

College students from across the U.S. come to Poconos

Eight in graduate programs participate in weeklong conservation program

By **MARIA SCHRAMM**

Community News Writer

While many college students break out the suntan lotion and head to warmer climates for spring break, eight graduate students spent their time off from classes discussing conservation and exploring the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area during Park Break 2008.

Students from Duke University, Northern Arizona University, Texas A & M University, San Jose State University, American University, University of Vermont, University of Florida and the United Nations University for Peace participated in the weeklong program.

Conservation is a very hot topic nowadays as scientists and environmentalists try to protect the Earth's dwindling natural resources. This is the first year for the program, which was developed to educate the next generation of park managers, conservationists and science professionals about environmental issues facing the world today and in the future.

Students stayed in cabins at the Pocono Environmental Education Center during the program and participated in daily panel sessions at Grey Towers National Historic Site in Milford. The sessions included con-



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Above, John Serrao talks to students about the flora and fauna found in the Pocono Mountains. Below, University of Vermont student Carena J. van Riper listens to John Serrao talk about wildlife conservation in the Pocono Mountains. Her graduate research focuses on human dimensions in natural resource management.

servation discussions with local officials, including Roger Spotts from the Monroe County Conservation District, Delaware Township Supervisor Ileana Hernandez, and Destry Jarvis, president of Outdoor Recreation and Park Services. The panels focused on the shifting tides of conservation policy and history, major resource issues and how conservation policies can be

handled in the 'real world.'

Duke University student Myriah Cornwell, 25, chose to explore her interest in conservation during her break from school. Cornwell has an undergraduate degree in anthropology and is pursuing her PhD in the environment.

"I wanted to connect with people who deal with ongoing issues and understand the practical process of natural resource management," said Cornwell.

Of course, they could not spend their entire week discussing policies and current events. Program organizers made sure that the grad students had the opportunity to get outside and enjoy the outdoors and the Pocono Mountains during their visit. Students spent their spare time at the Cliff Park Inn in Milford, hiking the trails at the Pocono Environmental Education Center and visiting the Delaware Valley Raptor Center in Milford.

On Thursday, students had

the opportunity to go on a guided hike with local naturalist John Serrao and explore the banks of Hornsbeck Creek in the Delaware Water Gap national park.

"The students didn't have a great deal of time to tour the park, so we thought that a 2-hour hike in the park with John

Serrao would be a great opportunity for them. I think the hike was one of the most exciting parts of the week because the unexpected ice on the trail kept us all very entertained," said DWG National Park Management Assistant Debbie O'Leary.

"We were completely off schedule the whole week, which was great because the students were so bright and were so interested. Most of the sessions ran late because they continued to ask questions after questions. The presenters were so impressed with these students," said O'Leary.

Twenty-nine students have participated in the nationwide program at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, one of only four parks chosen, and Acadia National Park in Maine, Gateway National Recreation Area in New York, and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in Indiana. The program was sponsored by the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, Texas A & M University, the George Wright Society and the Student Conservation Association.

O'Leary said the presenters and park officials were very pleased with how the program turned out and that they hope to have the opportunity to host the program in the future.



Pet photo to benefit Humane Society

Thomas Duncan Photography on 113 Seventh St. outside the Lumberyards in Milford will offer an open house "Pets and People, Too" Portrait session on Saturday, March 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. as a benefit for the Pike County Humane Society in Shohola.

For just a \$10 donation to help the animals, participants will have a 5-inch by 7-inch keepsake of their favorite pets. All of the proceeds will go to benefiting the Pike County Humane Society.

"We are grateful to Thomas Duncan Photography for using its studios. It will take the entire community to pull together and help this situation," said Barry Heim, PCHS executive director.

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