
FIELD TRIP MEMORANDUM

TO: PROFESSOR MARGARET LANG
FROM: LAURA WONG
SUBJECT: POTAWOT FIELD TRIP
DATE: OCTOBER 5, 2010
CC: NONE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to discuss the purpose of our class field trip to the Potawot Health Village, how environmental scientists helped their community, and similar projects that are just starting.

SUMMARY

This memo will cover three topics. First, an explanation of why we went to the Potawot Health Village, second, a description of one aspect of how an environmental scientist improved their community and finally, a description of one aspect of a similar project that you are interested in that is just beginning.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of our trip to the Potawot Health Village was to provide the engineering students with a functioning example of how environmental scientists and engineers worked together to help improve the lives of people in a community. While at the Health Village, we were able to see a successful, self-sufficient, environmentally friendly building. While from the outside, it would appear that the structure is made with redwood, it is actually made with concrete that was formed to resemble redwood plank houses. Concrete was not only the cheaper option, but it also spared the lives of trees, weathers well, can stand up to extreme weather conditions, and provides good insulation. Another feature of the Potawot Health Village was the creek that runs around the garden outside. The water that runs in the creek consists of rainwater that is collected around the property. For example, the water that falls onto the parking lot runs down into canals which direct the water towards the creek/wetlands. This happens because the parking lot was built at a slight angle, just so that they could make the water go where they want. As a result, they do not need to pump in water from somewhere else to water the plants in the wetlands.

Another environmental sustainability project that has started fairly recently is Lava Lake Land and Livestock. Since being established a decade ago, it is now a “national leader in grazing management and landscape-scale conservation.” It is one of the best examples of sustainable ranching in the American West.

CONCLUSION

Altogether, this field trip was enjoyable and helpful in the sense that one can not always see a practical application for the skills they are learning until they see them being used in real life. Hopefully, trips like this one will inspire other projects like it.