

1-23-2009

Reflection on the NYTimes Article

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Friday, January 23, 2009

Reflection on NYTimes Article

Sarah

A river without water; it seems ridiculous but Owens Valley, CA proved to us that it is just ridiculous enough to be true. Water scarcity is happening all over the world. Whether pollution or supply is the threat, water is endangered. We experience water problems even in Dayton. Here in Dayton, a major concern for us is pollution. While their story is different, Owens Valley can serve as an example. Their river lost many inhabitants that helped it thrive as we have in Dayton. During the fish shocking that we got to witness in August we learned how the rivers in Dayton have lost certain fish that keep it healthy. At the same time it has gained fish that keep it polluted. The Owens Valley story of revival can definitely show the people of Dayton that solutions and restoration are possible. As this story shows, restoration can bring new life to the river.

A river can have a huge impact on its surrounding community. Owens Valley even got into legal battles and conflict over the use of the river. But a positive aspect came from the resurgence of people coming to the river after its revitalization. The river can provide a great connection between people as well. We have fostered a connection because of the river as River Stewards and as we continue our work, eventually UD students and Dayton community members will be able to connect to each other as well.

A river has so much potential in multiple ways. It has potential to sustain life for its inhabitants and humans. As I said before it has potential to connect and bring people together. This potential cannot be realized without a healthy amount of water existing in the river. If that healthy supply is non-existent, then the river has potential to create many problems for the people that live around it.

While reading this article I thought about the English class that I am taking. The class looks at the use of the environment in literature. We have since studied a few of Shakespeare's poems that equate nature with beauty and love. Times have certainly changed since then. It is an obvious statement but one that is prominent in my mind. Today we are in the midst of legalities and politics that are the deciding factors for what a river will be. I had a professor ask my class this semester what our purpose for being on Earth is. No one could answer definitely but I am confident in responding that it is not to misuse a river as we wish. It is a struggle to find a balance between using and respecting a river. From Dayton to Owens Valley, community members have a responsibility to work out this balancing act. Owens Valley now has a head start in front of Dayton, and time keeps passing. I address this to anyone who has ever been in contact with a river in Dayton, how are we going to catch up?