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A Southwestern Outlook

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Sunday, January 13, 2013

A Southwestern Outlook

Maddi Irwin, 2015 Cohort

So I've been home almost a month, removed from UD and The River Stewards. I've also been removed from a region that has abundant resources my home of Albuquerque, New Mexico is lacking. In this time I've noticed that my attitude towards my surroundings has completely changed. I think part of this is due to being around our rivers in Dayton all the time and partially due to the things I've learned with River Stewards.

I spent a few hours the other day walking along the bosque, the area around the Rio Grande. I started comparing what I was seeing to the rivers we've kayaked on. Here, there are no kayakers, few people fishing and almost no families along the rivers edge. The river is often low and fails to live up to its namesake, meaning "Grand River". In Dayton, the river has been important in uniting groups and the greater Dayton community. We as a group seek to let it bring us together without viewing it only in terms of how it can serve us. But here, the river has always been viewed as a nuisance when it floods million dollar homes that should have never been built on its banks. It's viewed as something to be controlled with jetty jacks and dams, something that's not connected in complicated ways to the ecosystem around it and ultimately, something that can be manipulated to serve human interest without consequence.

Fortunately, much like in Dayton, changes are being made because people are realizing what we've done. River Stewards has given me tools to help and reason to hope that here, in Dayton, and everywhere, water resources will be treated with the respect they deserve and changes will be made to the way people view our rivers.

The jetty jacks installed in the fifties to prevent flooding:



Jetty Jacks in the Bosquex

I consider both Dayton and Albuquerque home, and I hope that I can not only see changes being made to protect our resources in both regions, but also that I can help.