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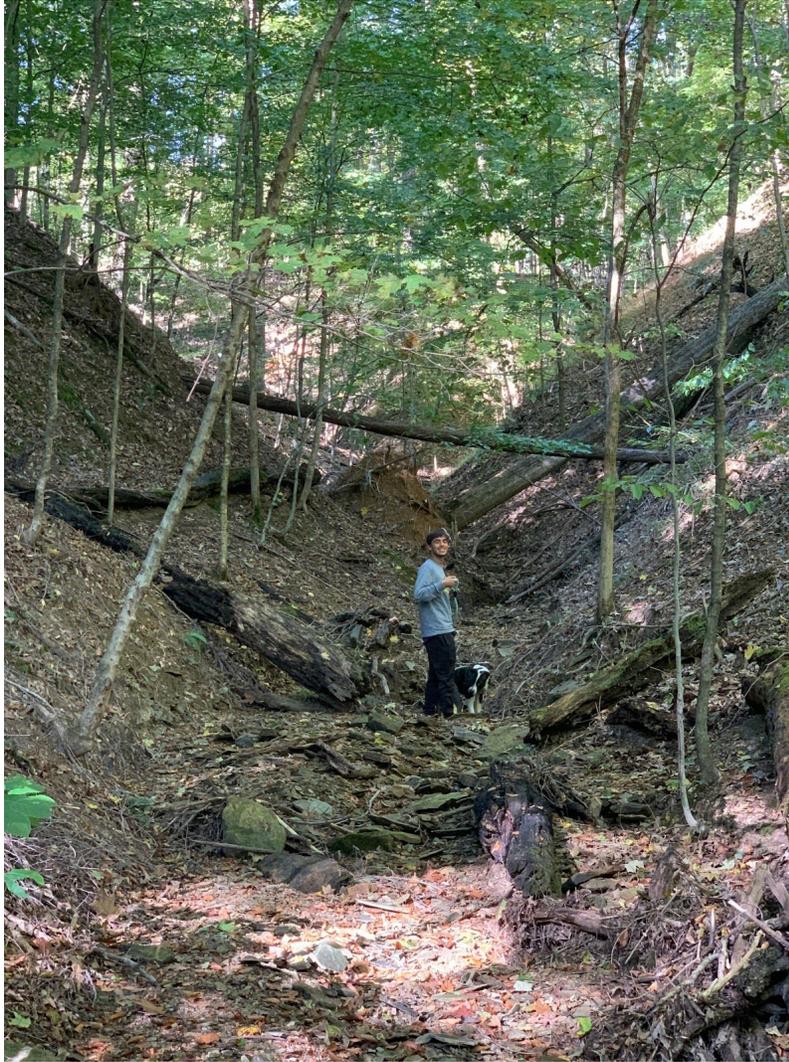
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Bloomington High School South

Day 12 Greenest



At this point in the adventure, I realized noticed how many trees I had seen like this one—fallen and decomposing. It was after closer inspection did I remember that it isn't simply a dead tree trunk, but rather a new habitat for a whole host of different tiny and microscopic organisms. There were spider webs and other insects in the broken branches and leaves surrounding it, there were (unseen) organisms helping to decompose it, there was a lot of moss, and there were even holes in the trunk about half an inch in diameter.



An interesting part of this specific part of the woods we explored was that it was not flat at all. Each slope was very steep, which made me think that there must have been rivers in the past or other reasons that caused the curvature of the land. My theory was strengthened when I saw the many flat or small rocks on the ground, which reminded me of the ones I typically see in a creek or river. No other areas in the woods had those rocks except in the areas that were carved out of the hills like this. I also noticed that the trees around this area had smaller trunks, perhaps because the soil is dissimilar to the rest of the woods because of past rivers? This change in tree type was also accompanied by a lack of creatures I could see, like insects.



At this point in the adventure, we saw a doe in the distance but couldn't get a picture of it before it ran away. I noticed that the tree trunk/branches (behind the dogs) were different from the one we saw earlier, as the earlier one was a whole trunk, but this one seems to be splintered into pieces. Additionally, the small rocks I saw earlier were still in the area but the flat rocks were gone. I'm not sure of the reasons behind these, but I think it has something to do with the river—maybe it was where it started or flowed less heavily, hence the small rocks. Part of that pile of branches might also be roots, as we saw many roots of trees sticking out the ground throughout the hike. Many were even going down the slope of the hills!

I expressed the intention of being grateful pre-adventure. During the hike, it helped me to think about how grateful I am for my friends and the simplicity of nature. After all, the adventure helped me forget about the stresses of normal life and to focus more on the very core aspects of humanity, social interaction and living alongside nature. It reminded me to be grateful for the fact that I do still have the chance to experience nature and that forests still exist. It also reminded me to be grateful for the fact that everything that brings me stress is man made, which means that I can get rid of that stress by either finding a direct solution to it or changing my mindset. The thoughts that nothing is set in stone and nothing is permanent except for our planet helped ground me in the moment, and for that, I am grateful.

I believe that the experience of actually adventuring did not strengthen my relationship with the earth as much as my reflection on it did. Of course, being in nature was calming in itself, but by going on the adventure with friends, I did not have as much time to think about what was around me as I would have had if I went alone; however, looking back at the pictures and trying to remember what I noticed during the hike helped to make me see the complexities of the environment and truly appreciate them. This reflection is what makes me feel a greater responsibility towards taking care of the earth. I think that in the future, going on an adventure with only one friend or alone would help strengthen that feeling so that I can focus less on socializing and more on nature. I remember previously I have gone hiking outside of Indiana with just my mom and sister, and those hikes (that were spent mostly in silence) allowed me to engage much more with nature and actively reflect while still hiking.



pollutionsux So grateful for the frands who will go on adventures with me 🥺🥺🥺

Adventuring (whether that be hiking, climbing, etc.) is an experience that too few people have enjoyed, but once you submerge yourself in nature, you'll understand for the rest of your life why you should care about the environment.

People in today's time often have a short attention span, which is a core reason behind why it's so difficult to care truly and passionately about an issue. This is also why a large majority of people simply cannot bring themselves to care about the environmental crisis occurring all around us. Sound like you? The solution is simple: just go take a hike—one is all you'll need to want to go back for more.

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