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Marsh, Liz, "Rivers at Stander Symposium!" (2010). *Rivers Institute Blog Archive*. 76.
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Wednesday, April 14, 2010

Rivers and Stander Symposium!

Liz Marsh

My river-filled Stander experience began at 9 a.m. at the Civil Engineers senior project presentation. This group of students presented a comprehensive plan for the use of the Mad River Property recently acquired by UD. Their plan included designs for a walking/biking bridge, a land bridge connecting the property to Eastwood MetroPark, a Leadership Lodge, a multipurpose building, and various paths and supporting structures. The Leadership Lodge was designed so that large groups would have a place for overnight or educational stays. Under the structure there would be a garage for kayak storage. The second structure, the multi-purpose building, would house two science laboratories, one computer lab, and several classrooms. The design team was made up of primarily civil engineers but it also included mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, and visual arts students (the visual arts students helped create a fantastic 3D rendering of the design). The presentation was very interesting and their project vision seemed to capture the essence of the property. You could tell that the Civil Engineers kept the final users of the property in mind when they were designing. They even mentioned the River Stewards and the Fitz Center by name several times! The presentation itself was very technical and consisted of sections devoted to the environmental, structural, transportation, and logistical integrity of their design. It was also interesting to see the tremendous progress the designers had made since they presented the unfinished project to us a few months ago.

My next stop at Stander was a presentation by a marketing class that had designed a marketing strategy for Five Rivers MetroParks. While I didn't agree with all of the group's suggestions for marketing opportunities for Five Rivers, I did think it was very interesting to hear another segment of UD's thoughts about Five Rivers. Most of the presentation involved using marketing techniques and statistical formulas to analyze Five Rivers and its target markets. What struck me was that the presenting group didn't suggest that Five Rivers target any of its marketing efforts towards university students. At first I was a little frustrated by this but then I realized that to a non-user of the parks, university students like us would not seem like a very cost effective investment in terms of marketing dollars. I think a lot of times we as River Stewards forget that a lot of people, especially people our age, do not appreciate or know about the MetroParks. The River's Institute has done a lot to bring UD to the river but it was obvious from this presentation that we still have a lot of work to do! But, I am certain that the River Stewards are up for the challenge!