

ECOEE 2007 NEWSLETTER  
1<sup>st</sup> Edition

Journal Entry 8-14-07

-Alex Barajas

The first full day is done and over with. And all I can say is THANK GOODNESS! My calves are aching from running. My brain hurts from all the thinking. But at least we ate well. I ask myself "Why am I complaining on the first day?" Alex, you just finished a 12-week internship working a minimum of 40 hours a week. SUCK IT UP MAN!!

Honestly though, I am grateful for leaving one gorgeous place to go on a once in a lifetime trip with 14 other people that I genuinely couldn't trade for anyone else. After meeting up with everyone after the summer I felt like the Beach Boys when they said, "I'm picking up good vibrations." I really do believe that this trip is going to be full of memories, laughs, stories and of course QUALITY!

Quotes

- And forget not that the Earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. – Kahlil Gibran
- Nothing lives long, only the Earth and the mountains. – Dee Brown, Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee.

**Those who talk do not know. Those who know do not talk. – Lao Tzu**

Water In The Outdoors

-Michael Evert

Learning to become a good teacher can be a hard thing to do. Over my past 16 years of school I have been the one sitting in desks, classrooms and lecture halls listening to what teachers have

thrown in front of me. Now those desks have turned. On ECOEE I am the teacher, though I cannot be the only one and that is true. Every Esonian is the know all guru in their outdoor education and Interpretation field. Before the start of Ecoee we were all given choices of topics to choose from. From these topics we would teach the group the ins and outs of our final decision. To splash right into it, my outdoor education choice was wetlands. Why wetlands you say? Ever since I was a young boy growing up in good old Cambridge Illinois, I have always been fascinated with water. I love all water from the gentle streams and rivers to the ever so stretching lakes and oceans. There is something about the smooth flowing current that sends you back to another time, where only you and the gentle sounds of crashing water can be heard. Only just a couple days back I was able to rest by a stream with beautiful flowing rapids that could put a person to sleep. So, that's just what I did. When I arose from my water-induced catnap, I said to myself I would love to teach the group about streams and rivers. I feel everyone can experience a moment like this whether it is sitting next to a pond, lake or even a tiny creek in your backyard. If one day you get the chance to do this watch, listen and examine how gracefully the water moves over the rocks or how gentle the sound of water can be. Watch for wildlife taking a drink of the nourishing water or fish playfully swimming around in the silent pools. Just remember that when the water is choppy and wavy at times or even

just a couple of ripples by the end of the night everything is all calm again. So when doing what you are doing, sit back relax and tell yourself everything is going to be ok.

### Teton Outdoor Science School

By Dale Maxson

There was frost on our tents. The day started out as one of our first frigid nights on the road. We stayed at a campsite outside of Jackson Hole, looking up at the Grand Teton. I can't explain the mountains with words, but I will try to explain the events of the day.

After waking, seeing a couple moose, a buffalo and going through the routine of breakfast, we headed out to Teton Outdoor Science School. We were to visit the school to learn more about their program. Most of us weren't really sure what to expect, which seems to be the case with most of our activities (this is a good thing). When we arrived the executive director greeted us and he proceeded to tell us all there is to know about the school. The main theory of the school is this: The classroom wasn't designed by teachers, it was designed by engineers trying to fit people into a space. The outdoors makes for a much better classroom, especially when you are learning about your natural surroundings. Another idea they employed is that everything is connected, and should be taught that way. For instance, the sagebrush that grows so well in Teton country has adapted to tolerate harsh conditions. How much water does the plant actually receive? How much is retained? If

every sage plant operates that way, how much water is being held in 1 acre? What animals feed off of it? I can keep going, but I am already pushing the limits of redundancy already ;)

I liked this way of thinking and teaching. It is hard to learn when you don't see how it applies to you. What makes algebra and chemistry relevant to you?

I think this is a good way to think about life. Always be looking for how the world relates to you. If you can't find a relation between yourself and the lizard you see on the rock, study it until you do; maybe you can learn something from that reptile. Sometimes I like to pretend that I'm the Gila Monster being studied, but that is a different story for a different time. Happy Trails.

Ryan McLaughlin

### A Mixed Bag

We have only visited two outdoor education facilities but Teton Outdoor Science School left quite an impression on me. When I viewed their facilities and read their mission statement, it felt like a place I would enjoy being a part of. Located in Jackson, Wyoming, this school offers a wide range of programs from expedition trips to a graduate program; but the one I wish to most involved would be their k-12 journey school. The school is an intricate mix of place based learning and a traditional learning environment. A relatively small school, only 220 students, it feels very personal. I felt a deep connection with the leader of the school right from the moment we

talked, this is an institution I want to involved with.

Teton Outdoor Science School or TOSS, started in the early 1960's by a teacher who believed that children who lived in a certain environment should be involved with that environment. He started by offering day trips for public school kids to learn how the science they learned in the classroom translated to the natural environment. This small ambition has expanded into a multi-million dollar facility with three campuses and 6 different programs. TOSS has a dedication to its' students and its' employees.

As I mentioned previously, the personal commitment is evident in every aspect of the school. I was raised with a deep love of history. Both of my grandfathers were aficionados of historical fact. This instilled with me a great passion for it and it has always been my strongest subject in school. When I got to college, I made it my major. I wasn't sure whether or not I should teach it, but I did know I could get a degree in it. When I decided to go on E. C. O. E. E., my dad laughed at me because he said, "What is somebody gonna do with a history major and an adventure recreation minor?" TOSS has given me an answer to that question. TOSS' philosophy is integration all subjects with nature. E. C. O. E. E. has provided me with an opportunity to do just that. If I had my choice right now, this is what I would do. There is still a lot left to see, and I'm still pretty young, but I am still going to send in an application. We'll talk to all you fine

folks soon; we'll see if I've changed my mind yet.

Looking back on the National Parks (N.P.) that we have visited I can see many similarities and differences between the parks. The national parks that we have visited so far were the Badlands, Wind Cave, Grand Teton, and Yellowstone N.P.

All of the N.P. that we have visited were beautiful. The Badlands looked like it sunk into the earth only to make these great depressions into the ground. The Grand Teton seemed they were pushed up out of the ground by some great force because the surrounding area was flat as a pancake. Yellowstone by far was the greatest place that we visited. Most of the trees in the park were destroyed by the fire in 1988 that burned over half the parks forest, but now there are small lodge poles, ferns, and other conifers that are reaching their limbs to the sky. Seeing the geysers, hot springs, and fumaroles boil and erupt was amazing. Then being inside a giant volcanic caldron was something unthinkable.

Our first interpretation program happened at the Badlands. The Ranger who led our group was rich in knowledge, but not very knowledgeable about the area unless he kept on his own topic. This is something to keep in mind when comparing other interpretation at other N.P.

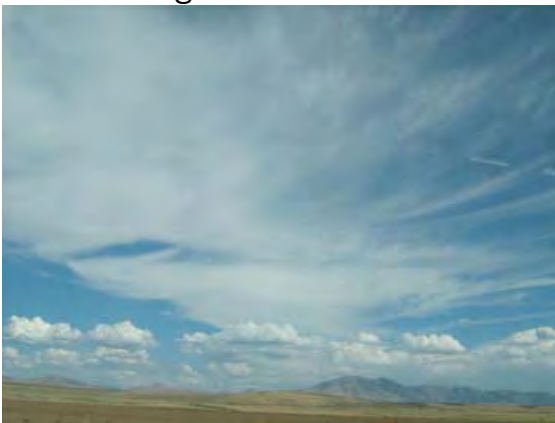
Wind Cave was an excellent interpretative program. The ranger knew what he was talking about, and when asked questions he would

always answer back immediately. He was also an avid explorer of wind cave which gave him a good knowledge base about the cave system.

At the Grand Teton we went to the visitor center and it was great. It was new and very large with great information with windows pointed towards the Tetons.

The Yellowstone visitor centers were hit and miss. We either went to a visitor center shack or the newest visitor at that N.P. that was interactive with the public. All and all I now know what a excellent and horrible visitor center look like.

~Greg Rolf



### Journal Entry 8-16-07

All you have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to you.

-Gandolf- Lord of the Rings

Jeff, Jennie, Cody, Mikey, Al, Alpine, Dan, Brian, Bets, Tank, Greg, Dave, and Buck. And this is my family.

So, at din din today I told my table about eating six saltines in one minute. With their best efforts, Al and Brian tried but quickly found out that it wasn't as easy as they thought. I enjoyed the laughs as we recorded them trying and love the characteristic of a male of having

to do something for themselves to see if they could do it.

Tonight is our last night to see friends before leaving. I wasn't too fond of the idea in the beginning but later I understood where Jeff was coming from and why he gave us the freedom. Most people went into town while others hung out around Horn. Brit and I built a fire while Buck played the guitar, soon joined by Dan. As the night went on, others come back and collectively started a sweet little jam session. Not only do I enjoy working with each student on ECOEE but love being in their presence and just hanging out together. I find such quality extraordinary.

As for the group, I believe we are ready to leave on Sunday (banking that the van will be here). I can only hope that we will continue to work hard as we have this week.

Well, I will stop for now and gladly hand over the journal to the next kiddie.

Peace,

Nj+

Oh how the tables have turned! A job I previously saw as being quite simple is actually much harder than it looks. The job I am referring to is that of being a teacher, more specifically an outdoor education teacher. Trying to create outlines and lesson plans on the road and fitting them into the many different locations we visit can be overwhelming. The topic I chose to teach is the night sky, a topic I had previously known very little about. I tried to prepare as much as I could over the summer prior to our departure, but it seems

like no matter what we did to we all came to a realization that we are drastically under prepared. Not to say that our goals for teaching will not be accomplished, well at least I can speak for myself in regards to that. I am putting everything I have into this experience and I know that I can succeed. My goal is to teach my fellow Econians how to use the moon, the stars, and even the sun to find their way, even if they do not have a map or compass handy. By teaching them some very interesting constellations, they will eventually be able to pick out the cardinal directions: North, South, East, and West. My first lesson will be over the North sky as it is filled with constellations that are present all year round. But what if the North sky is not visible or blocked, you may ask. Well, this is why I plan on using the moon, the sun, and other specific constellations as references to the other cardinal directions. This will prove to be more of a challenge as these objects in the sky are not fixed like the constellations in the North sky, but what would ECOEE be without a challenge? My brain will be pushed and stretched beyond all previous limits. Combine this with the physical and emotional challenges of three months on the road with the same fifteen people and we have the mixings for a stew of experiences. I am in no way shape or form regretting my decision to join this expedition but in fact even more sure that this was the right decision as time slides on by. As hard as it may be at times, I think to myself that I could be stuck in a classroom in Macomb and my

anxiety soon fades. This truly is a once in a lifetime experience and I will take advantage of every minute I am out here. I love you mom and dad!!!

-Dan L.

Reflection of ECOEE 2007



### Thus Far...

“Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained.” It is the motto for this generation of ECOEE students, and allow me to say that we have already done our fair share of venturing and much has already been gained. We have already hit three national parks and have listened to more talks than I can recall. I have personally been bombarded with more information than I could ever hope to remember.

We left Horn August 17 and since then we have been continually on the go. Our first stop was Ponca, Nebraska where we visited Jenny Tindal’s parents and we were off that next morning to Nebraska’s west side. We then methodically hit the Badlands, Wind Cave, Mount Rushmore, Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park and

all that those historical sites imply. Yes, we got to see Old Faithful, Half Dome, and El Capitan, but we also saw some of the less known areas and items found in these amazing areas. Box work from Wind cave, Devil's thumbnail in Yellowstone, and Lambert Dome in Yosemite.

We currently reside at Summit Adventures in Bass Lake, California, and we are making preparations for our 28 days in the back country but instead of frustrations and battles breaking out among our group, everyone is still laughing and enjoying each others company. Any item is only as good as the sum of its parts and the people that make up the parts of ECOEE are all very valuable. We have been on the road for nearly a month now and I can honestly say that it has been the craziest, yet most interesting month of my life.

Believe it or not the people you see and experience these assume sites and adventures with are far more important than the sites alone. If the trip ended today my fondest memories wouldn't be seeing Old Faithful, or watching people climb El Capitan, it would be fighting a forest fire together or climbing Lambert Dome with the group. (Yes those are horrible cliffhangers but I'm sure those stories will come out eventually)

Already so many stories and the big challenges are still to come!

Until next time  
Daniel Buren (Alpine)

Journal Entry 8-21-07

Chadron, Nebraska to Badlands National Park

Michael Evert

Today was one action packed day, from a Wal-mart shuffle to a Indian war scuffle.

We started the morning leaving Chadron State Park for another grand adventure making badlands the mark.

In the van the books flew open, some are just reading some are just looking.

We stopped for lunch at Walgreen pond, We had to move fast couldn't stay for to long.

Before we knew, there was Wounded Knee, A story to share an interp to see.

I'll end this poem for it's real rough, but one thing to remember is the sunset at dusk.

This poem may be sloppy but I felt today was a great day to put in rhyme and wait for my journal entry the next time.

- later Mike

Brittany Dunleavy

Over the last few weeks we've all been very busy. Believe it or not sitting in vans all day can be very tiring. While we've been traveling the country ECOEE has had the amazing opportunity to meet with other professionals in our field. Some of the places that we've stopped at are NOLS, Voorhis Viking camp, Camp Norwesca, and Summit.

The places that I've enjoyed the most have been the camps. When I grow up (ha ha) I would love to work at or run my own camp,

mainly in the area of activity programming. Camp Norwesca was an interesting camp tucked away in western Nebraska. The campus was settled amongst the hills and very picturesque. Even though Norwesca is owned and operated by the United Methodist church, the camp still accepts secular and other denominations in their little camp. What I thought was the most interesting was the big water slide that they set up once every summer. Picture a big tarp set-up on top of a large steep hill, with hoses that run the water to the tarp. That's a pretty good idea of what the water slide is like.

The other camp that we've visited along the way is Voorhis Viking camp, a camp for youth at risk. This camp is a subsidiary of the Boys and Girls club out of Los Angeles. This camp is truly unique, for one thing, there isn't programming at all. The kids go along and make up what they want to do. They go camping, hiking, fishing and they even go on day trips all over the county. I think the reason that I loved that camp so much was because of the passion that Clay, the executive director, had for all of the boys that come through the camp. One of the things that he said that really stuck out to me was "Once the boys and girls become part of our family, there always in our family, no matter what." I could really tell that Clay meant what he was saying.

The kind of passion that I saw in Clay, is the kind of thing that makes me feel like I know why I got into this profession. The effect that Voorhis had on the kids was very

apparent. They all respected him, and hardly ever talked back to him. I love watching camps in action and learning more and more about them. I can only hope that when I become more involved that my enthusiasm reaches kids as much as Clays has.



### Reaction Reflection

Natalie Jackson

There is something very unique about learning on the road that cannot be compared to going to school and attending class. Instead of reading about different outdoor education and adventure programs in text books, ECOEE gets to visit a select few first hand and catch a glimpse of what they have to offer.

On our way to Teton National Park, we visited The Teton Outdoor Science School in Jackson Hole, Wyoming for a day and met with Executive Director, Jack Shea. He welcomed us to the school and took us into the lobby to introduce us to the program and answer any questions we had. He began to tell us about the history and how a high school teacher wanted to get students out of the classroom and into nature forty years ago. It ended up as a private, non-profit school composed of six innovative

programs that serve those from kindergarten to graduate students to senior citizens and is primarily focused on scientific and environmental education. Their thinking is keeping the education “place-based,” that way students are directly interacting with the subjects their learning about, making the location for the school a key component to its success.

The numerous programs create many ways for people to get involved and learn about biology and geology, and they are Educational Programs, Journey School, Wildlife Expeditions, Teacher Learning Center, Graduate Program, and Conservation Research Center. Each one taking a specific role in educating students under their mission statement; people, nature, place, education. Although they have exceptional facilities with essentially normal classrooms, they take students out into the field for class. For example, the Wildlife Expeditions take students out into nature and allow them to observe natural history and learn to appreciate their surroundings.

Besides their awesome programs, the school buildings were very impressive and are held at high standard to keeping their grounds “green.” From solar power, more windows for natural light, floor heating, no janitors (people pick up after themselves), and walls made from recycled material, the school is trying to create a trend for other schools. These are only a couple of examples but they were financially able to accomplish their

vision of a “green” school and keep it looking beautiful.

The Teton Outdoor Science School was impressive with their extensive programs, great location, and resourceful facilities but they also had something there that money couldn’t buy, passion. Jack Shea ended up talking to us for a while, giving us a glimpse of what it took to get the school on its feet and how it has excelled and expanded. His passion was very apparent when he spoke and you could see it in the employers who also worked there. The attention to detail and uniqueness was inspiring with the older students who had to walk a couple of blocks to get to school, this way they were given a chance to look around and admire nature before they went inside. Also, the classrooms were built with large windows not only to cut down on electricity but to give students’ eyes a chance to wonder outside. If I were to ever start my own outdoor education school or camp, paying attention to small aspects like those are ideas I’ll remember.

Overall, The Teton Outdoor Science School was inspirational and I would love to go back again in the future. Visiting a school that teach people about the wilderness, how it works, and why we need to take care of our resources is something we need more of in the world.

Making a Difference

Cody Haars

We’ve visited many camps now and we will visit at least three more, but Voorhis Viking is the camp that has had the greatest impact on me

personally. From just visiting this camp I want to and hopefully next summer will volunteer at the camp and see how I like working there. Voorhis takes Latino boys and some girls and through the Boys and Girls Club of America and they get them back to nature instead of on the streets where there are gangs; who are their influence at this age of 13 and up. Voorhis takes kids from 14 and up but does make exceptions. Not every kid that goes through the program stops being in a gang but not all gangs are bad. Many are just for fellowship and feeling like you are a part of something.

But nonetheless, Voorhis makes kids responsible and respectful and helps them to be functional in the real world without a gang. I was really impressed with the camp. A 70 year old Caucasian man is the main director of the camp and the camp is composed of 95% Latino kids. What impresses me most though is the respect between the kids and the director. It is obvious that the camp is effective just by visiting for one day, I could tell. And I hope to volunteer at the camp in the summer of '08. I would love to be apart of something that makes such an impact of so many people's lives. I am definitely a person of service and I plan on being in the service industry my whole life and this camp reminds me why. It really makes me remember what I am trying to be like and accomplish in my lifetime. It made me feel good about myself just doing the one day visit there. The kids were very excited to see us. They demonstrated these feelings through breakfast

especially but the whole day they just talked our ears off. We just spent the whole day playing games and having fun with the kids and also seeing what they do on a day to day basis. That is when we weren't talking business with the director. This is definitely one of those places I will have to think about spending some of my life at.



Alex Barajas  
RPTA 240  
9/5/07

#### In My Place

I never camped when I was a kid. Up until I was eighteen, I traveled with my family every summer to Mexico. I had friends that used to stay at summer camps and I always used to wonder what they were all about. Seeing and visiting family was an important value that kept me from experiencing that. I would never trade my enjoyable summers when I was a child to go back and find out

first hand what a summer at camp would feel like, I am just glad that ECOEE is giving an opportunity to find out for myself what camps are made up of.

One of the camps that stick out in my mind is a place Voorhis Viking. Voorhis is not like other camps. It is a camp for children who live in gang communities and whose parents are incarcerated. Ninety percent of the campers who go to Voorhis are Latinos from the El Monte area in California. We arrived the night before we were supposed to have a meeting with them and the Executive Director, Clayton, let us stay at their facility. It was not until the morning that I started to get a mix of emotions about the place. I think the one emotion I felt the most was ashamed because a couple of the children were saying some disrespectful and vulgar words amongst themselves and it was loud enough for everyone to hear. I am the only minority on ECOEE and I am a Latino. To see children of the same race act and said things that is ill mannered really made me feel uncomfortable in front of my colleagues.

I started to think what if my parents had to moved to an area like El Monte. Would I of turned out just like the kids I met at Voorhis? Joining gangs, stealing cars or picking fights. That is not me and what values I was brought up with. The more the day went on at Voorhis, I felt grateful to have the parents that I do and what they instilled in me to become what I am today. I am also appreciative of being surrounded by such well-

hearted people on this semester long expedition to inspire me to grow as an individual. I know who I am and what my background is. I am thankful that my equals look at me as that – an equal. Another identical part of the group called ECOEE.

Journaling is something that I've never been too big on. When I thought of journaling I thought of a girl writing in her diary. When I knew for sure that I was going to be going on ECOEE, I realized that it would probably be a good idea to have a journal for this trip. I think it was because I knew this was going to be one of the most important things that I've ever done personally. I think I understood that ECOEE was going to be one of those things that I'd never forget.

I guess I have some pretty high expectations for ECOEE. I see it as a great opportunity for me to experience plenty of personal growth. I think that the best way to learn anything is by constant repetition and reinforcement. The more you hear, see, or read about something, the more you think about it and the better you learn about it. When it comes to my writing in my journal, I first experience something, then reflect on it, and finally transfer it to writing in my journal. That is three times that I think about my experience and what I was feeling during it. I am also forced to think about how the experience affected me. By doing this I think about what I learned from it. Throughout this process of experience, reflection, and transferring into

words on paper, I actually learn more about myself as an individual.

So far, journaling has made me look at some of the decisions that I have made and has helped me realize what thoughts or feelings I had at the time that contributed to why I made a certain decisions. On an expedition such as ECOEE there are plenty of opportunities for us participants to make decisions that not only affect us personally but the group as a whole and the individuals within it. This makes each decision more important and therefore requires a little more thought. I am learning a lot on this long travel workshop because I am constantly looking back at the decisions that I have made and experiences that I have had and using them to gain a fuller understanding about myself.



### Interpretation?

I don't get it

Interpretation and outdoor education, I have struggled with identifying the differences between these two similar, yet different, forms of educating people about

cultural and environmental resources. What is an interpretation, who attends them, how do they help, what do they accomplish? I would like to answer these questions and reflect on the different interpretations I have seen thus far.

A key word that comes to my mind when talking about interpretation or an interpreter is stewardship. Steward, looking over or taking care of something that is not yours. That is what interpreters do; they look after and make visitors aware of what is happening, whether it is in a national park, national monument, or national forest. There are different forms of interpretation, from the popular ranger walk or ranger talk to self-guided tours or visitor centers. Each has its own unique setting, format, and characteristics that are applied to best inform and educate the participants.

One element is having a non captive audience. The audience, that is in the stands or on the walk with a ranger, is there by choice. They want to learn more about the formation of Yosemite Valley or they want to learn how Wind Cave was formed. When we were at Badlands National Park, we participated in a ranger led prairie walk that was very interesting. As we walked along with him, he explained how different plant and animal species have adapted over many of years to be able to survive in the harsh climate of the Badlands. We were not on the walk because we had to, we chose to follow along and listen.

Another element of an interpretation is to inform visitors by taking scientific jargon and make it so that the average person can see and understand. I saw first hand, at Wind Cave National Park, a great example of explaining scientifically how Boxwork formations are formed. He then used the example laying bricks and mortar to help us mentally better understand, in simple terms, the complexity of how it is formed.

One last element I want to talk about is raising awareness and appreciation. One of the main goals, for an interpretation or an interpreter, is to raise the participant to awareness and to appreciate what is being talked about, whether it is the significant role or beauty. This is the approach I took when giving my interpretation on wolves and the role they play in the predator/prey cycle. I got my audience to appreciate the wolves by raising their awareness of why the wolves are a natural and very important player in prey population control.

Being on ECOEE has given me the opportunity to experience several interpretations and meet with park ranger interpreters, to get a behind the scenes look into the research and the effort put into making a meaningful interpretation. I have seen the real deal, and it has made working on my interpretation topics much, much easier. I look forward to and will continue to learn with every interpretation along the way.

-Brian Rittenhouse

## Journal Entry 8-26-07

Betsy Williams

Journal #2

8-26-2007

This morning came far too early for me, as several others and myself had a late night in the bathroom typing papers and eating mints. The toads in their holes were tasty and the impromptu interpretations returned! I was really impressed with Dale and Alex's imagination- I feel like my interpretation was a big joke.

We left Jackson Hole and motored our way to Yellowstone National Park, with intermittent stops and Grand Teton National Park visitor center and various pullouts. I have never been here before so I can't wait to do some exploring and see some animals. Hopefully for Brian's sake we'll see a wolf or two.

The pressure is getting high to do outdoor education and interpretation presentations since we leave this ecosystem on Thursday. Nat did an awesome tree O.E. and Jeff told a ridiculous interpretation joke. At least no one was taking notes!

I know I was supposed to write this last night, but due to lack of planning on my part, I get to document the hilarity of bird vs. ECOEE. First, the little jerk stole my potato right off my plate then bombed me for the sake of soul stealing. Then, for the next 20 minutes the battle ensued and I am really glad WIU's student handbook does not allow guns in class, because Tank would have gone postal.

Well, welcome to America's first national park, ECOEE 2007!

Peace,

Betsy

"Thousands of tired, nerve shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find that

going to the mountains is going home” –  
John Muir

“Wealth consists not in having great  
positions, but in having few wants” –  
Epicurus

“Knowledge without judgment is  
useless” –Paul Petzoldt

