

Program Goal 5: Graduates are prepared to assume civic and environmental responsibilities associated with the practice of outdoor education.

In the industry of outdoor education in order for the outdoor classroom to continue to exist it must be cared for and protected. As outdoor educators we must be stewards of the land. We have a sense of responsibility to raise awareness about the environment. One of the first courses I took at Georgia College was Outdoor Living Skills. The principles of LNT were first introduced to me in this course.

The course itself was an ongoing training of the LNT principles in order for the class to gain its LNT trainer certification. In this course we participated on a 3-day field experience where we, through hands on training and lessons, taught each other the 7 principles of LNT. My topic was 'Be Considerate of Other Visitors.' My partner and I discussed that through, camping to close to the trails, being too loud, and traveling with brightly colored equipment and clothing are inconsiderate views that distract other campers from their experience with nature. Through the use of our ethics activity we were able to explain specific methods used in order to be considerate of others.

This past summer in my practicum I was able to actively practice and teach these principles to my campers. As an outdoor educator this was a great experience for me to educate my campers on the 7 principles. Explaining that these were just principles, I felt that they gained an understanding of why we should implement these principles in order for later generations to be able to enjoy nature as well.

The topic of environmental responsibilities was reinforced in the course Foundations of Environment Education. At the beginning of this class we were introduced to the idea of living lightly, we choose an area in our life that we could daily minimize our impact in, and throughout the semester we were evaluated in that area. While in this course one of the field experiences we participated in was a clean up project on Lake Sinclair. One Friday afternoon we met on the lake and spent an afternoon travelling from island to island picking up trash and anything that took away from the lake in its natural state. This experience was an eye opener for me, and can be read about in my reflection on Lake Sinclair.

Also in this course one of our assignments was to choose an environmental education center in the U.S. and conduct a site interview. This interview was intended to get a more 'behind the scenes' look into an environmental center. The site I choose is Earths Classroom, located in central Missouri. My findings were astonishing. Earths Classroom mission is "To use experiential education to advance awareness, understanding and appreciation of ecology, cultural history and their interrelationships." After a lengthy phone conversation with their co-executive director, I came to the conclusion this is exactly what they are doing. By bringing an awareness to a topic, giving learners a better understanding of the topic, and then bringing an appreciation to the topic, they are reaching thousands of people. It was great to see that there are fellow educators and environmental centers in the US implementing models that I am currently learning about.

Throughout my time in the Outdoor Education program, I know that I have been proficiently taught, and given the correct tools to educate learners in areas of environmental responsibilities, which can be read about in my philosophy

statement of environmental education. In my pursuit as an outdoor educator I will continue to raise awareness to the ever-growing environmental issues we face.