



## Students learn the 'science' of teaching

Workshop teaches SLC education majors about environment

By Allison Wickler • Herald Times Reporter • July 21, 2010

MANITOWOC — Silver Lake College senior Josh Klopf donned a blaze-orange lifejacket as he waited to take a boat across Silver Lake to collect water samples and study fish Tuesday.

The environmental workshop he was participating in had been fun up to that point, he said, but for one detail.

"With the exception of the mosquitoes, it's great," said Klopf, an early childhood and elementary education major.

Klopf and 11 other SLC education students are participating in a three-day environmental education workshop, which began Monday and continues through today, to fulfill an environmental requirement for their majors.

For 56 years, the workshop has taught students about the environment. The students also learned how to teach those topics to their future students, said Sister Lorita Gaffney, an associate biology professor. It focuses on outdoor, hands-on activities and field trips to explore ecology.

"They're not just talking about trees," Gaffney said. "They're looking at trees."

Students studied forestry, aquatics and soils Monday and Tuesday. Today, they'll visit Collins Marsh, Vanderbloemen Bog and a conservation farm.

Conservation Education Inc. of Manitowoc County and Silver Lake College sponsored the workshop. Officials from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Manitowoc County Soil and Water Conservation Department helped lead the sessions.

While the workshop isn't new, this is the first year activities were held mostly on the SLC campus,

Gaffney said.

Klopf said he liked how students learned specifically about the local environment and got to focus on Wisconsin ecology through their activities.

SLC senior Ashley Hines enjoyed learning about Project WILD, an environmental conservation and education program used to teach students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Hines, a secondary education major, said Project WILD provides curriculum ideas that all the education majors could use, regardless of the grade levels they'll teach in the future.

Gaffney said students could instead take a three-credit environmental science course during the school year to fulfill their environmental education requirement, but the summer workshop is specifically geared toward future teachers.

Students continue to appreciate the hands-on nature of the three days' environmental activities, she said — "being immersed in it, rather than just talking about it."

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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources fisheries management technician Steve Surendonk, left, shows Silver Lake College education students a northern pike while boating on Silver Lake on Tuesday during an environmental education workshop activity. The students studied fish species with fisheries biologist Steve Hogler, right, and other DNR experts during one session of the three-day workshop that covered environmental topics and prepared the students to teach those topics as future teachers. (Sue Pischke/HTR)



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Silver Lake College education student Ashley Hines looks close at two bluegills Tuesday during a three-day environmental education workshop that 12 education majors participated in this week. During their aquatics session, students learned to identify fish species, counted how many species they caught and measured fish on Silver Lake. (Sue Pischke/HTR)

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