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River Leadership Curriculum Update

University of Dayton

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Wednesday, October 19, 2011

River Leadership Curriculum Update

Sarah

Week 5

For Week 5 of the RLC, the students traveled to Calvary Cemetery with Brother Don Geiger of UD's Biology Department and Susan Byrnes, the director of ArtStreet. Brother Don discussed land use and its impacts with the students. Standing on top of a hanging prairie, the class was able to see various examples of land use including a land fill, a highway, and waste management. Brother Don brought several maps to show how land use has changed throughout the years. Susan asked the students to exercise their "third eye" to process what they were seeing. Susan asked the students to draw what they were seeing, smelling, and interpreting on the hanging prairie. She even asked them to draw what they might not be able to see with their naked eye, like systems at work (i.e. radio signals). The students really responded to both presentations. This class was changed slightly from last year. Originally we also traveled to Hills and Dales MetroPark and did a different artistic exercise. Staying in one location allowed for both presenters to have more time and flexibility with what they wanted to talk about.

Week 6

This class also took the students out of the classroom. This time we traveled to Miami Conservancy District to talk about the history of river cities and current examples of how cities are using their rivers to revitalize. Dr. Janet Bednarek of UD's History Department explained how rivers have been integral in cities' history. Using Pittsburgh as a case study, Janet explained how cities were dependent on their rivers for transportation and industry. A next phase in river city history was reclaiming rivers after industry polluted many of them. Finally, in more recent history, cities have begun to turn back to their rivers to draw people to live in their midst. Dayton is one of these cities. Carrie Scarff, Deputy Director of Five Rivers MetroParks, has been integral in the conversations about removing a low dam in downtown Dayton. The low dam is very dangerous. People hope by removing it, recreation on the river and activity around the river will increase. The plan would remove the low dam but also put in a kind of water park that would make water sports and the river bank more attractive. This class was beneficial to the students' learning after they kayaked one of the rivers that flows downtown. The students paddled down the Mad River a few weeks prior to this presentation. They ended the trip at RiverScape, close to where the low dam would be removed.

The pictures below are from the students' visit to Calvary Cemetery with Brother Don Geiger and Susan Byrnes.

