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## Getting to Know the River

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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Getting to Know the River

**08.13.2009 | Campus and Community, Students** About 45 University of Dayton students, faculty, staff and community partners will spend two days kayaking, camping and studying the environment of the region's largest river.

These members of the University's Rivers Institute will begin their trip Tuesday, Aug. 18, at the Taylorsville Dam in Vandalia and camp overnight at Island MetroPark in Dayton.

The trip includes a stop from 11 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Aug. 19, at RiverScape for fish shocking and presentations from Five Rivers MetroParks and the Miami Conservancy District. Students will finish the trip at SunWatch Indian Village.

Fish shocking — or electrofishing — involves passing an electric current through the water to stun fish and bring them to the surface for counting and studying. The diversity of fish species is a good indicator of the water quality in the area. The method does not harm the fish, which return to their original state within minutes.

The two-day experience is an annual orientation for the incoming class of River Stewards, a group of University of Dayton students from several academic majors who lead the Rivers Institute, a University organization that seeks to reunite the Miami Valley with its rivers.

"This year we plan to have a greater presence on the river and get the community on the river with us," said Leslie King, who was hired last month as the institute's coordinator. "We are looking at the river corridor as a way to connect cities in this region through economic growth, community building, education and recreational opportunities."

For the first time, the institute has planned a separate, five-day trip for senior River Stewards. They began Wednesday, Aug. 12, paddling 65 miles down the Great Miami River from the headwaters of Indian Lake to the Taylorsville Dam.

The senior group plans to meet with city officials in Sydney, Piqua and Troy and document the trip using video, photography and audio recordings to examine the biology and health of the river and to assess economic development opportunities.

The Rivers Institute is an initiative coordinated by the University's Fitz Center for Leadership in Community. The institute's community partners include the Miami Conservancy District, Five Rivers MetroParks and the Dayton Early College Academy.

The institute sponsors an annual River Summit in April at the University to encourage leaders in cities along the river to create a cohesive vision for recreation and development.

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