



SENS, U of S: Two Experimental Field Trips to Redberry Lake

October 1, 2013



This is the third year students from the University of Saskatchewan, School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS), have been out to the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve for their annual field trip. But this year we were pleased to welcome a second group of students. On September 13th to 15th, seventeen students came to Redberry to study the “Human Dimensions of Environmental Change”. Their Experimental Field Trip started off with setting up camp in the Regional Park and a presentation about the Biosphere Reserve. The following two days were filled with meeting young students from Hafford Central School, seniors and other local residents. The students wanted to find out firsthand

how life has changed over time in Hafford and area and what everybody’s perception is about future changes and challenges. The results will be presented back to the community later this year (date will be announced).

SENS Field Trip 2013- Members of the Centennial Committee took the students on a historic tour down Main Street to the new Monument that commemorates ten decades of the history of Hafford and area. The students also had the chance to get access to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. An authentic Ukrainian meal made out of fresh and local ingredients was another highlight the students won’t forget. For some students this was their first week in Canada and Saskatchewan. Being on a field trip that had so much to offer is a truly new and unique experience! The group rounded up their field trip with a special Service Project: They helped building a new hiking trail along Redberry Lake and clearing the view in front of the Research & Education Centre. After lunch and before heading back to the City the group came up with a poem for the community. Each student contributed one sentence:

But I liked it here
Learning through doing
Excellent, more than I thought
Coyotes Yip: Rally for nature
Warm fire sparkling through woods
Real, relevant and revealing
Building friendships
Buffalo Berry and Choke Cherry tasting
Ducks Belly-Flopping
Swimming beaver
Sun-kissed days
Woven together like a spider’s web
Essence of power, speed and beauty
Sustaining a new idea
Communal, and communing

COMMUNITY.

Floating through calm water
Snow geese sparkling in the sky
Community and nature Life experience
...at the most beautiful lake in Saskatchewan.

The following weekend we hosted a second group of SENS students at Redberry Lake. Their focus was on “Ecosystem Science and Sustainability”. After an introduction to the Biosphere Reserve and the ecosystem, the students head out to their demonstration sites on Marshy Creek and area. Here they were accompanied by students from Hafford Central School. We added this experience for the second year now to give school students the chance to get in contact with research, researchers and the University. Together, the younger and University students got an introduction on how to use GPS and compass to map sampling plots, how to take vegetation samples and wildlife samples (bird migration monitoring and banding) and to measuring water quality. The second day was dedicated to research and a night at the K-Bar Inn in Hafford to meet with the community and engage in a discussion about life in a small town. On Sunday morning the students met with a local farmer and with a representative from Ducks Unlimited Canada. In the afternoon they gathered the gained information and presented it to the group. Being this the third year that students took vegetation, wildlife and water samples it can soon be used to compare data over time and draw conclusions.

The annual field trips to Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve is part of the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in spring 2012 with the School of Environment and Sustainability.