We made it back from the Grass River and are excited to share the adventure we experienced along the way. Hard work, laughter, and team work were keys to our success as we traveled from Macomb all the way to Manitoba, Canada. During the river expedition we ran class 1 and 2 rapids. With the opportunity to white water canoe came portages, which challenged our strength and endurance. During our time we learned to read water and steer the path that many Cree First Nations people did and still do today. From seeing the magnificent sight of an eagle flying overhead in the cloud-filled sunset to the historical pictographs that were made over a 1,000 years ago, the memories we made will never be forgotten. So onward we go to the Western United States to continue the expedition that has already changed our lives. We hope you enjoy the first newsletter of our expedition.

Note: The following articles are written by the students of ECOEE 2013. The Publications and Promotions Committee compiles the entries; how they are written and any errors are at the fault of the writer.

~ The Publications & Promotions Committee

There and Back Again: Our Canadian Adventure

An Excerpt From Our Journal

“Frost” Written 9/15/13

Yesterday when the cold wind raced through our campsite, I suspected that our nice, warm days were coming to an end. My suspicions were certainly confirmed when I woke up: winter is coming. This morning was the coldest morning we experienced thus far. With the temperature being 35 degrees at 7:30 in the morning, we began our day. After our morning meeting, we loaded the boats as usual. While I walked with my bags from my campsite to the canoes, a joyful yet morbid thought crossed my mind: all the mosquitos are dead. Even though that meant no more uncomfortable meetings with annoying buzzing around our ears or having to slap our arms and legs every minute, an entire generation of living beings vanished from our daily life out here. Yet, there is something to be said about resiliency. As we found out during our debrief this evening, not all the mosquitos die in the frost from last night. Yes, a living mosquito is now few and far between, but those who survived have not given up just yet.

As we paddled northeast along the lakeshore, I noticed yellow autumn leaves peeking through the green needles of the northwoods. The trees agreed in that winter is coming and have thus started their preparations to ensure their resiliency. Unlike the mosquitos who will die and have a new generation to replace them, the trees will stand dormant until the spring air revives their limbs. The pines and spruces grow ever more resilient as they continue to thrive during the cold winter, refusing to rest like their brethren.

Out here, with the days growing colder and our time on the river shrinking faster, we must be resilient as well. We must not just stay warm, but we must not forget to enjoy the remaining moments we have out here in the Canadian northwoods. Like the now dead mosquitos, once our time on this river is over, we will not be coming back. Even though we are just mosquitos to this river, our experiences on this river make us like the pines and spruces: always absorbing, never resting. As we end our journey on the Grass River and continue to different lands, I hope that we grow into strong, tall pines and spruces, trees that never rest long enough to go dormant.

~ Andrew Busker
Perspectives of Outdoor Education

As students of ECOEE 2013 it is important for us to be well rounded; we need not to only be well versed in backcountry living, leave no trace behind methods, travel modes, interpretation, and leadership styles; but within the outdoor recreation field as well. Our group will be visiting a lot of outdoor recreation agencies, and staying at plenty of outdoor recreation campsites. It is while being in these places that we will have the opportunity to meet with professionals and discuss any issues that are happening within each place, or discover them by ourselves. As we have been traveling through the northern United States and into Canada we have stayed at a couple of campgrounds, mostly provincial parks within Manitoba, and even more backcountry spots as seen in the picture to the right.

As we visit the different parks, and visit the National Park Service, Forest Service, and many different bureaus we will learn about what they do and provide as well as the history of each place. In the form of a scavenger hunt each of us will be learning interesting facts about how the outdoor field has gotten to where it is. We will find important dates, missions, people, acronyms, and agencies as we complete this task.

The class of RPTA 376: Perspectives of Outdoor Education will not only provide information for the 14 of us on ECOEE 2013 but it will do so in a fun and challenging way. Instead of sitting in a classroom and reading facts from books we will be traveling, interacting, hunting, and learning from real life sources. We will learn from sight and experiences rather than someone’s interpretation of each place written into a textbook. In the end of this semester our class will know the principles, the history, and the philosophies of agencies within the outdoor recreation field. So the next time you see one of the ECOEE 2013 group as them who Aldo Leopold is, or what was the world’s first national park, or even who the first president to set aside land as a “forest preserve”; and hopefully we can pass that knowledge onto you.

~ Cassandra Roy

“It does not do well to dwell on dreams and forget to live.”

JK Rowling

Keep on Leading on

Out here in the backcountry of Manitoba, Canada, we are learning what it takes to become outdoor leaders. Day after day we encounter conflicts and risks which need to be resolved and managed through good judgment and decision making. These skills ensure that our goals and objectives are accomplished in a timely manner and in an appropriate way. Out here we have many classes that help guide us in how to be more efficient and effective as leaders but the lessons are never fully learned until the real life tests are presented in the field. The consequences of taking waves on the broad side of a canoe are never fully understood until one’s feet are under a few inches of water, or one does not fully understand the importance of cooking and eating nutritious meals until you have to paddle 20 miles in a day while becoming more and more fatigued and cranky. These real life experiences help us better our judgments and decisions because we fully understand the consequences which affect ourselves and our group. Many of the technical skills such as: paddling, knot tying, loading/unloading gear in and out of canoes, and portaging, come with the everyday practice just as every kind of skill does. Although many of us become bored of our repetitive cycle in the backcountry; we realize that if, and when, we someday have a group of our own all the practice we had made us that much better and prepared to be able to lead others in the backcountry. I can tell you one thing for sure and that is, when you experience an event and see its consequence, whether it’s positive or negative, you surely will not forget what to do or what not to do to achieve your desired outcome safely and efficiently. “The most effective executive is one who hires good people and then has the good sense to stand back and watch them do their work.” –Teddy Roosevelt

~ Kevin Williams

Discoveries of the Backcountry

1. Shaving is nonexistent
2. The answer for every question is “What do you think?”
3. If our group unanimously agrees, there is something wrong
4. Always have your raingear ready
5. Singing passes time while canoeing
6. Don’t celebrate until you are 100 feet away from the rapids
7. Don’t leave matches out in the rain
8. Pack 5 lbs. of flour, not 5 lbs. of sugar
9. Rain before 7, stops by 11 (disclaimer: 60% of the time, it works every time)
10. Pack fuel separate from clothes and food
11. Cooking after dark results in lost gear
12. Paddler tans are way more attractive than farmer tans
13. You might wonder how to keep bears away... take ECOEE 2013 along with you
**Backcountry Interpretations**

During our backcountry portion of the ECOEE adventure, each student must perform interpretations based off of natural, cultural, and environmental resources. These interpretations provide the group with an experiential source of growth in knowledge and personal development as outdoor instructors in our Outdoor Leadership minor as we work on our Wilderness Education Association certification. While some students were more prepared than others, each student offered a scope of insight into their topic that was worthy of recognition. Some teachers would provide a solemn lecture environment in which details would be mulled over and repeated in order to give the relevant ideals time to sink in. Others would use props or the natural setting within itself in order to provide a tangible source of information as we paddled or hiked along our plotted course.

As we look back on ECOEE for the past forty-two days there are many things that we need to look at; we have homework, goals, task, and chores. There is one thing that each person needs to take in consideration while they are on ECOEE, which is chores and maintain a system of organization. Which makes me laugh because the chores that we have for ECOEE reminds me a lot of what the chores I do at home. But also some that I do not do enough of because I am lazy or know my parents will take care of it, but on ECOEE there are chores and responsibilities that we have each day whether it was when we were in the front country for two weeks or when we were in the backcountry for twenty-eight days. The way that the group has been handling it is not typically how they probably would at home; which is having their dirty clothes all over their room and leaving it, or leaving our dirty dishes in the sink after just being ate out of it. Well on ECOEE, that does not fly. We have to pick up our beds each morning and have our clothes packed away in a bag. It definitely took some time to adapt to the lifestyle of living out a duffle bag or medium size dry bag and knowing that’s my only clothes, so use them wisely; which is what I think when I wear each article of clothing. Also, each person has seen the responsibility of dishes and the daily reminder that we have to clean them each time we are done eating out of them. It does not matter if its front country or backcountry you’re in charge of your dish, there’s no mom or dad to take of our dishes or put them in the dishwasher for us. For example, when we get in the front country we have to go through the process of dish station which two wash buckets, a rinse bucket, and bleach bucket and after the dishes are washed we put them into a yellow sack to air dry. The backcountry is a little different; instead of cleaning dishes together you will clean them within your tent group and clean only your dishes after each meal. I think this daily life skill is something I hope will become something that is natural for us do after ECOEE is over. In wrapping up, these daily life skills that were improving on or learning how to do for the first time is a part of one of our classes and this one is called 450 Travel Workshop and daily chores are a big part of our grade for the course. I hope that going in to the west and getting back swing of things, of being in the front country, can become a little bit easier for us remember and we can become pros at in the end.

~ Emily Chathas

**Guess Who…**

1. Ran the wrong side of the rapids and made it through (hint: it is two people)
2. Jeff tricked into sitting alone in the woods with a bag and flashlight
3. Thought there were wild cows (like the ones you would find on the farm) roaming Canada
4. Says the famous word “EWWW!”
5. Tried out for Jeopardy twice
6. Named their canoe Rosie Roxanne
7. Can make the best monkey bread
8. Works at Philmont
9. Told us we were all dirty and needed to wash our hands when we went to our first restaurant out of the backcountry
10. Screamed before getting to the rapids and all the way through the rapids
11. Has the most paddling experience out of the students

**Answers on Last Page**
The Impossible Plan

To plan or not to plan, that is the question? Does anything ever go to plan? Life is an interesting journey where left turns turn into right ones and down turn into ups. Imagine taking a job in the outdoor adventure recreation field where planning and coordinating is an every day occurrence. You have many unforeseeable obstacles that await your path; weather, terrain, funding, personal, equipment, location, training, etc. Now let’s take the 12 of us college students from various backgrounds and different majors ranging from political science, recreation park and tourism, and art.

Through the Environmental Conservation Outdoor Education Expedition we are all learning the art of managing a group. Every week 3 individuals come together as leaders of the week (LOW), where they organize a schedule and put it into place. Eh, as we hear a lot of Canadians say, sounds easy right? On the contrary, when decisions involve physical or emotional risk they are not easy. Trip planning is one of the most difficult tasks and most rewarding many of us have faced.

No longer do we have the comfort of sitting in a classroom and reading from a book on how to appropriately manage a group. We get the opportunity to manage a group ourselves. One very important lesson we have learned on the course that I have seen many put into place when it comes to leading a group is known as the Expedition Leader Style Analysis (ELSA) Inventory test taught by Jeff. This gave us a look at four different leadership styles; delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing. In order to successfully manage a group and care for their emotions and physical well being one needs to find a balance between relationship and task. If a group is high task and low relationship we have discovered that group morale goes down and willingness to participate decreases. If there is too high of a relationship and low task the objectives of a course are not met and group goals wouldn’t be complete.

Many of us wish we would of known some of the things we have learned from Jeff and Shane in the beginning to aid us in our past experience as LOW’s. I look at the things I could of done differently, but am thankful at the same time for the mistakes I have made and what I have learned. The learning experiences we have had make us a stronger team and individuals. Every learning experience helps me become a stronger individual; mind and body.

~ Liz Flesher

Outdoor Education

While on our Environmental Conservation Outdoor Education Expedition all of us twelve students have Outdoor Education topics to teach each other along our way. Each of us got to choose what topics we wanted to teach back in the spring semester. So we have had the spring and summer time to study our topics and become the “guru” of that topic. Some of these topics being taught are trees, plants and shrubs, medicinal and medical plants, birds, rocks, animals, ecosystems, habitats and homes, weather, scats and tracks, astronomy, and endangered and invasive species. Each lesson is followed by an activity for that lesson for hands on, to engage all of us, and of course to make it fun. Because what is learning if it isn’t fun, especially since we’re in the outdoors.

Following these Outdoor Education lessons is our teachable moments that each of us will give. Teachable moments are done while we’re on the river, on a trail, or at a park. Those are just a few examples of when teachable moments will be done. We’ve already have had plenty of teachable moments from each other. We saw an eagle’s nest on the river so the person with habitat’s and homes gave us a teachable moment. Another one was done for animals when we saw some curious river otters pop up right next to our canoes.

Our Outdoor Education lessons are so important because not only are we teaching each other, but we’re learning from each other. After the lessons, we give each other feedback on what was good and what needs improvement. So teaching each other gives us the chance to see what teaching methods are good and work. It is also a good way to learn what doesn’t work that well too. We will learn so many things about each of the topics throughout this expedition, all the way from Canada to the West and then in Baja California.

~ Shayla Hill

A Collection of Poems by Quinn Moore

Roses are red, Violets are blue,
I stink,
And so do you!

Roses are red, Violets are blue,
I’m stuck on an island with Jeff,
And so are you!

Roses are red, Violets are blue,
I’m stuck soaked and cold,
And so are you!

Roses are red, Violets are blue,
If caribou can do this,
So can you!
A Daily Challenge

Since we soon learned that there was no escaping each other while on ECOEE, we realized that everything we do affects one another to some degree. Kingman Brewster, a former president of Yale University and past US diplomat, said “there is no greater challenge than to have someone relying upon you; no greater satisfaction than to vindicate his expectation.” During our time together as students, as friends, we rely on each other in multiple ways, with one of the most prominent being our daily chores.

In both the front country and the backcountry, our chores keep us accountable. When we are camping at campground in the front country, we keep ourselves accountable by working in teams. Three students cook the meals, four students clean after meals. One could say that when it comes to cooking and cleaning, there is safety in numbers. In the backcountry, our accountability is found within the confines of our three-person cook and tent groups. No matter where we are on this expedition, our peers are relying on us, challenging us to live up to their expectations.

Our actions out here prepare us for the future. As we face the challenges of living up to our peers’ expectations and relying on our peers to support us, we grow as outdoor leaders. When we struggle, fall short of their expectations, and the group raises us back up, we experience what it means to fail and we learn what we can do to make sure that failure doesn’t happen again. When we vindicate our peers’ expectations of us, we experience the great sense of accomplishment because we can effectively support the group. In the future, when we are using the skills we have learned and honed on this expedition, the groups we lead will hold us accountable for their wellbeing and they will rely on us to provide them the best experience we can give them.

In the meantime, we continue to refine our daily chores so that we will one day be able to surpass the expectations on the group. Whether that is cooking a delicious dinner, starting a fire, setting up the group tarp, or making sure the van and trailer are well taken care of, our daily chores while on this expedition are our way of practicing accountability and trust in one another.

~ Andrew Busker

“Not all who wander are lost.”

JRR Tolkien

Different Views of the Same Idea

Outdoor Recreation has a variety of different purposes for people to enjoy the beauty and to learn the lessons that the natural world has to offer. While in the U.S ECOEE 2013 will be visited state parks, national parks, and from being in Canada we have already visited a few provincial parks. These places preserve and conserve natural resources and allow people to interact with these resources in a low impacting way. We will be speaking to professionals within these parks learning how things are funded, organized, and how the parks are managed. We will see how state and national parks differ from the type of funding which is given to them while being able to see similarities between for they are accessible to the public for their own leisure and recreation. As with everything we will explore what challenges these parks face with management of these facilities because as we know, land is a very valuable resource to us as human beings so we will learn what makes each resource valuable and worthwhile to protect and fun through the tax payers’ dollars. A few big parks that we will be visiting include Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park, and Joshua Tree National Park. These places do a great job allowing people to experience the outdoors in a variety of ways which include interpretive programs, outdoor education programs, and guided trails, as well as, allowing recreational fishermen, bikers, hikers, and many others to enjoy their time while not harming the natural resource at hand. Using the outdoors for recreation is an important aspect in peoples’ lives which has continued for ages and we will have the opportunity to meet professionals to understand why and how these places work and what keeps them going to help improve the quality of human life. “The way to get stared to is quit talking and begin doing” –Walt Disney

~ Kevin Williams

Quotes from Our Journey

“To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and not enough time.”

~ Leonard Bernstein

“Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit.”

~ Edward Abbey
Management for Days!

Most of what we call management consists of people making it difficult for other people to get their work done. Anyone who has ever had a boss can definitely relate to this quote! Management in any form is full of stress, long hours, and angry people. While management in other fields such as business might be boring, management within the recreation field can be much more enjoyable. When I think of working a job, an old quote comes to mind. “If you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life.” If we look at this quote closer, it almost acts as a guideline for managers and employees alike.

Why Teach Outside the Classroom?

It was a typical day at school for the ECOEE expedition members. Paddling across the vast beauty of the grass river. Portaging through muddy and harsh terrain. Hiking through the vast green fields of moss. Listening to the roaring rapids crashing, and smashing against the rocks like a roaring herd of bison routing it path to next patch of field. As we follow the path of the bison, we remember through all this we were far from the four white walls that enclosed countless of students back at Western Illinois University. As students back at Western learn about a few topics such as risk management, outdoor skills, facility management, and environmental education. We found ourselves distant from the regular classroom. We found ourselves seeing, learning, and teaching the vast outdoor education topics.

The lessons, run jointly by each expedition member that covers a vast field of outdoor educational topics. Such topics consist of birds, trees, geology, weather, plants, and ecosystems to helpful hints to identify creatures, plants, and scats and tracks. The idea that learning can occur outside the classroom is by no means anything new. Learning was a direct experience that was passed by essential human cultures from one generation to the next. This evolved from learning from camping to what we know as outdoor education today. This influence has impacted each expedition member on this expedition, voyaging across the Grass River and front country.

It is an approach to enhance learning, by having the classroom based in the outdoors. Expedition members observed firsthand the direct experience of being outside the classroom. It extended my learning process of outdoor education. By giving me a greater understanding, a deeper insight, and a clearer meaning in areas of knowledge that all too often are only read and discussed but not experience directly. By finding the basic concepts and abstract ideas like freedom, truth, love, anger, and fear. An outdoor educator can formulate a universal concept to something we experience directly in the outdoors. Able to give a verbal meaning to an object, people tend to learn quickly and create an understanding and strike meaning in people’s everyday life. Each day is a new learning experience, and as we continue our journey we find our path to the field of learning and teaching.

Confucius - I hear, I know. I see, I remember. I do, I understand.

~ Rogelio Hernandez

Quotes from Our Journey

“Once in a while you find a place on earth that becomes your very own. A place undefined. Waiting for you to bring your color, yourself. A place untouched, unspoiled, undeveloped. Raw, honest, and haunting. No one, nothing is telling you how to feel or who to be. Let the mountains have you for a day.”

~ Sundance
Inside Story Headline

While being on ECOEE 2013 there are three main courses that the group is responsibility for making lessons plans for and one of them are Interpretation. The process of making interpretation there is four main points to keep in mind of trying to make a good interpretation. These four are entraining, relevant, organized, and theme. Trying to make your interpretation have those four things can be struggle, but can be done. My interpretation topic that I have for ECOEE is migration and adaptation. The focus of what I going to be speaking about and telling a story about was how caribou migrate and adapt in Canada. I started off by asking the group some questions to get them thinking about how they got the place they were sitting and how we found the campsite that we were sleeping at that night and how much farer we had to go to get to our destination. I had brought into the fact that some caribou have a way of migrating through a specific route and how they use that same path for thousands of years and their huff prints have worn the path in each year they take it. By telling the group how they can relate it to themselves by saying they all have their own path and way home to their house, in since that each person knows the streets and turns to take to get to their house. I continued with other facts and relating it to the group and how they can compare themselves to how the caribou migrate. Also, when had discussed about the adaptation that some caribou have, for example some caribou have two sets of fur and one of them insulating there body when air travels through fur so they can say warm. I had relat-ed it back to the group of how they wear cer-tain layers over one another and how they that keeps their bodies warm. In all, when giving my interpretation I made sure I was making it relevant towards group so they could get better understand of surviving and living conditions that some caribou go through. But in the end making sure I left them with something to think about, which one that we live out lives in the backcountry and at times it can be rough but to know that some types of caribou have it much harder living conditions. My hope was that group think about their live and similarity they shared with caribou. Therefore this course 448: Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Resources can future my knowledge of what an interpretation should be like and how the ending point should touch someone heart with leaving them to think about the story that was told. I am looking for our group to go to different national parks in west and get to experience professional presentation of what interpretations are all about.

~ Emily Chathas

Leading in Style

I always thought being a leader was easy. I thought leading came naturally, which I'm still convinced it does. In retrospect though I've realized taking charge of a group of twenty year olds and leading them from house to house in the small town of Macomb might still have its own set of risks, still differs vastly from leading a group through the backcountry of Manitoba, Canada. I believe the twelve of us who were crazy enough to take on the task of ECOEE have learned more in these last four weeks of backcountry expedition than we have sitting in a class room for the last 3 years.

As an artist by trade, I find the beauty of humanity rests in the notion of the snowflake. Meaning we're all made the same but what makes you who you are is completely unique. With that being said, people along the way have devised four groups in which we as leaders belong. Ideas people are visionaries, Process people know how to get it done, Product people are all about getting it done, and People people make sure everyone is ok with getting it done. I personally sit proudly as one of two Idea people in the group. We are the outspoken, rambunctious members who strive on chaos. I believe I am the physical manifestation of chaos and I'm sure my team would back that up, just ask them. Processors, are our mortal enemies so to speak. They have their specific way and their way is law. Without their system they would run the group mad and although valid wouldn't accom-plish much. Now Producers are the enforcers. They make sure we know what has to happen and make sure it happens. Just talk to Cassie and Ro about that one, they had a great time leading the team on what seemed to be a death march to make up all the lost time from the first two weeks. I never thought I would run out steam and will power, they found a way. Last but certainly not least the People people. Think of these guys as the glue that holds us together or well for this group the crazy glue. Their joy comes from the enjoyment of the people they have around them, which in this your team is a remarkable feat. Not only do they bash heads but at times we're full on bucks charging for complete dominance. No matter how much bickering really goes there are always people like Quinn, or Papa Bear as I like to call him, who can bring us all back together with a simple joke. I personally think that as a leader there are many qualities that hold strong far above the rest. The ability to not only obtain but simultaneously portray undying love to your underlings is what makes good leaders great.

~Dustin Granat

Quotes from Our Journey

“Only dudes and fools try to predict the weather.”
~ Paul Petzoldt

“Even the ablest of navigators fall victim to the wind and the waves.”
~Anonymous

“If you want something you’ve never had, you have to do something you’ve never done.”
~Anonymous
Oh... The Places You Will Go

As our increasingly functioning group has the distinct pleasure of traveling across the beautiful land that is North America, we will encounter a multitude of environments and people along the way. More importantly, however, we will be visiting a vast array of national parks and interpretive centers which will provide us a great deal of insight into the jobs available within the field of study that we are pursuing as outdoor leaders. As we visit different parks and interpretive centers, the staff that kindly provide us with their insightful tours will cover areas of discussion such as administrative practices, staffing, logistics, and funding/ acquisitions to name a few. It is thus our job as students to provide ourselves with the necessary notes as we progress through our regularly scheduled tours in order to display an understanding of the variety of centers that we will be subject to.

While we are already one third of the way through our ECOEE journey, most of the time on the expedition has been spent within the confines of the back country of the Grass River in Manitoba, Canada. Thus, our experiences within the national parks and interpretive centers that are scattered across the western United States have not become particularly available to us yet. – That is not to say that we have had no experience to date. One experience that stands out most prominently was the groups somewhat spontaneous visit to Deep Portage in northern Minnesota. While visiting Deep Portage, we were provided a tour by the Assistant Director Molly Malecek, who covered everything from staffing and salary, to fuel economy and efficiency of heating their facility throughout the frigid winter months. The depth of insight provided was overwhelming for one of our primary visits, but after having over a month to contemplate our critiques as we toured the back country of Manitoba, the group should be more than prepared to complete the necessary forums in order to characterize and bring to light how we each viewed our visits as individuals discovering our specific areas of interest across each new horizon as we travel the path of becoming outdoor leaders.

~ Tyler Schrapf

Interpretations in the Backcountry

During the adventures we experience on ECOEE, one of the tasks we must complete is being assigned to teach three different subjects that we were assigned at the beginning of the spring semester prior to the start of ECOEE. One of these subjects requires us to demonstrate our skills of describing, displaying, revealing, and relating certain subjects that we have chosen during the spring semester to a group of people. Our lessons should be able to accomplish all of these things on a variety of topics and issues like environmental, cultural and natural resources. We should be able to captivate the attention of our audiences and teach them about our subjects in a way that will have them never forget the importance and history behind these subjects. One of the lessons that was taught in the backcountry of Manitoba was the subject of Fashion, Wealth, Competition, and Survival. This student taught the rest of the group about the French Voyageurs that were a part of the fur trade that was going on at the time in Manitoba Canada. He began his lesson by talking with us as his normal self; after a few minutes of talking with questions, he went and “found his friend” who was a French Voyageur. The Voyageur talked with us about the adventures and hardships he and other Voyageurs had to experience out in the backcountry; they paddled hundreds of miles just so they could deliver the goods that they had in their canoes. He compared the clothing that we were all wearing to the clothes that the Voyageurs wore as they endured the harsh elements of Canada. He also talked about how many men lost their lives during these bleak and rough times all for the sake of a fashion frenzy that was going on in Europe over fur hats made from the animals found in far north of the “New World.” During this lesson, the presenter was able to catch our attention through the use of the items he had brought to make him look like one of the French Voyageurs. His items were a toque and a sash that he wore while portraying his character. These visual aids are things that allow the audience to grasp what the men looked like and how and why they used these items during their travels. This lesson is one of the many that our group taught to us while on the Grass River. They were able to give us insight into the world around us and the history that accompanied the subjects that were taught to our audience. While we gain more experience within the realm of interpretation it will be exciting to see what new and fascinating things we will learn about as we travel from Canada all the way to Baja California.

~ Kyle Pickett

Quotes from Our Journey

“Turn your face into the sun, and let your shadows fall behind you.”
~ Charlotte Witten

“At the end of the open road, we come to ourselves.”
~ Louis Simpson
Outdoor Education in Style

The 12 students on ECOEE 2013 each have an outdoor education topic that they are responsible for teaching as we go on our travels; these range from trees to furry animals to endangered species. As we go on our exploration our group members will each become knowledgeable about the topics taught by our peers. This is done through a basic informational introduction, followed by numerous teachable moments, and concluded with a remembrance of the topic as well as what each person should get out of what we were taught. Along with each member teaching a specific topic our group will also be visiting numerous outdoor education centers. On our travels from Macomb to the Grass River (Manitoba, Canada) we stopped by 3 outdoor education centers; Deep Portage Learning Center, The Living Prairie Museum, and Oak Hammock Marsh. Each of these places had their own way of teaching. Deep Portage learning center had an outdoor education center that was filled with furs, animals, games, and facts. It was also encompassed with acres upon acres of land, solar energy lights, and outdoor activities. They also had an observation deck that could be used to teach trees, weather, and astronomy. The next site we visited was smaller and upon entering the Living Prairie Museum we saw a small room with games for kids, windows looking out to the tall grass prairie, and a projector set up ready to give lessons. We were given a slide show/presentation about the different species surrounding the building, the tall grass, the different animals that came across those lands, as well as the history of the center and the tall grass surrounding it. The last outdoor education center that we went to was Oak Hammock Marsh. This was a spectacular building that had many different ways of teaching their lessons. It ranged from a walk through the grounds, to a guided canoe tour, to a room filled with toys and activities; it served as a very interactive learning area. Each of these places, as well as our own 12 topics, are all going to be taught in different styles. It is because of this that each of us are able to remember what was taught seeing as well all have different styles of learning; ranging from visual, to spoken, to interactive. As we leave Canada and enter the United States once more our student lessons as well as the other outdoor education visits will continue. As ECOEE 2013 comes to an end in December not only will we have been taught many varying things from different agencies but we will all become a “Jack of trades” of trees, invasive species, plants/shrubs, furry animals, habitats/homes, edible/medicinal plants, boats and tracks, weather, ecosystems, birds, rocks, and astronomy. Shown above is one of our very own teachable moments; Liz and myself (Cassandra) taught how to spot a White Spruce Tree and what the edible properties of it are.

~ Cassandra Roy

On Course to Lead Future Generations

Throughout history and to this day leaders are a major driving force of the generations of our world. To be an effective outdoor leader there are three major essentials, one is character and having good charisma, the second is good decision making and this takes having good judgment, and the final essential is the ability to manage risk properly. Throughout our one month backcountry experience our instructor Jeff has had little to no input in the expedition decisions besides the lessons he taught in our curriculum and the input he had in a few timely decisions. The heads of our operation are the leaders of the week which are three group members who are in charge and have the responsibilities of answering group members questions, scouting the rapids and portages, choosing the routes, creating the schedule, leading the group briefly and debriefs, making lots of decisions and more. The experience of being a leader of the week is a hectic and busy one as you are the first one to wake up and last to go to sleep, and have to make sure everything is done properly in terms of logistics, everyone is safe and taken care of, delegate tasks for people to complete, discuss group issues, and the entire experience of leading the group. When the LOW’s meet they must discuss their personal leadership styles and personal characteristics about themselves, as well as layout the week plan on three sheets. The first one being the first draft of their envisioned schedule, the second being a revision of the first draft, and the final one is how plans of the schedule actually turned out; and I don’t think anyone has or will have their week run without things being subject to change due to all the factor that may alter you schedule. Every night after debriefing the group on the day, the LOW’s are in charge of briefing the group for our plans for the next day. It is a major part of our curriculum and overall evaluation in whether or not we will gain a minor or certification in being an outdoor leader. We are currently transitioning into the front country and going to go network with outdoor adventure programs. We have yet to visit any outdoor adventure programs, but this week we have a NOLS visit in Lander, Wyoming to learn about the administration and management of their program. Later on in the itinerary we will also pay a visit to Summit Adventure, Aztec adventures, and others. These will be important visits to gather an understanding of lots the functions within these outdoor adventure programs and this will help us in our educational understanding. Over the course of ECOEE we were all in charge of creating a 10-day program for six individuals of different demographics we were assigned. From our personal experiences on ECOEE and our visits to these outdoor adventure programs we will put together an in-depth program including location, activities, instructors, financial aspect, risk management, goals and objectives, and more. This will serve as a good gauge if we understand all of the factors that go into the creation of 10-day programs which will be a realistic task in the future as an outdoor leader. Till next time....

~ Norris Andriuskevicius
Travel Workshop that Goes on Forever!

The title of this newsletter article is a running joke between Shane, our grad assistant, and I. The joke pertains to our expedition on the Grass River when I first said it to Shane; we had paddled several miles at that point, and I looked over at him and with weariness in my eyes I said “Man this river goes on forever it never ends!” Since he was also tired, both of us laughed for several long minutes. It was the type of joke that makes you laugh so hard everyone wants to know what’s funny, and when you inform them, they don’t fully understand why we were laughing. After the group got off the river, we had to start on our daily front country chores again. I know everyone loves daily chores! These chores are assigned to everyone, and they rotate from day to day.

These chores consist cooking for the group, setting up tarps if it rains, set up lights clean the vans and trailers, start a fire, and finally clean dishes. Doing these chores is a must to keep the group clean and organized. Of course chores aren’t something everyone wakes up to and fully enjoy doing, but these chores play a vital role for us. If we don’t do these chores properly it can negatively affect us by keeping us from seeing great new places and experiencing everything we can. Besides the chores, we also have to keep an ECOEE binder that consists of all of the work the group did in both the past spring and current fall semester. The ECOEE binder is a collection of all the hard work the group did to make ECOEE our own experience. Too bad we can’t accomplish our chores in our own way! The travel workshop is only one of several classes we are working on this semester, but it is neither the hardest nor easiest, it’s just the class that reminds me of home the most.

~ Quinn Moore

What We Change Inwardly Will Change Outer Reality

Oh what a ride of great strides, the voyagers have returned to their homeland. We have just concluded our first backcountry expedition in great spirits having completed 250 miles, 12 portages, and 3 rapids canoeing over 28 days. Throughout our stay on the Grass river we had largely stayed at Provincial Park campsites that were low-impacts campsites spread out across the canoeing expedition on the Grass river. These took place at portages sites around waterfalls and rapids, had one firebox, and a minimum amount of camping spots for our group but were filled by the original wonderful natural setting. We would rarely come across campgrounds that were more established which could be accessed by a road, they had more luxuries like flattened campgrounds, water wells, more fire pits and rings, bathrooms, and a camping fee. It seemed that the campsites in Manitoba were more surrounded around the experience of canoeing and the wilderness experience compared to campsites at state and national parks in the United States are more about the tourism location and the sights for the tourist.

The anticipation stage took place when every individual heard about ECOEE and considered taking part in it. The planning phase began when we took the three courses prior to arriving at Horn Field Campus on August 10th. The beginning at Horn Field Campus could count as part of the planning phase as we prepared more of the logistics, had discussions on our upcoming expedition, did research upon our expedition, packed bags and food, loaded the trailers, practiced canoeing at Spring Lake State Park, and took more acts of preparation. The planning is essential for an expedition to run safely and effectively. The participation phase which was the canoeing and witnessing the majestic sights, invigorating smells, feeling the burn and growth of our muscles as we paddled daily and did the physically demanding portages, as well as the three lessons we had prepared and taught. This also includes all of beautiful sights we had seen of the boreal forest, wetlands, rivers and lakes, wildlife, viewing golden sunrises and rainbow sunsets, star filled skies with the milky way, the moon, and Northern Lights overhead, the quaking aspen whispering ancient lullabies, cool breezes on warm sunny days, 800 yr. old pictographs, the smells and sounds of the interactive nature, the taste of the backcountry meals, and the all-encompassing experience of the trip from beginning to end. The final phase is the recollection and this take place when we meet at Horn Field Campus on December 10th to celebrate ECOEE 2013 with a banquet!

All in all, the backcountry experience was largely centered around the canoeing of the Grass river camping, and placing mental concentration on the experience. An important factor in our experience is that the natural world itself was the predominate fundamental focus to the recreation experience between nature and the individual interaction and appreciation. Along the way we learned ways to balance the health of the land and human usage with major ideals of conservation, preservation, and wise use. We practiced leave-no-trace which is minimal impact camping where we held all of our trash with us throughout the experience, tried not to damage any vegetation along the way and make it seem like no one was camping there in essence.

~ Norris Andriuskevicius

“Life is a song— sing it. Life is a game— play it. Life is a challenge— meet it. Life is a dream— realize it. Life is a sacrifice— offer it. Life is love— enjoy it.”

Sai Baba
Until Next Time...

Our next newsletter will include our adventures at:

Badlands National Park
National Outdoor Leadership School International Headquarters
Yellowstone National Park
NOLS Wilderness Risk Management Conference
Grand Teton National Park
and more!

Guess Who Answers… The ECOEE Crew

Norris & Dustin ran the wrong side of a rapid and made it
Emily was tricked into snipe hunting
Kevin thought there were wild cows in Canada
Shayla says “EWW!” very often
Tyler really loves Jeopardy

Quinn paddled Rosie Roxanne through the Grass River
Cassie makes great monkey bread
Kyle has worked at Philmont for the past 3 summers
Rogelio likes clean hands
Liz screams down rapids
Andrew has been paddling for 9 years