

2007 GSA Denver Annual Meeting (28–31 October 2007)

**Paper No. 203-12**

**Presentation Time:** 11:00 AM-11:15 AM

## A CAMPUS LAKE AS A PEDAGOGICAL OPPORTUNITY

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Furman Lake is a 28 acre lake that sits at the center of Furman University's campus where it serves as a campus icon and community gathering place. In the past several years the environmental quality of the lake and its environs has been declining due to increased nutrient loading from excessive waterfowl populations, surface runoff, stormwater discharge, and denuded feeder creeks. As such the university has initiated an extensive lake restoration plan intended to improve the environmental quality of the lake and surrounding landscape.

This restoration project provides an extraordinary opportunity to re-create the lake as a teaching resource. This past spring the university's Watershed Hydrology course was transformed from what was historically a traditional lecture based course with a global emphasis to a field based course with a local emphasis. Specifically, Furman Lake was used as a field site to teach the science of hydrology by focusing on understanding and quantifying the natural physical processes (precipitation, evapotranspiration, runoff, soil water, and groundwater) that comprise the lake's water budget while considering local human impacts (e.g., development, land cover change, irrigation, focused drainage from paved surfaces) to this budget. Making Furman Lake the centerpiece for this course (1) provided students with easy and convenient access to a field site that afforded ample opportunities for field based, experiential learning, class exercises, (2) provided the university with some of the necessary background hydrological and chemical data for tracking improvements to the lake as the lake restoration efforts proceed, and (3) helped promote a sense of personal environmental responsibility as students explored the linkages between their and the university's practices and the impact of these practices to the lake ecosystem.

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[General Information for this Meeting](#)

Session No. 203

[Learning in the Field: Effective Strategies for Teaching Undergraduate Geology Outside the Classroom](#)

Colorado Convention Center: 603

8:00 AM-12:00 PM, Wednesday, 31 October 2007

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