
MEMORANDUM

TO: DR. MARGARET LANG
FROM: DAKOTA GILLETTE
SUBJECT: POTAWOT FIELD TRIP
DATE: 10/8/2010

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the field trip to Potawot Village could be broken down into a few branches. However, I believe that the main reason that we went there, was to show us students what can become of an environmental engineering degree and how if you set your mind to something and put in the time for it, then you can make it happen.

DISCUSSION

Our guide, Eric Johnson, specifically told us the most predominant problems he had to overcome to create Potawot Village as it is now. The first problem he had was getting enough people in the community to join his cause to build Potawot. With allies come enemies, and he had numerous amounts of both. The next hurdle was going to court and discussing it, as many of the members of the community did not accept that Native Americans actually exist currently in the community. It was a stressful and emotional process, which didn't end after the council granted him permission to build on the selected farm land. Eric also said that getting grants to build were tricky because there are rules and requirements for each grant, and in order to qualify, and had to phrase his requests carefully. Overall, he has only received 2 grants from the government, and a bit of donations. Since he received so little money, he had to apply his education to spend it wisely. Hence, Potawot Village is less than 50% Solar Powered, and moving into becoming 80% Solar powered as soon as possible.

Because of all of the time and hard work Eric has put into the making of Potawot Village, he has been able to improve the lives of many Native Americans. This is because of the resources Potawot Village provides, like the health center, which is open to all Native Americans in the area. It is also a representation and prime existing example of how life should be. There are paths for people to walk on in the field to get from the main building to the gardens. Also, the buildings are centered around a water system, which represents a source of life.

I have done a little bit of research on current energy efficient projects going on around the world, and I have found one which interests me. "The E₈ San Cristobal Wind Project in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, was successfully commissioned on October 1, 2007". This is an 8 year long project which entails using wind power instead of diesel. "The E₈ expects the project to continue paving the way for the fossil fuel free electrification of the Galapagos Archipelago". If I ever get the chance, I would like to go and work on this project. I recently visited the Galapagos Islands in June 2008, and this wondrous place has impacted my life and what I want to do in the future. As a National Park, and one of the Seven wonders of the world, the Galapagos needs to stay

as a National Park, and have a “as small as possible” amount of human residence, and keeping the Galapagos clean of all types of pollution would make it that much better.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Visiting the Potawot Village has opened my eyes to a few things. For one, I personally did not know that there were people that wanted to restore the Native American lives and living styles and preserve our history. I have a great love and respect for Native Americans, and I’m glad that I am able to share that with others up here at Humboldt. I have learned a great deal about how hard and satisfying being an environmental scientist or engineer can be when out in the real world. I have also learned of projects going on around the world that I have taken an interest to, and want to be a part of in the future. The Potawot field trip has been a great experience for me, and I can’t wait for what else I have yet to see and learn.