



ECOEE 2007 Newsletter
3rd Edition

The Final Test

Imagine yourself at the edge of the roof on a three-story building. Your heels are over the edge and the breeze is gently trying to push you off. The only thing between you and terminal velocity is a three quarter inch rope that you have just finished tying to your belt. Now you have to jump off, trusting the rope and the hundred-year-old chimney on which you are anchored to hold your weight.

That is a taste of what it felt like last week during our stay at Joshua Tree National Park. For those who don't know, J-Tree is one of the premiere rock climbing areas in the United States. The rock faces are so popular they bring over 1 million people to brave the desert temperatures just to climb.

Most of us had very little traditional climbing experience and what I mean by traditional is having your own pro to make an anchor not bolts that you just clipped in to.

Your pro is the chocks, hex nuts, Cams, and tricams, which are all pieces of protection that you wedge into crevasses in the rock. The rocks in J-tree can be any shape or size, some are solid, and some aren't, some cracks will hold, while some will split the rock. The stone in Joshua Tree is also full of nubbins, dimples if you will. These nubbins can be flaky at times. A couple times I placed a piece of protection and it looked solid but the rock was bad and I could literally pull it out with arm strength alone.

All this information is for a purpose. After all the pro is in place, the knots are tied, and the

carabineers are clipped; one still must complete the final task before an anchor can be used. That task is testing it, and in our case that meant repelling off the forty-foot wall; your only lifeline being that anchor you just set up.

After double and triple checking everything from harness to hex nut you walk to the edge. You can't help but look down at your friends who appear to be a fraction of their normal size. The joking comments such as "That knot looks a little off," and "It will be all over soon," cast yet another dark shade on the already black pit of self-doubt. You're about to do the ultimate trust fall, but this time it is with the stone and your own skill of protection placement. Everyone knows the stakes are high and even that is putting it lightly. You lean back and watch the slack in the rope go taut. Just for an instant you wonder, "did I miss something?" Suddenly you stop, the anchor is adequate, you're safe, till the next time.

What is really interesting is I can't wait for the next time!

-Daniel Buren "Alpine"



Cody Haars

Interpretation

Throughout the semester, I have been learning about and teaching about how the Spanish have influenced the Western United States, North America, and seemingly the whole world. They have impacted more than I would have ever thought and I would have never thought unless I had to teach it. This topic alone has made me a better teacher, has made me feel more comfortable in front of a large group and has made me excited to teach. And that has something I have never been overly excited to do in a forced situation, but the

interesting stories and the men and women of Spain are that of interest to me and I hopefully made it interesting for my classmates.

I have presented this topic 3 times now and even my classmates have noticed the difference in my teaching and the excitement I at one time didn't have. I got a great book on the conquistadores and also picked up a book in Oakhurst about the Spanish west. My instructors have me looking for books even on my off time. The purchases were both worth it because there were some interesting stories that I believe the class really enjoyed. I had their eye contact, and they looked attentive.

I have taught much on the Spanish but one out of these three times of teaching I taught on who influenced the *Spanish*. They had enemies too and their enemies impacted the decisions they made to a great extent. Sir Francis Drake happened to be another lesson that day too so it tied right into my focus for the day.

The Spanish influence was a great topic for me and I had a great resource. A native Mexican, who knew his history, was our guide in Baja California. He helped me on the interpretation of the books facts to my presentations appearance and how to work it in well with my focus.

The Spanish influence has given me a better understanding of interpretation in general and why people would stand in front of a crowd and risk embarrassing themselves horribly. It is because knowledge needs to be shared and there are some great ways of spreading that knowledge.

This Process of Mine

Dale Maxson

As we go about our daily routines we may or may not pick up on the many lessons life has to offer. One way that we try to ensure that we learn something each day is by the "debrief." During a typical debrief we will recall the experiences of the day, evaluate how they made us feel, whether good or bad, and try to learn from our mistakes and successes. After we debrief the day, we try to give some feedback to the Facilitator or Leader of the Day. The reason for this whole process is to produce some kind of growth, as a group and for the individuals in their part of the group.

I take a long time to process things, which makes it hard for the rest of the group when they want feedback now. For instance, right now I'm

considering what life is going to be like when I return home. I am thinking about how I will take what I've learned so far and apply it to my life...but the problem is: I don't know entirely what I've learned! I have a feeling that it might spend the rest of my life processing my experiences on ECOEE. It is hard for me to see the patterns of successes and mistakes that I've committed myself to right now, because ECOEE isn't over with; it is still intangible and unfinished. I am looking through a glass darkly, skewed by my current perspective.

This is why my journal is so important. I want to be able to look back 5, 10, 53 years from now and read my journal to see what my thoughts were now. I want to compare what I think now with what I will think 24 years from now. Unfortunately, the complications of time travel being what they are, the privilege is not yet mine. Maybe soon the flux capacitor will be finished, and understanding will be mine. Maybe...

The Meaning of Adventure

- by Michael Evert

There are a lot of things I think of when the word adventure pops into my head. The crazy thing about these thoughts is that they all involve the outdoors. What is so adventurous about the out of doors? Something must be because outdoor adventure programs sell and appeal to most everyone. Deep down with in everyone is a need for adventure and thrill. It just takes the right program or activity to draw that inner adventurous spirit out. Maybe some enjoy the open water on a kayak, trying to stay upright as waves crash over you. Some might be called to calm the white water on rafts or navigate the river in a two-man canoe. I realized for me that my adventure side is drawn out by the mountains and wanting to take on its highest points. Though, what if you cannot enroll in an outdoor adventure program or course. Does an adventure experience or thrill have to occur with a guide or adventure recreation agency? In my opinion, no. I have been on many adventures without the two, whether it is hiking with family or friends, exploring ones own backyard or even roaming the house looking for a hidden remote. The adventure happens from with in and it doesn't take anyone or any other program to draw that experience or feeling out. Adventure Recreation agencies are a nice way to achieve this experience but if you can't manage to attend one don't feel left out. Next time that you have a chance for a little getaway, go on a hike, ride a bike or just explore the outdoors because in all retrospect nothing ventured equals nothing gained.

Reaction Reflection

-Natalie j

Camping has always been one of my favorite childhood memories not only because I spent time with my family but the stories that come of each trip. I can remember when I was in grade school my older sister and I pitched a tent in the back yard to just have fun in the fall weather and have the chance to snuggle with as many blankets as possible, which was always a good thing. We put the tent up thinking we did a fine job but reluctantly forgot to put stakes in and throw over the rain fly, don't worry, we paid for our mistake later. So we crawled in and found a cozy spot in all pile of down blankets and fell asleep. Waking was quite interesting; I couldn't find the door, no zipper or anything. Looking around frantically I finally found the zipper under my blanket, and yes, we were sleeping on the door.

ECOEE has been an awesome camping experience with my peers and the amount of knowledge I've gained about chores, equipment, and sharing a tent has been substantial. Thankfully to keep things humorous, small details are forgotten in the process of setting up a campsite but they make for great laughs and stories later. Just like my sister and I rolled the tent during the night, I can recall the countless times in the backcountry when putting up bear hangs were almost impossible. The challenge of tying a rock to the rope and then rather up some slack to then throw over a decent branch doesn't seem like a big problem, but somehow, somehow, it always was. Either the branches were all dead, drooping down, too high, or on the edge of a cliff. Then if you were fortunate to find a quality branch the best part still laid ahead. There were times when I tried for forty-five minutes attempting to throw the rope and rock over the branch, usually in the cold and hungry from hiking, until I stopped to take a break and by that time it was dark out. But for some reason I laughed every time I missed the branch, it's as if I knew I would be only doing it for a couple more nights and the struggle was worth the effort.

Aside from equipment and such, my favorite aspect of camping is sleeping, cooking, and simply living with my brothers and sisters. There's a dynamic element put in when you live outside every minute of the day, the group tends to come together because everything takes longer outside

and it has to be a group effort, otherwise it won't happen. I think of it as our journey to becoming a family.

Now with the last couple days of ECOEE coming to an end I can't believe how far I've come from the incident I had with my sister and the tent. Camping is more than living outside efficiently, for me it has now become a way of life.

Dan Legris
Reaction and Reflection #4
Interpretation

Your word is "shoelace", you know have thirty seconds to prepare for a five minute speech about shoelaces. Can you do it? It does not sound that hard until you actually try to talk about shoelaces for an entire five minutes. How many aspects of shoelaces can you think of to talk about? Ah, the power of interpretation. What does it mean to interpret? Well in order to talk about shoelaces for a continuous five minutes, I would imagine that some heavy interpretation of the word or concept itself would be in order. Is the fact that they keep your shoes tight all you can think of? You still have another four minutes and forty-five seconds to fill. Or maybe you related the word to shoe strings and were able to go on a, one or two minute, tangent, talking about those little crispy French fries, mmm... delicious. Maybe you could talk about other uses for shoelaces such as using them as little whips to annoy your brother or sister, or in more serious sense, using a shoelace to tie up a laceration running down your leg from falling on sharp boulders. The possibilities are endless and this is the essence of interpretation. Maybe you decided that you do not actually know anything about shoelaces and you just started making things up, like the "fact" that shoelaces originated in Mongolia circa 450 B.C. Is it true? I challenge you to prove me wrong. This isn't necessarily improvisation but, heck, its good to be quick on your feet. In any case, your five minutes are almost up, you cannot leave your audience with the Mongolia cliffhanger can you? This was a silly example, but in a fun and simplistic sense, what I am trying to get at is the definition of interpretation, a word in itself that can be interpreted in many ways. What separates environmental interpretation from outdoor education is the emphasis on inspiration. In this field not only are we trying to inform an audience,

we push to inspire a certain feeling and have the audience leave with their emotional buttons pressed. If all else fails, as unethical as it sounds, make something up. Disappointment or, conversely, humor is an emotion that can be inspired. Good luck trying to keep your job as an interpretive ranger however. The fact that I am even writing a reflection paper like this is because of how I interpreted the assignment and if you couldn't tell I have used some stretches of the imagination to make my point, which at this point of the paper seems to be way out in left field. But hey, if I kept your attention thus far, then my job is done as an interpreter. Even if the feeling I have left you with is an utter sense of confusion, I still inspired it.

The Art of Camping
by Michael Evert

In 1861 a man named Frederick William Gunn established the camping world. Gunn organized a two-week camp trip at Gunnery School for Boys. Today camping has exploded worldwide and it seems like the thing to do. While on ECOEE we have been camping at different National Parks and State Parks throughout the western half of the United States. These campgrounds and campsites have been what we call home for the past 3 months. So, you could say that we have been camping everyday. When one has been camping for this long they tend to feel they have mastered the inner workings of camping principles. Though to me camping is not the same thing everyday. Each day we pull into a new site or campground, we are presented with a difference scene or obstacle to adjust to. Sometimes the ground is flat and pristine and sometimes it is rocky and not manageable. These differences can change the whole way you camp from setup to break down each day. I realized in order to be a great camper or master of the camping skills, you better be ready for any obstacle or challenge such as snow, rocks, bears, humans or even location. If you can handle that you might make it through the night. So, the next time I go camping I will make sure I am prepared and ready for whatever camping adventure might come my way.



Reaction Reflection

-Natalie j

Returning home from beautiful Baja California after kayaking for several days, it was back to the books and living in the front country and that meant visiting outdoor education and adventure recreation facilities. For me, our visits are probably the most interesting part of ECOEE. The Itinerary committee makes an appointment in advance to visit a program somewhere in the country we planned to be and each one so far has been a great experience to see what some places offer and how they stand out among the rest. I'm given the chance to walk away with a better knowledge of what is out there. One adventure recreation program in particular stands out in my mind because it gave me insight of what I could do possibly back at Western Illinois.

The morning of our program visit to Aztec Adventures in San Diego, California the group did their best to clean up and look presentable and do a small recall of what questions we need to be asking to accurately fill out a critique form, which will in turn help us on our final project of creating our own program. Funny thing about Aztec was we were already there. Jeff and Jennie have a close, long time running friendship with the man in charge Jim Lustig, who graciously housed us at the recreation center for a couple days making it very simple for us to pull information from him about the program.

Aztec Adventures is a unique program at San Diego State University primarily for SDSU students and other school groups looking to take a trip anywhere from two days to a week long to surrounding wilderness sites such as Joshua Tree National Park to rock climb or Baja California to sea

kayak with trip guide Francisco. It's not counted as school credit but is a great chance for kids in the city to get out of their normal routine and experience the outdoors and live with about ten other students to gain camping, social, and specialized skills in the field. My favorite aspect of Aztec are the students because they were the driving force back in the late 70's to get Aztec on its feet and currently run the program, mostly graduate students, along with a large portion being undergraduate recreation majors looking to gain experience as a trip leader.

The question I'm asking myself is how I can bring these ideas back to Western's recreation center, and granted WIU is not as big as SDSU I could see the interest popping up if students could get together and turn thoughts into actions.

Reaction and Reflection #3

By *Ryan Patrick Martin McLaughlin* A.K.A "Tank"

Most of the courses that I have taken at Western Illinois University I would consider a sprint. ECOEE is an endurance trial. A marathon, if you will. As I have said, most of the classes that I have taken are a sprint, you go to class for three hours a week, and only do the homework the night before it is due (that part is the same on ECOEE), and only thinking about the course when it is absolutely necessary to do so. That is not possible on this course. Not in any way.

The reverse is actually true; one thinks about one's personal life for three hours a week and thinks about the course for the rest of the time. In some ways it is maddening because of all the facets of your life are utterly different, and you feel disconnected from the outside world. On the other hand there are very few distractions on this course, nearly everything that you do throughout a day relates to the course in some way. Taking eighteen hours back on campus is a matter of scheduling. On ECOEE, taking eighteen hours is actually relatively easy in comparison to campus due to the aforementioned lack of distractions. The biggest distraction involved with ECOEE, besides the incredible destinations, is a fine ROOT beer, a hard pill to swallow for us freshly 21 year olds, but we got over it.

We are nearing the end of our trip and the thought of Macomb is looming large in the minds of all of us ominously for some, with great anticipation for others, namely me. I am ready to see my family

and my friends again. But in the same breath it will be very strange to not be sleeping in a tent and playing in a traveling band. So until our next letter, remember to keep your stick on the ice, we're in this together.

Reaction and Reflection #4

by *Ryan Patrick Martin McLaughlin* A.K.A.
"Tank"

We have now visited all of our Outdoor Education facilities, and this class is nearly at an end as is the course. Of all of the places that I have visited that are incorporated in the Outdoor Education course Teton Outdoor Science School also known as TOSS. The other places where intriguing as well but what really drew me to Teton Outdoor Science School is the K - 12 school that they also operate.

The reason that I am really drawn to TOSS is the fact that I have the opportunity to incorporate of my training on ECOEE and the passion of my whole academic career, my major, History. In their small school of 240 students, they teach a full curriculum of courses as prescribed by traditional elementary, middle, and high schools, but they incorporate this into the environment in the way of place-based education. This means that they teach about the river systems of the world by having the students go out into the environment that surrounds them, and relating this to the other environments of the world. This unique way of teaching is extremely appealing to me. There are the benefits of both the classroom and the outdoors in one very versatile location. Located in Jackson, Wyoming, TOSS has a huge natural world to explore and for students to find inspiration and a deep appreciation of the outdoors.

The downsides to working at Teton Outdoor Science School are limited but they do exist. The biggest and most deterring fact about employment in Jackson, WY is Jackson, WY. The price of land is astronomical, two acres of land in Jackson is around \$600,000. That is an unimproved lot mind you. The billionaires are displacing the millionaires in that town. That is a really hard place to get started at. The other portion of this equation is the fact that they also only employ graduates of their Master's Program which specifically deals with the teaching of place-based education.

Outdoor Education in Yosemite

By: *Betsy Williams*

Over the course of the semester, ECOEE has had the chance to visit a lot of really unique and beautiful places- some of them even being schools. Over the course of the semester we have been able to visit Teton Outdoor Science School, Cuyamaca Outdoor Science School, L.A. County Outdoor Science School, Yellowstone Institute and Yosemite Institute. All of these schools had great facilities, talented staff and caring administration, which we were able to see through our tour firsthand.

Yosemite Institute, however, showed us their program in a way that I will not soon forget. The students on ECOEE were each able to shadow an instructor during a day with a class that was there for a weeklong session. I shadowed a young woman named Betsy (how often does that happen!), who had been a teacher there for two years.

I was not sure what to expect by being a shadow, especially when the kids arrived for the first time. I didn't want to say much because I was not entirely sure how the program was run and did not want to confuse them right off the bat. I stuck with Betsy for the first hour while we were moving the kids from place to place in Yosemite Valley, but after a little while I became more comfortable and started talking with some of the kids about school, sports, their life and telling them a little about mine. They all were convinced I was a teacher and was lying about being in college, which was funny. At a stop where Betsy planned to talk about water purification, she turned to me and said "This Betsy spent 28 days in the mountains, so let her tell you about how to purify water". After the kids stopped "oohing" and "ahhing" about this new information,

I told them an outline of what I knew about the purification process and how important it is to drink plenty of water. While it was a surprise to be able to teach, I found myself enjoying the experience. The kids were very receptive and I was able to teach several more times throughout the day. When it came time for me to leave at the end of the day, the kids were all really upset that I was not

going to be back the next day. I felt bad leaving them to go back and wait for my other classmates to finish up their days as shadows. While I know I am never going to see any of those kids again it is still fun to think that I taught them things that hopefully they will retain for at least a few weeks. I am glad ECOEE gave me this experience to not only see the school and ask questions, but have a have a firsthand look into a day at Yosemite Institute.

Cody Haars

Adventure Recreation

My best experience with adventure recreation has been oddly enough the farthest away from adventure recreation in my mind. The program I am referring to is MWR. The marine recreation facilities. They had some of the best staff I had seen in some time and their basic philosophy was service. And there service goes to the men and women who strive to protect our country. It is all about the marines and their happiness. They have a lot of things to not look forward to like war and if there's someone there to keep everyone playing sports together and keep morale high, it is good for their spirits.

They have very nice gyms and a small treadmill section, but there are many gyms on base. Their weight room however was very big and necessary for the marines. It sounded and looked like a lot of marines lifted weights. They had standard basketball courts and an Olympic sized swimming pool. And an interesting though they had at the base was making a separate swimming pool for the marines wives and their kids, just so the wives won't be surrounded by all these other marines. They also have daily maintained soccer, football, and baseball fields. The biggest thing that stuck out to me was their renting out of equipment to the marines. They rent out everything from tents to dunk tanks. They will have a package deal for everything you need to camp for a whole weekend for a very small renting fee. They rent out snowboards, kayaks, canoes, sleeping bags coolers and much more.

But the nice sport fields, giant swimming pools, and a warehouse full of equipment, still doesn't impress me as much as do the core reasons they started these programs. That's why MWR has been my best experience.



Reflection Reaction
Brittany Dunleavy

At a recent debrief Betsy asked the group a question that made us all stop and think, “Out of all the outdoor education centers and schools that we’ve visited, which one have you liked the best?” That question was a thinker as ECOEE has visited five amazing outdoor education facilities.

First there was Teton Outdoor Science School, which was a completely green campus and had amazing programs for kids as well as a graduate program for adults that wish to continue their education in the woods. Then we visited the Yellowstone Institute, which was geared towards adults. The facility was a little ranch located in the park that housed the students and the volunteer teachers.

Yosemite Institute was very different from the other sites that we have visited. The students stayed with one leader all day and learned all about the wildlife and geology in the Yosemite Valley. It was a different learning environment and it was up to the leader on what was going to be taught and on what day. More recently, we visited Cuyamaca Outdoor School. It’s the oldest outdoor ed facility in the United States. They had a camp type atmosphere and were geared mainly towards fifth and sixth graders.

Finally, our last outdoor ed facility was LA County Outdoor Science School. LACOSS has a pretty interesting way of using their facilities. They lease a private Jewish during the school year that houses the students and their teachers. They also have access to the mountain, desert, and marine

eco-systems in the area. It was a pretty neat place to learn.

Personally, my favorite place was the Teton Outdoor Science School. They have access to the Grand Tetons, plus two facilities to utilize. I also loved how eco-friendly their campus is. I liked visiting all these places because I think that it gave us a taste of what we’re in for when we put on our own outdoor ed program for the St. Paul Catholic school in Macomb.

Kayaking Surprises in Baja, California
By: *Betsy Williams*

When the itinerary was being made for this ECOEE 2007 everyone in the group had some part of the expedition they were the most excited for. Some were excited for Yellowstone, some for backcountry but I was excited for sea kayaking in Baja, California, for a variety of reasons. I had never spent any time in Mexico and this would be the longest span of time I had been out on the water before. The drive down to Baja, California was long and through terrain I had never seen before. The scrub bushes, cactus and valley after sweeping valley never seemed to end and I was beginning to think that the Sea of Cortez was not even a real place. At what felt like forever, Francisco, our guide, told us that the next range of mountains were actually islands! Soon after, we saw the oceans blue hue in the setting sun. Everyone piled out of the van to smell the salty air and we ate a celebration dinner at a restaurant close to our house (called “Casa Azul”- can you guess what color it was? ☺) with all our gear. I ate an order of fish tacos in honor of my dad and fell asleep listening to the clanking sound the halyards on the sailboats in the harbor.

The following day was an introduction to sea kayaking for those who had never participated before, and we went to bed early to anticipate the departure soon after sunrise the following morning. We had all the food and gear as ready as it could be, but Mother Nature seemed to have another plan for us. Francisco told us there were strong winds coming from a hurricane in the south and Santa Ana blowing from the north, which meant it would not be safe for us to depart. We left the next day and paddled about six miles before the wind picked up and we beached on Quemado, which is Spanish for “burnt”. This hopefully can paint a picture of what the area looked like- no shade of any kind. To make

a long story short, we ended up being stranded on that particular beach for the next four days, leaving us no option but to start to paddle back to where we came from once we got a break in the weather.

Once that break came, we made a mad dash to a beach close to Casa Azul called La Mona and two days later, back to Casa Azul to put the boats away and clean the gear.

A favorite quote of Jeff's comes from J.R.R.

Tolkien, author of the "Lord of the Rings" series, which is "Good days are nice to have, but are not much to talk about. Bad days are not so nice to have but make for great stories". While the trip did not go as I had envisioned, it was still a great learning experience. I had the chance to see the kind of weather that could stop a trip firsthand and I was able to learn some important decision making skills.

I was reminded to always put your group first, because just because I might think I can handle a situation it does not mean that the rest of the group can. Aside from decision-making skills, I think the group had a great opportunity to grow, since we had not run into any real obstacles before this point. Plus, how many people can say they were stranded on a beach in Mexico?

Camp World

-Brian R.

When I think of Sea World, I think of Killer Whales, Dolphins, and Sea Turtles. The last thing I think of are kids attending camp. Our recent visit to the San Diego Sea World had me thinking of camps in a different way. My image of camps are kids going for a week to two months, staying in cabins that are surrounded by woods, and singing songs by the camp fire. Like the other camps we have visited so far on ECOEE. Sea world was different. I believe its location, its programming, and the atmosphere makes it different from other camps.

To me, most camps are located somewhere in the middle of the woods. Kids are sleeping in cabins and swimming in lakes. At Sea World, kids are staying in what look like big dorm rooms that hold 20 kids in bunk beds. Their sleeping facilities look new with nice restrooms and a few individual showers. They do not have the traditional restrooms that you share with the bugs or showers that hold a dozen people. I will have to hand it to them; their facilities are really impressive.

I also picture kids playing sports, swimming in the lake, and having arts and crafts time. At Sea

World, what they have programmed is a little different. During their resident camp, kids learn about different marine animals, plants, and the ecosystems they live in. They have all the resources they can ask for on site. Kids have all they need to learn about what is in the ocean. They still do some traditional things, like sing songs and play games, but they do not hike in the woods or cook over campfires. I feel they lack some of the old, more traditional camping ways.

There is a different atmosphere at their camp. I am used to the sound of wildlife. There is something about waking up to the sound of birds singing and squirrels barking. To me this is an essential part of the camp experience. At Sea World, the park does not close to the public when camp is running. This means that kids are walking around, from one attraction to another, while mingling with other tourists. I feel that this strays from, what I believe, traditional camp should be.

I cannot deny that Sea World is running a great program for young kids. Maybe a new trend of camps is taking over. All I know is that the kids get to come to a state of the art facility, get up close and personal with some awesome marine animals, make friends, all while getting to stay at Sea World. It doesn't sound too shabby.



Alex Barajas
RPTA 450
11/08/07

Its Baja California, Not Baja!

Before ECOEE started, I have wanted to travel to British Columbia in Canada. When people were asked where they wanted to go during ECOEE, that was my choice. The majority of the group wanting to go to Baja California outvoted it to do some kayaking. When I realized that British Columbia was out of the picture, I more and more

began to look forward to visiting Baja California. But my hopes and expectations of the trip didn't exactly live up.

Francisco, our trip guide, was a great addition during our stay. He had a very different teaching style than what we have been getting used too with Jeff and Jen. I'm not saying that anyone's leadership style is worst than the other but it was nice to see how other outdoor leaders lead a group. Francisco was more up front and frank than Jeff and Jen. He was also great to listen at debriefed because when he spoke, he seemed to know a lot about life experiences and how that related with us. Even though we were with Francisco for a short amount of time, I liked having him on board with our family. I was sad to see him go when he did.

You know that old saying: you can plan a vacation but you can't plan the weather. In this case the weather is what made the trip not so exciting. And I have no one to blame, it was just how the cards were drawn. The winds picked up from the North and the South and because of that, we only paddled two days of the eight. I wish that I could on improved on my current kayak skills but with only having two days, I wasn't able to get that.

Although the weather kept us from kayaking, I was able to take away some things from the trip. Francisco was a great resource to use in our presentations on interpretation and outdoor education. Many of Francisco's words were taken to heart and will stay with me for a time. I am also glad that I was able to visit Mexico again, it has been four long years and I was itching to return there. It was nice to see another part of the country because I would of never of thought I would kayak in Baja California.



Interpretive Dance

-Dale Maxson

During the semester long excursion that is ECOEE, I've had the opportunity to observe and lead the interpretation of many topics. Their bases range from Adaptations, to Zebras (okay, didn't see any Zebras, but the only other Z words I could think of were Zoology and Zazz. Zoology is too broad of a topic, and we've already got enough Zazz in this world, we don't need to Zazz it up any.). Interpretation is one or many persons conveyance of an idea, a thought, a series of synapses.

This passed summer, and the summer before that, I was an interpreter at Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site. What we practice there is historical interpretation. You get dressed up in the 1830's clothing, and interpret the life and times for the enjoyment and satisfaction of the hundreds of thousands of visitors that drive up our road. Specifically, I spend my time interpreting Joshua Miller's workshop, which happens to be a Smithy. The smithy is the building, the smith is the guy inside the building standing behind the anvil swinging a hammer. Some of my co-workers would give me a hard time for "being a lazy interpreter," and not spending as much time talking as I did swinging the hammer. At that time, I partially agreed with them, but I didn't talk so much because I just don't talk that much. My theory was that people were probably more interested in what I was doing than the fact that Joshua Miller lived in a Dog-trot style house, but its rebuilt location isn't correct and should actually be located about 130 yards to the south. I didn't think that the average person would care.

In our travels this fall I have noticed that the best interpreters are the ones that can be themselves, however quirky that may be. One interpreter named Sheldon from Detroit gave us a presentation on the concept of the Wild in Yosemite. It was dark out, a little cold, and he took the stage by playing a native cedar flute. That is what set the tone for the rest of his interpretation, and we all listened to him because we wanted to know what this chanting ranger had to say. Man, he was good.

Looking back on how I interpreted at New Salem I would change a few things to make it better. Since there is no set time for interpretation, you just go all day, your starting time just has to be played by ear; maybe whenever a bigger or more interested group comes through. From there I could

greet them as custom, but continue to do my blacksmithing; that would be like Sheldon playing his flute- something interesting that makes people pay attention. After I have their attention, then I can move into some of the oral tradition, the stories. Maybe I could even intertwine the stories with my craft, but the point is this: from what I've gathered the best interpretation is not in just one medium. If you want to communicate thoroughly, you might have to switch it up a little. In my case I needed to put lyrics to my song (a problem that always stumps me). In others they might need to try dancing a little. You know, zazz it up a little.

News letter 449

Yosemite National Park is full of wonder and beauty. Within the park there is a place called Yosemite Valley. When you enter this part of the park people can only be amazed by the tall granite walls and the flat valley floor. The valley is full of life and geological features that include, black bears, coyotes, deer, sequoia trees, incense cedars, glacial moraines, rivers, parries and much more. These animals and geological features make it a great place to teach outdoor education to children in middle school. This is what the Yosemite Institute does. Our group was lucky enough to get paired up with instructors and watch how they teach their outdoor curriculum to these children.

Some of the activities that the children did throughout the day were teambuilding exercise (blind fold walk through some of the glacial erratic and crossing a creek with only 7 milk crates and 13 people), dump school (they learned how use natures bathroom), solo time (this is where the kids get 15-30 minuets to just sit alone, write in their journal and reflect on their day), and learn about glacial moraines (the instructor took us up a hill and asked the kids if they knew what we were sitting on. Being in the out of doors is a very powerful teaching tool. Instead of teaching about glacial moraines in a class room and looking at pictures of them, the students actually got to sit, touch and hear wildlife while they were learning in a good setting.) Overall the Yosemite Institute is a great place for people to learn hands and get out of the classroom and actually experience what they are teaching.

-Greg Rolf

Reaction Reflection

-Josh

Throughout the semester, we have all add various topics that we need to be the guru of and give outdoor education lessons to the others in our group. My topic was fishing. I thought that it was a topic that I was pretty familiar with and that would not be too challenging to teach. Well, as I found out, any topic is a challenge to teach, no matter how much you know about it. Teaching is a challenge in and of itself. Having some previous knowledge about fishing did make teaching a little bit easier but delivering your message across so that everybody understands and enjoys your lesson is where the real challenge lies.

I found that it was not too hard to gather information about a topic because in today's world there is information around every corner. The hard part was putting all the information together and selecting only the information that will help you achieve the goals that you had made for a lesson. After I gave a lesson that wasn't so hot, I quickly realized that it was because I didn't really have something solid that I wanted the students to take away from my lesson. I knew a lot of facts and so I pretty much relayed the facts that I knew to the group. A lot of these facts were received by the group but they didn't have any relation to a bigger picture or point that I was trying to get across. If I would have told the group exactly what I wanted them to gain from my lesson, they could have made the connections themselves.

Teaching outdoor education is like teaching any other form of education. The skill lies in speaking well in front of a group, being organized with your facts, and having a underlying theme that the audience has in their head throughout the lesson so that they know what the idea of the lesson is.

Adventure Recreation

-Brian R.

I would like to recap on two different Adventure Recreation programs that we have visited while on ECOEE. These two places are Summit Adventures and Oars/Dories of the Grand Canyon. They are two very similar programs but different at the same time. I would like to reflect on what makes them alike and different.

Summit Adventures is an adventure program that focuses on mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada's. They have courses that can last a weekend, a week, and up to a month. They teach different skills that are essential to mountaineering. They focus on teaching hiking skills, technical skills, and people skills. Instructors and assistant instructors will take anywhere from eight to 18 people into the backcountry to teach them the many different skills. People will be responsible to bring the right clothing, the right gear, and the right attitude. They will be carrying all of these on their shoulders, in and out of the backcountry. Some people take these courses for fun or to gain more experience with the hopes of becoming an instructor themselves.

Oars/Dories of the Grand Canyon is an adventure program that focuses on rafting trips down the Grand Canyon. They are one of 15 commercial guiding companies that take people on trips down the canyon. These trips can last from six to 16 days. They do not necessarily teach the participants skills that are needed to be able successfully run the canyon. The guides are in charge of taking care of the clients, by navigating through the canyon, cooking the meals, and ensuring that they are having a great experience. They provide most of the gear, the food, and the knowledge. The gear is carried in the rafts, so weight is not as much of an issue as it would be on a mountaineering course. People seem to just want the experience of seeing the canyon from the bottom while not having to expend much energy.

Oars/Dories and Summit are both adventure recreation programs. Even though they appeal to different areas, rafting and mountaineering, they are still the same in many ways. It seems that in recent years that the demands for these sorts of programs are in high demands. I do have to admit that they both seem like a blast.

Alex Barajas
RPTA 448
11/8/07

What's Your Story?

Have you ever told a story and had the attention of the whole crowd the entire time? Everyone is listening to every last word you have to say because they want to know the beginning, middle and end without missing any details. Well if you answered no, hello, my name is Alex and we

should get together some time! I have never been able to tell a story without the listener ever being as enthused as I was. And I have some pretty dang ridiculous and funny stories to tell in my life.

Interpretation is probably my weakest point in the entire curriculum we have for ECOEE. The basic use of interpretation is to tell about natural and cultural history, geology, etc. to a non-captive audience in a form of a story. The great thing about ECOEE is that our peers critique us on how well we do or what things that can better improve on for interpretations. The thing with me is that I do some research on my topic, which is Native Americans, and I give a presentation to our group but I am such a terrible story teller that the presentation never goes about how I visualize it in my head.

I have been able to see many different interpretive walks and talks given by Park Rangers. I have seen some great ones and others that weren't so great. I recently was able to catch a particular interp given by a Park Ranger in Yosemite National Park. His name is Shelton Johnson and the thing that I will remember about his interpretation is how he set the stage before his actual interpretation began. He was playing different types of Indian carved flutes that sounded so wonderful. As soon as he began to talk, his joking personality made you want to listen to what he had to say. Like those folks in my opening line that you want to listen to every word. Soon enough, Shelton talked about the idea of wilderness and what it means to each individual person. And in his interp, he would subtly drop in little facts while keeping our attention with humor and authentic history from the park.

After seeing Shelton's interpretation, I realized that I need to become better and more comfortable speaking in front of a group. The truth is I do feel comfortable speaking in front of groups but when my research is lacking, it doesn't do much good on my confidence to speak in front of others. I am not expecting to be at Shelton's level by the end of ECOEE, but this program has surely let me become better with feedback given by my peers, watching actual Park Ranger give interps and having several chances to put on my own interpretation.

News letter # 4 240

ECOEE has been on the road for almost two and a half months, living out of a duffel bag that sits

inside a trailer for a large portion on the day. It's not just living out of a trailer and trying to survive, but we also visit places and write reflection papers on the places that we have visited. So far we have visited a fair amount of camps in Nebraska, Wyoming, and California. Some of the camps that we have visited were on their last leg because of certain legal issues or looked run down because the kids did not treat the facilities with respect. Other camps are trying to expand and reach more kids who would not have the chance to go to a camp.

The first camp that we visited in California is called Viking Vorhense. The camp has been running since the 1960's by the same person. This camp takes troubled youth (gang kids) from the inner city of Los Angeles and takes them out in the woods for about a week. The ages range from 8 – 16 years old. The idea of the camp is to let kids be kids and not change their personality but change their behavior. This is one of the last camps that does not have a structured day, the kids do not need to get up at a certain hour, they do not need to go to bed at a certain time, they can pretty much do anything they want. By letting these kids do what they want to do puts responsibility and trust in their hands. This is the way the director of this camp has been running the camp for almost 60 years. Overall this camp had the biggest impact on me because it is so different than all the other camps whose goal is to make money, and program the day, and treat kids like kids, unlike Vorhense where they treat kids like adults.

-Greg Rolf

What Has Changed

If you have never spent more than a solid two weeks in a tent, living off of whatever you are carrying, and you only see the people you hiked in with, it will be hard to truly understand my writing. Before ECOEE I considered myself an average, well... let's say above average college student. I always went to class though paying attention was occasionally optional. (Sorry Mom.) Video games, movies, sports, and working took up the rest of my spare time. (I tried to keep them in that order also.) Truth be told, I had never spent more than five days at any one time in a tent, and five days was pushing it. It should also be mentioned that I had never taken a duce in the wild before. (A port-o-potty to me was roughing it.)

Now I was on ECOEE, 28 days without the porcelain or even a toilet seat. Living out of my backpack, my home being a couple centimeters of canvas. I learned very fast that you just had to deal with it. The situation would not change so I would have to change. For starters I am now a master at the cat hole art. (I even used the facilities during a hailstorm! That is a story.) But it wasn't just about being comfortable in the backcountry, this was still school. I learned a fair amount of skills spanning from LNT (Leave no trace) and trail etiquette to climbing and search and rescue strategies and principles. (That was only the tip of the iceberg by the way.) I soon realize that knowledge and experience breed confidence, confidence that had not been up to par previously. (I'm not over confident, in case you were wondering) Possibly the most dramatic change was my appreciation of things. Things like running water that doesn't need to be purified, grocery stores, and heating, just to name a few. After being without such luxuries for a few months you realize that you are very blessed with the things we have and they should not be taken for granted. Not just material things either; family, friends, health, sight, and the list continues. Make the most of each day, for you never know what will happen in the future.

One thing I want to express to those of you who want to do similar trips such as ECOEE but are worried that they couldn't handle the transition, I am happy to say you will adapt. You'll discover you don't need TV, or microwaves, or even electricity! (Make sure to have good gear though. Bad gear is not fun and can be dangerous, I know trust me, so spend the money on the important stuff!) In fact you may come to enjoy the simplicity of the outdoors. Without the distractions that electricity brings you get the chance to really deepen the relationships you have with the people around you. Family and friends make all the difference!

-Daniel Buren "Alpine"

Dan Legris
Reaction and Reflection #3
Adventure Recreation

Who has gone camping in their lifetime? It is surprising to me how many people would answer this question with a "yes" when they are referring to the time they had to use a porta-potty and slept in a "nerfy", cushiony, air conditioned recreational

vehicle. Now that is all fine and dandy, to some this is and will be the extent of their camping experience. All opinions aside, I ask you this question, who has ever been on an adventure? Who has ever felt like the pioneers traveling west and stumbling upon, what is now known as, the Grand Canyon and then rafting down the mighty Colorado River? Who has smelled the crisp clean air on top of a mountain at 14,000 feet elevation? Most people will never be able to answer “yes” to any of these questions. Some people may not want to experience these feelings, but for those who do, did you know that there are people in this world who make it their life work to fulfill your adrenaline need? There are people who will outfit and guide you through just about anything imaginable from jumping out of a plane to snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef to moving cattle on horseback in Wyoming.

Adventure Recreation is the popular term and on our ECOEE adventure we have visited many of these outfitters. Most are smaller operations working in a specialized field such as Grand Canyon Oars and Dorries, whose focus is to take willing participants down the Colorado River in humungous rafts or old fashioned dories, or Summit Adventures, who work primarily out of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range in California and guide backpacking expeditions. Others are larger and can facilitate many different types of adventures such as Aztec Adventures, based out of San Diego State University. It is not an easy life, living as an adventure guide, but if it is what you love to do who could even consider that work? It is more of a reward that people will pay you to do this. God bless America! If the completely furnished mansion on wheels type of camping or adventure is what you are looking for, so be it and all the power to you. But there are others out there who need that edge to hang off of and experience a different type of adventure, which is not for the faint of heart. There are working men and women striving to make this happen for you. Whatever type of adventure you are looking for, it can be found... and experienced.

“Cool Camp on the Coast”

Did you know that there is a camp that will guarantee that you will see a killer whale, dolphins, penguins, sharks, tons of other cool animals and it is located near the beach in San Diego, California! You may have guessed that it is Sea World that I

am talking about. Yes, it is a tourist attraction and millions of people have gone there to look at the animals but how many people know that there is a camp available for the public? A camp that will allow you to get even closer to the animals than you are at the wall!

Sea World offers a unique opportunity by allowing the campers that are of a suitable age to help the trainers and even get in the tanks to swim with the animals. Obviously only the animals that will be safe such as the dolphins and otters will be with the kids but think of how cool it would be to swim with animals that you only get to see in the movies. There is even more to it than just swimming with the animals, they also provide trips to the beach to learn about the ocean, the wildlife there, and to surf the waves of course.

It should be said that the camp isn't just babysitting the kids, there is a fair amount of class work during one's stay at Sea World. The brilliance is the class work takes place right in front of the subject they are talking about. Imagine learning something on the bottlenose dolphin while the dolphin is swimming right in front of you!

Unfortunately, such great things must have a drawback it seems. One week of resident camp costs upwards of one thousand dollars, not much for some but that is an arm and a leg to me. Even though the cost is rather substantial it could be worth it to those that have a leaning in oceanography or things of that nature. Long story short, Sea World is amazing even though it costs a lot and a beer company owns it.

Daniel Buren “Alpine”

