

3-3-2022

On River Stewardship

Gillian Leone
University of Dayton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/rivers_blog

eCommons Citation

Leone, Gillian, "On River Stewardship" (2022). *Rivers Institute Blog Archive*. 320.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/rivers_blog/320

This Blog is brought to you for free and open access by the Rivers Institute at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rivers Institute Blog Archive by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

Thursday, March 3, 2022

On River Stewardship

Gillian Leone, 2024 Cohort

When posed the question of what is river stewardship, there are many words that initially come to mind. These include service, leadership, wellness, effort, community, bonds, water, protection and many others. But, there is one word that in particular stands out to me; understanding.

I believe that a large component of river stewardship is taking the gracious time out of your own day in order to understand. Taking time to understand facilitates an environment in order to make deeper connections that those who briefly walked by wouldn't notice at first.

I've had the amazing opportunity to work with so many different organizations in the past year. Being able to serve under organizations that all share the same source that provides life to us; the river, is such a beautiful and unique experience.

Understanding the river and its complexity is something that not only takes time, but a large desire to want to be a part of something bigger. After being a river steward for shy of a year, I've had a plethora of experiences that I would consider to be "full-circle" experiences. Being a river steward means being able to take in these "full-circle" experiences, understanding them, and applying them to other areas of your life so that others can benefit from them.

Being a river steward means understanding that our relationships in life are very complicated, but they are what hold us together at the end of the day. Recognizing the importance of these relationships and their connection to the river is a large aspect of river stewardship.

I had the opportunity to work for the Mission of Mary this past year. The Mission of Mary Cooperative works with sustainable urban development that is rooted in community. Mission of Mary manages a network of 6 urban farming plots and they grow over 100 different kinds of vegetables and fruits. After working under this organization, there was one main thought that came to mind; what is the one thing that allows this organization to thrive? Yes, a group of hard workers. Yes, money and land. But, most importantly, the backbone of being able to grow and provide for many community members is, you guessed it, water!

When you are a river steward, everything flows back to the thing that gives us life; water. Having a larger understanding of the role water plays in our life (it provides us life, gives us recreation, gives us a place to meetetc) is the root of what being a river steward is.

