Promoting Sustainability Knowledge and Skills within UWRF Outdoor Education Students
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Background
The Outdoor Education program is a minor option within the UWRF Health and Human Performance Department. The program aims to provide students with knowledge and skills in the areas of outdoor education, adventure leadership, and experiential learning that can be applied in a variety of educational and recreational environments. The pedagogical approach to the majority of the program curriculum focuses on high-impact educational experiences utilizing active, experiential methods.

Rationale/Purpose
PED 301- Foundations of Outdoor Leadership is the capstone course of the Outdoor Education minor program and encompasses a broad range of important historical, contemporary, and philosophical topics in the field. Heretofore, the topic of sustainability was not included in the Outdoor Education program curriculum. However, the intersection of outdoor leadership, environmental education, conservation, and sustainability continues to strengthen. Outdoor education students needed knowledge and skills in this important area.

Project
With support from the St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development, UWRF became an Educational Partner of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Leave No Trace is the worldwide leader in providing training and advocacy efforts to encourage the responsible enjoyment and active stewardship of the outdoors. As a result of this partnership, UWRF gains access to a variety of resources, training, and educational information, while also providing support to a leading organizational advocate for sustainability education around the world.

Outcomes
During the fall of 2011, all students enrolled in PED 301 participated in a Leave No Trace Trainer Course held on November 20th in the University Center and November 21st at Willow River State Park in Hudson, WI. As a result of this training, these students are now certified to teach Leave No Trace Awareness Workshops. One student provided one such workshop to the Outdoor Education class at River Falls High School later that semester. This training will become a permanent course feature, with the fall 2012 training already scheduled for September 27-28.

“All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land”. – Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

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