

1-18-2018

Linking Environment and Economy

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Carbonara, Jesse, "Linking Environment and Economy" (2018). *Rivers Institute Blog Archive*. 312.
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Thursday, January 18, 2018

Linking Environment and Economy

Jesse Carbonara, Biology

*Junior River Steward, Jesse Carbonaro, explains how her experiences in the program shaped her role with the **Hanley Sustainability Fund**.*



River Stewards demonstrate the correlation of environment and economy. Through the Dayton Riverfront Master Plan, we saw how development focused on enhancing current environmental assets can reinforce positive economic development. Firsthand, we have visited organizations that connect environment and economy. Some provide environmental public and private services. Some focus on advocacy and education. Both rely on economic conditions to exist, while contributing to the economy. An environmental business can add growth to the economy, and a growing economy can finance more environmental initiatives.

River Stewards revealed a perspective of environment and economy that I had not been exposed to. This sparked a passion to learn more about this relationship. I took this passion, and I applied to work at the University of Dayton's Hanley Sustainability Fund. After multiple interviews I was accepted as the first non-business major of the fund, and the 3rd women of the group.

The Hanley Sustainability Fund is student-run investment group with a portfolio exceeding \$120,000, whose primary focus is investing in companies that have an environmentally conscious business model. The fund strives to over perform the stock market while embracing environmentally conscious companies. Our investments show the University of Dayton's commitment to the environment, by divesting from companies whose actions negatively impact the environment. Our fund continually outperforms the stock market demonstrating how showing a passion for the environment can be fiscally beneficial. It seems to be a mutualistic relationship where both environment and business benefit.

My role within the fund is Head of Sustainability. I am responsible for investigating a potential investment environmental impact via a Sustainability report. I have developed a quantitative assessment that analyzes several ways a company can impact the environment. This includes an in-depth look at water and energy usage, waste, carbon emissions, supply chain, and social responsibility. They score in these individual categories based on a rubric with criteria. This criteria analyzes history of reduction, their current plans and procedures, any sustainability oriented goals and the nature of their business. I set goals to ensure that each investment improves the overall sustainability rating of the fund. If it strives to help the fund further achieve our goals it is passed to the next step of deciding if we will invest.

Through this research of companies' sustainable practices it has become apparent how striving to approve your environmental footprint can help a companies' bottom line. Sustainability is becoming a cornerstone of all Fortune 500 companies. River Stewards has demonstrated the local relationship and further exposed me to the relationship on a greater scale. I am very thankful for the perspective that River Stewards provides. Given its interdisciplinary nature it provides each member with a broader view of how sustainability connects to the world. In my case, I felt a strong passion to continue to learn about how economy and environment connect.