

River Quest

Mrs. Uremovich

May 17, 2011

By Paul Foldesi

St. James Catholic School

On May 9, 2011, I went to River Quest on the Vista Star. I was not looking forward to River Quest because of the terrible weather, but it turned out to be fun and very educational. My favorite stations were about hypothermia, rip currents and lifejackets, oil spills, and invasive species. When I was on the boat, the water was nice and clean. We saw pictures of the St. Louis River a long time ago, and it was tremendously dirty. I learned how important it is to keep our waters clean. My experience with River Quest was extremely enlightening and really fun.

Let us start with hypothermia. Regular body temperature is ninety eight point six degrees Fahrenheit and hypothermia starts at ninety five degrees Fahrenheit. I have experience with being cold. When I was younger, I went fishing with my dad and his friend. I was walking on a sheet of ice on the river, but the sheet of ice ended and I fell into the icy, cold water. I did not know what to do, but luckily my dad's friend saw me fall in and he helped me out. I was so cold! After that we went home. My dad was not carrying waterproof matches. If he fell in too, we probably would have gotten hypothermia. I will use this information in the future to keep an eye on my brothers just in case they fall in. This information will also remind me to carry ice picks just in case I fall in and no one sees me and so I can pull myself onto the ice.

Not only do I have to take caution in the winter, but in the summer, too because of rip currents at Park Point. Rip currents are thin and only carry me out about one hundred feet. To escape a rip current; I either swim to the side or ride the current and yell for help because sometimes the current will bring me back. Rip currents are very dangerous. I learned that over fifty people were saved last Christmas in Florida. Since I go to beaches such as Park Point often, I will use this information in the future to escape from rip currents. I will also use this information when I go to Oregon because I am going swimming and I might get into a rip current.

Rip currents are a big problem for people and oil spills are a big problem for marine animals. So, oil spills need to get cleaned up to prevent death of marine animals. When oil spills occur, the Coast Guard uses big floatable pads that suck up oil from the water, or they use booms that surround the oil. Then the Coast Guard sucks the oil up with a vacuum. I will use this information in future by getting my boat fixed if it is leaking oil because that oil could leak into Lake Superior. This information might even convince me to be in the Coast Guard and help them clean up oil spills.

Not only oil spills are bad for marine animals, but invasive species are also bad. Invasive species can destroy whole habitats! Invasive species usually do not have a predator, so their population grows very fast and takes over. We need to prevent invasive species. I can do this by: cleaning my boat, reporting any non-native species to local DNR, and not releasing any live bait into the wild. If I try to prevent invasive species, I am doing my part to save our lakes and rivers! I often go fishing on a boat with my dad and his friends so I will clean my boat every time I come out of the water, and I will not release minnows into the lake.

I am glad I got to go to River Quest rather than spending the day crammed up in a classroom. I learned a lot about my community and rivers and that what ever I do can affect everything around me. Everything I learned on River Quest, I can use in the future to help keep my lakes and rivers clean. I am really glad I learned that we should not dump cleaners down the drain because I used to do that, but now I will not. I hope everyone younger than me will be able to experience River Quest so they can also learn to be safe and protective of their lakes and rivers. Overall, River Quest was educational and really fun.