



The whole semester contained our Wilderness First Responder certifications, a 3-day Leave No Trace backpacking trip around Turkey Pen Gap, whitewater kayaking and canoeing on local rivers such as the French Broad, Nolichucky, and the Chattooga, a sea kayaking trip to Lake Jocassee, a 5-day sea kayaking trip to Capers Island, climbing on local rock such as Cedar Rock, and a 3-day caving trip up in Radford, Virginia with Jenny Kafsky.

Many people think that WLEE majors only play in the woods the whole time. We do a lot of that, however we also have to come up with multiple lesson plans and teach them to the group.

We also learn a lot about group dynamics, and outdoor ethics. We are training to become better leaders and teachers. The most important part about our Immersion Semester is learning about ourselves, and gaining great relationships and connections.

The greatest adventure during the immersion semester is the planning and doing the 21-day expedition. After weeks of creating a very thorough trip plan, the group came together and did it. Nan Pugh joined us as our Brevard graduate co-leader. For the first three days of our expedition, we spent the days canoeing on Lake James up near Marion, North Carolina, where we taught many of our lessons.

Clyde's son, Josh Carter, gladly joined us for this section of the trip. It was a pleasure to have him there with us as he told us about his experiences and thoughts about the outdoor industry. On day three, we paddled nine miles to the other end of Lake James and met our

van there that would shuttle us up to the Blue Ridge Parkway and begin our backpacking section of our trip on the Mountains to Sea trail. Starting off, we thought we only had a mile to go before we got to the campsite that we had planned to stay at. Turns out, there was nowhere to camp. So, we continued on down the trail in the pouring rain for a few miles trying to find somewhere flat enough and out of the Parkway boundaries.

It got pretty late and dark, so we decided to off-trail downhill to an old logging road where there may be some potential campsites. During this, Clyde's knee went out on top of everything else. Sadly enough, Clyde had to be evacuated. It was a huge disappointment for all of us to spend the entire semester with Clyde, and not even have him on our trip.

On the brighter side, we got to spend quality time in the field with the rest of the WLEE faculty, such as Robert Dye, John Buford, and Ryan Donovan. We continued down the Mountains to Sea Trail, and went to the top of Mount Mitchell. We got shuttled around Asheville and dropped off into Pisgah National Forest. It was great being back on our home grounds.

We continued our backpacking section and began making our way down to Looking Glass Rock. The three days before we arrived to the glorious rock face, Nan and Robert left us for our independent travel section. This was essentially a "test" to see how well we work together as a group without any instructors with us. For many of us, this was one of our favorite sections of the trip.

We successfully made it to Looking Glass

alive, where we met Ryan and Nan for the climbing section of our trip. We spent 3 days climbing on the Southside of Looking Glass. For the last two days of our trip, we all decided we wanted to make it back to campus on our own without the instructors.

We all cranked out all the different tasks we needed to get checked-off for the trip during the climbing section, and were given the reward of independent travel. After Ryan and Nan left us, we began our final stretch to make it back to campus. On our last night, we slept at the top of Cedar Rock Mountain just like we did during our WLEE 101 backpacking trip.

It brought back so many memories, and it was the perfect way to end our trip. The next morning, we all woke up at 4:45 a.m. and began our trek back to campus through the Kings Creek trail.

We made it back on November 21, 2011 with big smiles on our faces, and big appetites for food that didn't need to be hydrated before we could eat it. Even though Clyde did have to be evacuated, the trip was an overall success.

Throughout the semester we have grown as a team and as a family. This has been a semester that none of us will ever forget, and the friendships we made will never fade.

We all look forward to hearing about the future immersion semesters and hope they have as great of a time as we did and hope they learn as much as we did.