

From Becki Wells, Jan, 2004 upon completion of an Outdoor Education Internship and Naturalist Certificate at Au Sable Institute:

Dr. Silvius,

I hope all is well for you and Mrs. Silvius as you are preparing for Christmas. Thank you for your e-mails, I enjoy reading them even though I am sometimes slow to reply.

My internship experience was WONDERFUL!!!! I am so thankful for the time I spent up there. I really enjoyed teaching the children. The experience gave me confidence that I CAN be a good teacher and I WOULD enjoy having a career in environmental education for the rest of my life. I was amazed at how pliable many of the children's minds were. In just those 4 short hours that I was with the children I could see how my words and what I was teaching them had made an impact on their minds. And most of the schools that come to Au Sable bring students from every grade level through elementary, so each student will visit Au Sable many times. I can see how big of an impact my teaching, and Au Sable's environmental education program has on forming these young people's opinions of environmental issues.

Trish Fagg was also very wonderful. She is such a wise person. If I had a problem with a particular student, I could go to her at the end of the day and she would tell me how I could have better handled the situation. She was always so encouraging, never said anything that brought me down. Even if I did something wrong, she corrected me in a way that was encouraging. Trish is a great woman.

I also had a lot of FUN during my time in Michigan. There were 2 other interns there, plus Emily Hoekwater who is the Program Assistant. The four of us did a LOT together. We had so much fun. Some of my favorite memories included making smore's in the fireplace, playing euchre, cooking dinner for each other, squeezing on the couch and watching movies, visiting Hartwick Pines and Mackinac Island, backpacking/camping in the UP, surviving a blizzard with no electricity for 3 days and hiking through the snow. These are times I will never forget!

As for my life after my internship: I have returned to work at the Cracker Barrel until I leave on the 27th to return to Au Sable to cook for the students during J-term. I am so thankful the people at Cracker Barrel allowed me to come back so I could earn money. And although I really enjoy my co-workers, being there makes me long for a job in my field where I can use my hard-earned degree. So I have been searching the internet for jobs and working on cover letters to send out in hopes of making a career switch soon! I don't know what job I will end up with, but I do know that God has an exciting plan for me and everything will work out.

My goal is to visit Cedarville sometime this winter, I promised some friends a visit. I would love to stop by and visit you while I am down, too. Have a wonderful Christmas!

Becki Wells