Places Visited

Iowa Nature Conservancy
Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Veedauwoo Rec Area
Lander, Wyoming
NOLS
Yellowstone National Park
Zion National Park
Honeycomb Rocks
Red Cliff Ascent
Yosemite National Park
Nature Bridge

What's happening in ECOEE 2014

This 2nd installment of the newsletter covers the front country portion of the four month expedition that we are all on. The front country involves no back country experiences or expeditions, we live out of two vans, a trailer, and our tents. In the front country we visit many different places that revolve around categories like outdoor education and adventure recreation. We visit state parks, national parks, private entities that specialize in some form of recreation or outdoor education, as well as non-profit organizations too. Front country is not easier or harder than back country, it has its challenges just as much as backcountry and just as many learning experiences.
Interpretation is connecting people to a resource, and encouraging them to care about it. That's what Jeff hammers home, anyways. We've been a fortunate group to experience some very educational interpretation. We've had four of our classmates present their interpretation topics, and Jeff has shown us what they did that we shouldn't (or should) do when the rest of the group gives theirs.

For example, we know that if you talk about a historical figure such as John Colter, it might be good for you to tell a story about him needing to use a fire steel to start a fire and how he needs to know a second language to talk with natives. Then your audience can relate better and their attention is kept. Using a slightly made up story to communicate is better than, say, just throwing in a hodge podge of John Colter tall tales.

One other thing that Jeff taught us about interpretation is to have the theme be a kind of punch line to the talk. He demonstrated this by saying that he was going to give us an example of interpretation and then proceeded to simply tell a very long-winded joke that ended with Jim Bridger stabbing himself with a fork. So I suppose that the only thing we could take away from that demonstration of Jeff being himself is that the theme should be something that sticks with you. Because since then everybody has been saying "boat won't float" on a daily basis. (The punch line was that Bridger’s skin couldn’t be used as a canoe since it had holes in it. Very funny, right?)

On our trip we have seen two interpretive trails and one talk. The trails were our first experience with rating informational signs and understanding how the quality of the trail and access affects guest experience. The talk we’ve seen was a night program about astronomy at Bryce Canyon National Park. As of yet, we have nothing to compare it to.

In conclusion, interpretation is increasingly become a bigger deal in our lives. We're seeing and talking about it more and more every day. Jeff continually tells us that it is connecting people and resources. Beyond that, we can't really trust him about interpretation, e.g. "boat won't float."
I grew up in a family with three older sisters, one mom, one dad, and a dog. I never thought about what went into the roof above my head, rarely did I think about the bills that needed to be paid, and of course I would go with my parents to the grocery store on occasion but I still didn’t give a whole lot of thought about what it cost to feed a family and a pet. ECOEE is not dissimilar to feeding and providing for a family. We drive around in our two white vans with all of our personal belongings, our stoves, sink, bedroom, and refrigerators in a duel axle white trailer. We all have our own shelf in the trailer, and there is a spot for everything else we have (even though we may not know exactly where it goes there is a home for it). Our bedroom is rolled up every day and put in its place. In order for our house to roll down the road with us, each of us had to prepare for approximately six months.

In the spring of this year each of us had duties to fulfill in order for the fall semester to go smoothly. Personally I’ve had to prepare a budget of approximately $60,000 with the help of Jeff Tindall the ECOEE coordinator and Cheyenne Wilson a fellow student. Most notably I have written a contract and payment addendum. The documents were very important in the beginning so that ECOEE could start collecting funds and students could have a sheet of paper to display their commitment to the program. As important as money is to get a program like this going that isn’t everything, as many of us have heard before. To have a house there needs to be structure, discipline, and values. ECOEE has its own religion and there are two books its followers must carry with them. On our first day Jeff gave us our bibles: the 2014 ECOEE course manual and the larger of the two white plastic Chinese made binders, the ECOEE 2014 journal. In the manual there is a surplus of information about group dynamics, hard skills like knots and fire building, and of course leadership tests. In the journal there are 120 blank pages that we are to fill with daily activities such as decision making, behaviors in the group, feedback for those who have taught, and of course personal reflections.

I do not envy the work my parents went through in raising me. They worked their hardest to provide me with the best they could so that I would not have to go without supper or have to come home to a dark house because the bills went unpaid. ECOEE has shown me just what needs to happen to make sure the roof stays strong above my head, or in this particular case the tent walls don’t leak.

“Keep yourself clean and bright, for you are the window in which you see the world”
A Movement in America by Cassidy Depoy

I have had several experiences climbing. I operate a climbing tower, high ropes course, and zip-line to name a few. I never turn down the opportunity to throw on a harness and reach as high as I can. Needless to say, I have had many experiences with heights but that did not prepare me for the rush of repelling 70 feet into a canyon carved out of sandstone. These wide stretches of red sandstone spires and valleys are a part of the wonder that draws those with an urge to hike and explore to the great state of Utah. Canyoneering, a form of repelling, is a popular tourism lure of recreation in the Bryce Canyon/Zion National Park area (if you’re into that whole “adrenaline” thing). With just a rope anchored to a tree or crevice in a rock face, our guides strapped us into harnesses and showed us in and around deep canyons with cave-like features, narrows, and 40 degree pools that required a nice swim to cross. It was an experience, that though fulfilling, I can still feel to this day. For those looking for a less dramatic experience in the canyons, Zion offers guided hikes, nature walks, and tours that show you the many sights of the park. All recreation in the park guides you through the preserved areas of land protected by the National Park Service.

Prior to the canyon adventures, we met with Christine, a concessions manager with Zion National Park. She met with us to discuss the many managing problems the park has faced over the decades, mainly pertaining to the issue of overcrowding. In my mind, too many people enjoying themselves in a park did not seem like such a bad thing. Zion actually entertains around 3 million visitors a year, the same amount of visitors to see Yellowstone each year—except less acreage. With this many people, dare to dream of a parking space or an empty bathroom. How can a small park like Zion manage so many people while still fulfilling their mission statement to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources for future generations?”

The recreation movement happening in America is shining a great light on our parks and bringing people from all over the world to experience the unharmed phenomena of nature. The reality behind managing these parks is disheartening; there is no area in these parks that go completely untouched or unimpaired by man. Even while exploring the canyons we ran into private parties and impacts left from previous users. Can we really experience nature in its natural beauty while pushing through a world of tripods and camera phones?

“The human spirit needs places where nature has not been rearranged by the hand of man.”
While on ECOEE we learn about the perspectives in Outdoor Recreation, which is a course designed to introduce us to the aspects of outdoor recreation and resource management. We become aware of topics and issues specific to the areas and agencies that we visit. While visiting Yellowstone National Park the realization of how much control humans have on the environment really hit hard. For almost 50 years bears they were the sight to see at Yellowstone. In 1888 park personnel recognized that the garbage piles in the park were attracting large quantities of bears as well as visitors. Once this was recognized they started promoting the viewing of the activity. Thousands of people were flooding into Yellowstone to see the bears feed at the garbage pile. Visitors of the park soon started to feed the bears themselves to try and get pictures with them. People were changing the natural habits of the bears; they were becoming dependent on humans for food.

Soon came the begging and destruction for food, because the bears were so heavily dependent on the steady food source. Bears were starting to break into kitchens and panhandle cars. From the years 1931-1969 there were 48 human injuries, 138 properties damaged, and 2 women killed by bears. It was quickly realized that the bear were a problem and needed to be managed. Park personnel started to relocate the bears, but they either returned or got into trouble elsewhere. Once this happened then were either taken to a zoo or killed.

People had been negatively impacting the natural habitat of these creatures for so long they did not know how to survive on there own, which decreased their population immensely. It wasn’t until the early 2000’s that conservation management realized that humans were the problem and not the bears. Conservation Management worked to educate visitors and taught the risks of feeding the bears. With that cub production and survival rate has increased drastically. My friend Jill introduced me to a quote that emphasizes how humans need to make a change and not try and change the inevitable:

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make”

– Jane Goodall
What Happened Here? By Cheyenne Wilson

During our travels through the awe inspiring, vast land of the west, we landed ourselves at Yellowstone National Park. There we were identifying between what a wholesome interpretation and an average interpretation was. We found our selves walking along self guided trails viewing geysers, mudpots, waterfalls, mud volcanoes, etc... along with interpretive signs. Interpretative signs help communicate specific messages to visitors. The messages can be written to change behavior, educate, or evoke an emotion within the reader and are almost always mounted so they are visible to all viewers.

The interpretive signs that we were reading were interpreting the attractions; history, geology, unique attributes, and stories. They displayed a combination of well-written text and professional pictures to relay the message to the park visitor. This is a helpful strategy for any person, so they are better equipped to relate the text to the attraction.

There are many reasons why I like interpret signs along self-guided trails, besides just listening to a ranger interpret for you. These interpretive signs are helpful in conveying a consistent message to many people at one time and can be viewed at convenience. The signs are also in place at all times and available to visitors 24 hours each day. An interpretive guide cannot always provide you with those options. There are some negatives about the interpret signs though. They are rarely as personal or near as effective as a interpretive guide and the signs are very vulnerable to damage. The biggest problem with interpretive signs is there are no interpretive guides to help you be more consciously aware of risks to the environment. The interpretive signs draw attention to fragile resources, which can result in damage or destroyed through deceptive behavior.

Overall I feel more equipped to understand the foundations of interpretations and specific techniques for effective interpretive program designs. What each interpretation needs is to engage the audience with a few key components. They need to have sensory involvement, using your senses to build a bridge to the visitor. Interpretation is a unique art.
This summer before I left for this four month expedition, I attended the Global Leadership Summit with my parents. I distinctly remember taking a walk with my mother during the afternoon break for lunch at the Summit. We talked about the speakers we had heard so far that day and what our big takeaways had been. We began to talk about education (one of my mom’s favorite topics to discuss) and the issues that our current education system is experiencing and the disservice that it does to students who do not fit within its narrow mold. As we talked about how we see these problems, but do not know what to do about them, I realized that I know of a solution. Throughout the prep courses for ECOEE last spring, we discussed the concept of outdoor education. While I did not have all the answers then, I could feel the idea beginning to take root.

Outdoor education takes a more holistic approach to teaching and learning, covering cognitive, physical, behavioral, social and spiritual domains. Putting the student in direct contact with the resource they are studying, outdoor education strives to make real connections and teach through experience. Throughout our travels on ECOEE, we have visited several Outdoor Education facilities. Although, as a formal practice, outdoor education is a relatively new field, what I saw happening at places like Sarett Nature Center and Bradford Woods was incredible. Seeing those places and what they are doing made me want to find a way to buy up my old Girl Scout camp and create an outdoor education facility of my own! I want to be a part of this educational revolution, to help people realize the immense value of outdoor education, as well as its potential benefits and outcomes, which far surpass those of a traditional classroom experience. I know that ECOEE is where I am meant to be. I am attaining the knowledge and skills I need to transform this seed into a tree.

Cold Canyon Sonny Day by Josh Baughman

Personally canyoneering was the most fun I have had so far on this trip. Our guide Sonny helped it to be this way with his laid back yet enthusiastic personality. Sonny explained to us that even though we and anyone else who hires him on as a guide comes to have fun, safety and risk management is first and foremost. Without risk management no one would be left to do these fun things because we would all have many broken extremities. Though he kept risk management in mind while we did all these fun descents through the red, orange, and yellow sandstone canyons, he easily managed to keep fun at the forefront as well. When we were found guilty of risky behavior he called us out for it and reminded us that if we had groups out in the canyons like he had us, it would be a tedious and lengthy process of evacuating us if an easy practice of risk management was ignored. The day was bright and sunny and the canyon was illuminated by it, but not low enough to have a temperature impact on us unfortunates on the floor of the canyon. We tread through cold water getting from one descent to the next and with no sunlight dry and warm our bodies we got cold, but not cold enough to become a problem. At the end we had a pitch we had to climb up to get out of the canyon, we reached a spot where we didn’t know where to go from. Sonny made us think, weighing the risks and posing possibilities by assessing our groups abilities and skills. As a group we talked out our options and Sonny guided us through our decision of which routes we decided to take. In the end we made it out unscathed and with a better mind about managing risks in the backcountry of an adventure recreation setting.
In life, parents often try to protect their children from making the same mistakes they did. Just as often, it becomes clear that in order to learn, children must make certain mistakes for themselves. So it has been, from generation to generation. Some lessons just need to be learned the hard way. Therefore, experiential education can be described as the first (and perhaps even best) type of education. People have been learning through experience since the beginning of human existence. Yet, we have strayed away from this model of learning in favor of straight rows of desks, standardized tests and a one-size-fits-all style of teaching.

With the formal school system discarding experiential education, it took root in a different area: adventure recreation. Camps and adventure programs like Outward Bound embraced the power of experiential learning to develop the whole person and promote collaboration and problem-solving. When Outward Bound came to America in the 1960s, Paul Petzoldt, who was instrumental in the formation of ECOEE, saw a need for training the leaders of these adventure recreation programs. Petzoldt created the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) with this exact purpose in 1965, to develop leadership skills in a wilderness setting. Since then, the value of adventure recreation as a backdrop for leadership development has taken root in many programs.

The first backpacking trip I ever went on was a program associated with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Amongst teaching many outdoor living skills like hanging bear bags and lighting stoves, the week-long trip also included leadership lessons on group development and team building. While on the road, ECOEE visited NOLS’ headquarters in Lander, Wyoming. NOLS offers month-long courses that cultivate leadership skills in a wilderness setting. They offer a variety of adventure activities including kayaking, canoeing, mountaineering and rock climbing. The Wilderness Education Association (WEA) is another organization I have heard a lot about because of its close ties to ECOEE. They offer courses of a similar length to NOLS, focusing on leadership and teaching in the outdoors.

But, of all these programs, some that I have been a part of and others that I have only observed or heard about, ECOEE is in a league of its own. I’m not trying to be biased, although I may well be… But, no other program I have encountered matches ECOEE in length (We’re travelling for 4 months!), intensity (For the first time, I actually have to deal with interpersonal conflicts because I cannot get away from them.) or depth of knowledge (We are constantly learning, and all of it is experiential.). It truly is a one-of-a-kind opportunity.

“I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees.” – Henry David Thoreau

“What we must learn to do, we learn by doing.” – Aristotle

Leading the Way by Jillian Ross

“I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees.” – Henry David Thoreau

“What we must learn to do, we learn by doing.” – Aristotle

Jillians Amsel Adams recreation from Inspiration point
Ever since we pulled off of the Missinaibi we haven’t had any more backcountry experiences. It has all been front country thus far, and I must say it has been quite a change in gears. The backcountry showed us all what skills we need and what social characteristics must exist for a group to be cohesive. Though we are in the front country now, we have other things that we are learning that will help us progress in the field of Outdoor Recreation. Now that we are in the front country we have visited a number a different places that have opened our eyes to what goes into running a recreation, park, or tourism business and how those things are implemented. One of the biggest and most educational places we visited and learned about was Zion National Park. While there we learned about how big a problem overcrowding in a park can be and how no other parks are dealing with these problems on the same scale as Zion. With overcrowding comes a whole new system and structure for an organization to operate under. Things like reservations 3 months in advance for campsites and quotas for certain backcountry hikes, shuttles that take you around the park because there just isn’t enough parking for individuals cars, and strict permit rules that help regulate the overcrowding issues in Zion. One thing that stuck out the most from our visit with some of the staff at Zion was the inside joke all of them had about some certain “Toilet Paper Flowers” that were notorious in the park. One of the big problems with the overcrowding is the lack of bathrooms suitable for the numbers of visitors which Zion is hosting. Because of this, people are going off trails to go potty, not only making social trails which is detrimental to the park but they are leaving their toilet paper where they do their business which then either ends up blowing around the park or sticking in one spot deeming it a toilet paper flower. Another problem was dealing with the relationship between people interacting with each other and the park trying to find out whether or not the visitors were ok with seeing so many people on a trail at one time. All these things go into planning and operating programs and organizations, and all of which we are learning extensively more about.

“It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live”
- Dumbledore
Professional Visit to NOLS by Kenny Bambini

We have arrived to the half-way point of our incredible journey and all I can think about is how fortunate we are to learn in an up in your face experience. Learning in the classroom can’t come close to what we’re doing in this program. Experiential learning to me is the most effective way of learning anyone can do, it makes you think and do instead of sitting in a seat and hearing about it. One of the awesome things about Environmental Conservation Outdoor Education Expedition is that we get to meet with professionals in the field ranging from outdoor leaders to outdoor therapeutic workers working with people with disabilities and troubled teens. We went to NOLS which is the National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander, Wyoming there we met with the wonderful Elyse. From there she led us on a tour of the place starting with their hotel where the students traveling from far out stay. The next stop was their warehouse that housed all their equipment. She showed us how instructors help the students organize the gear they need for their chosen class they may attempt and how the process works. Soon after we ventured into the ration pulling area where we all were like HOLY MOLY because what they get on NOLS is like steak slowly cooked over a slow burning fire in Texas. Ok that might've been too far but their process and organization with ration pulling was top notch. Rounding out our day there we got to see how the program ran from the inside out ranging from the computer men to people branching out calls from around the world. Overall our experience at NOLS was amazing we met many amazing people with likenesses to us. Hopefully one of us can go back and make a difference working there.
Planning ECOEE together as a group has alone taught us about the management and logistics of outdoor adventure recreation. With the help from Jeff and Tiffany we all have our part in the group by taking care of our committee work. Anthony and I make up the Risk Management committee so we both have some hands on experience with the preparation of preventing risks before going into the field. That is only one part of developing a plan for outdoor adventure recreation. To show our understanding of all the parts of adventure recreation we will be planning our very own ten day backcountry course with seven students. One of main professional visits for this class was our visit to NOLS, the National Outdoor Leadership School. They have buildings and departments working on the logistics of their trips. It was helpful for us to see everything we have been learning about being put into action. Elyse Guarino gave us a tour of all the buildings that make planning their trips so efficient.

We started at the Noble Hotel where the students and instructors stay. We then went to Rocky Mountain base where all the gear is stored and distributed to the students. If students do not have the correct gear with them they can rent or buy gear from the NOLS store. The NOLS store also has a repair room with all the tools and staff to repair broken gear. A big component of risk management is prevention; it is dangerous to take a group out if just one person doesn’t have the right gear or if their gear needs repair.

On the far end of the Rocky Mountain base is the gulch, where students and instructors pull rations (food for the backcountry). The staff is working behind the rations to make sure that the students and instructors are eating nutritiously while on their course. Certain nutrients needed on a course can depend on the duration of the course, the season and the type of course. The staff buying the rations should always have budget in mind; for example if a certain food is not being pulled very often and it is an expensive purchase then it is not logical to keep buying that food.

Risk Management and Budget are just two elements of the planning process needed for an outdoor adventure trip. It was an excellent learning experience seeing these two components working in action and I will use some of the skills I learned at NOLS to plan my own ten-day backcountry course.

“Numbing the pain for a while will make it worse when you finally feel it.”
Since the dawn of humans the outdoors has been something to retreat and take shelter from. Our delicate bodies don’t handle the elements like a deer or rabbit’s body does. This means that we have to know how to survive in Mother Nature’s unforgiving world. The outdoors today has become something that can be totally avoided on a day to day basis if you so choose to. We can eat, sleep, and live out our whole lives indoors with only the occasional inconvenience of having to experience the outdoors between the car and work or the dorm and class. This, as most of you should already know, is not what ECOEE is about. We will have experienced more of the outdoors in our four short months on this program than, I feel, a lot of people will ever experience in their entire lifetimes. This is why educating each other about the out of doors is so crucial to becoming outdoor leaders. Just like how a teacher knows what's in his or her classroom an outdoor leader knows as much about his or her classroom which is, the out or doors.

Each member of our expedition has a topic about the outdoors that they must teach the rest of us. It is their responsibility to educate their peers about these various subjects which include, but, are not limited to trees, habitats and homes, geology, astronomy, plant communities, biomes and ecosystems, and birds just to name a few. These subjects are planned out and taught through an into lesson, grasshopper lessons, and a final lesson which will be taught in Baja California. So far I have learned a lot about the outdoors from my fellow expedition members that I know I can apply to situations in the future when I am perhaps leading a group of people in the outdoors or just simply on a weekend camping trip with my friends. Things like what plants I can eat and what plants will kill me if I try to eat them, or, what animal poop I am looking at so I know what animals to watch out for, or, what stars I am looking at so that I can find my way at night. It’s these outdoor skills and knowledge sets that we are all going to benefit from one way or another in the future and it’s all thanks to the structure and goals of RPTA 444.
Dark and difficult times lie ahead. Soon we must all face the choice between what is right and what is easy.

As an outdoor recreation major, learning about different perspectives of outdoor recreation and aspects of the field allows for me to form my own perspectives based off information from credible sources. Since our journey out west has begun we have had numerous professional visits, and some of which were focused on outdoor perspectives. While at Yellowstone National Park we met with Christina, an employee of the administrative office, and discussed the topic of winter use, snowmobiling for the public, at Yellowstone. This topic demonstrates different perspectives because it is currently one of the most controversial issues occurring in the park today, and has been going on for years. The issue is that the park has two groups of people to please, two responsibilities to fulfill, and those two groups want two completely different things. Each group with their own perspective on the situation. The two different groups are the business group and the environmental group. The issue occurring between these two groups is that the business side is for the local shops and the park to make money in order to get by, and on the environmental side it is the concern of not taking care of the park. Yellowstone has made many attempts to please both sides but always end up getting sued by the opposite end. It seems as if no matter what you do, you cannot make everyone happy. Abe Lincoln was right with his quote, “you can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you cannot please all of the people all of the time”. As of now Yellowstone is proposing the idea of meeting in the middle with a method of using minimal impact methods and plenty of regulations to try assure both sides that their concerns will be met but I am with Abe on this on and I am sure not everyone will be happy with it.
When driving through southern Utah this week we stopped in Enterprise, Utah, the home of Red Cliff Ascent Wilderness Therapy. A place where troubled teens can get some help. The age run from 13-18 years old and they also have a Adult program. Throughout the program the teens are given a workbook and with every phase that they complete they are given a reward, items such as an osprey backpack, nicer sleeping bag, and a bunch of other gear that is there once they complete the program and graduate. Students are also never given matched to start a fire they are to use other methods to start fires. With this there is a lot of behind the scenes planning that go on between the head instructors, and instructors and people back at the office delivering gear and food twice a week. When something comes up the instructors call into the office and they make the drive out to the field to deliver what each group needs. Every night each group is required to tell the office of their location so they are aware where they are. They also have a excellent risk management plan if the electable does occur and they need to help call in the helicopter they can do so. Someone is in the office 24/7 to help out when this does occur and they can be on the road within minutes of an incident. The Head instructors also build amazing relationships between the teens when they are in the backcountry, and they also get to see them grow from when they first entered the program to when the graduate from the program. They also have to think on there feet when it comes to tough decisions about where to take the teens and how to react in certain situations.
This past week when we were camping at Zion National Park we got to experience what canyoneering is all about. When most of us woke up that chilly morning we really didn’t have any idea of what to expect out of what really going to happen out of all of it. All we really knew was the definition that we looked up about canyoneering in the vans the previous days, pretty much that we will be climbing rocks and repelling, but it was so much different than what I expected walking up to the canyon. The instructors Sonny, and Tonya really knew what they were doing, and made us think about every move that we were making in the canyon. They didn’t let us lazily go through the canyon without thinking about what was going to happen if we took a wrong step off a rock the incorrect way. After our first repel into the canyon Sonny talked to the group and told us if anyone gets hurt it's pretty gosh darn difficult to get you out of here so please pay attention to where you are stepping. When we would do something wrong he would tell us what we had done wrong and what could happen if we stepped the wrong way. When we were repelling we were constantly reassured that we were safe. Which really made us all fell safe when we were in a situation like that. Let just say repelling was an amazing experience I will never forget in my life. The rush you get when you get to the bottom of a repel and look back up and see what you have just done is something that is unexplainable, and tough to explain. Though it is well worth it. I can’t wait till the next time I get to experience something like that again.

“Just think about how far you’ve already come before you think of giving up.”
This is the stretch on our expedition where a lot of travelling is done, ultimately providing a lot of opportunities to get homework, lessons, teachable moments, and all of that great stuff checked off the never ending list of school work. Interpretation of cultural and environmental resources is an interesting class adding to that list of school work, and it is all about making connections. When giving an interpretation the goal is to make a connection for the audience to the resource. Throughout our travels out west we are at the point where we have seen a few professional interpretations and are now presenting our topics that we chose last spring. Each and every presentation that is given by someone in the group is different, but always enjoyable because there’s something pleasing about seeing your friend in a different mind-set, a professional mind-set for that matter. We travel a lot and meet plenty of professional agencies and present ourselves with good uniform and manner but it is different watching a peer present their topic. To me that is connecting the audience to the resource. The audience is all of the group, aside from whoever is presenting of course, and the resource for each presentation is growing as a person. Each presentation is followed that night by feedback, feedback from the whole group, and then more feedback from the wise old man Jeff. This process is where growth happens. One of the most important thing I have learned on this expedition so far is that evaluations and feedback is the only way to regulate how you are doing in situations and the more honest the better. Tough love is better than no love, and will create a stronger, better, and more prepared person. Interpretation is connecting this expedition to life beyond ECOEE.
As John Muir would say, the mountains are calling so we must go...

and keep following us on our blog at:

ecoee2014.blogspot.com

Take the Long Way Home