



Biology lessons in Costa Rica

Over spring break, Manitou Springs High School science teacher Ben Mack led a student trip to Costa Rica to study biology. Mr. Mack shares a brief summary of their educational spring break.

On March 24, myself and Manitou Springs assistant soccer coach Kevin Dlugos took 13 young, aspiring biologists to Costa Rica for nine days to learn about its diverse ecosystems and work with leatherback sea turtles in a conservation effort.

We arrived in the capital city of San Jose and the next day we left civilization behind. We went off the grid into the rainforest of Tirimbina, where we stayed in a local field

station and studied local bats and other native flora and fauna.

After four days in the rainforest, we traveled to a remote research station on the Caribbean coast called Pacuare. There, we patrolled beaches into the early morning hours searching for nesting leatherback sea turtles.

When encountering a nesting female, we would measure her, take the temperatures of her and the nest, tag her or read a preexisting chip, count eggs and

relocate eggs to a more suitable location.

While at Pacuare, students conducted their own research, gathering data and presenting in small groups. It was definitely a ton of work as we often walked more than 10,000 steps on patrols.

The mosquitos and sand flies could be brutal, but it was an incredible experience that I'm sure none of the

students will ever forget, and it gave them a good idea of what real biological field research looks like.

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Alumni Corner: Timothy Longfield, MSHS Class of 2012

What are you currently doing?

I am in my second year of law school at Pepperdine University School of Law in Malibu, California. After graduation, I'll be returning to Colorado to clerk on the Colorado Court of Appeals.

What advice do you have for current students at MSSD14?

Start reading old books. Thinkers and writers from different times and cultures didn't share many of the same assumptions we make about life, morality, politics, religion, etc. It is difficult to recognize how much we simply assume to be true because of the time and place in which we are born.

In fifty years, there will be certain things we assume to be true as a matter of course that will seem so outlandish that our grandchildren will scratch their heads and wonder



how we could have ever thought that. The problem is, it's hard to see outside of our own cultural biases and preconceived notions and predict which of our beliefs our grandchildren will one day laugh at. The best antidote to this is, in the words of C.S. Lewis, "to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books."

Keep trying new things — if you're an athlete, audition for a role in a play, learn photography or pick up an instrument. There are many opportunities to develop a new skill/interest at MSSD, so take advantage of them!

What did you personally learn that has "stuck with you" while at MSSD14?

One thing that's stuck with me

from my time at MSSD is a sense that it's OK and even beneficial to be skeptical. My teachers at Manitou taught me to examine theories more closely, to be wary of easy answers, and to consider multiple sides of an issue. As I'm studying the law, this practice has paid dividends because there are always multiple sides to a legal issue and an argument that initially seems persuasive can often be meritless once you look at it more closely.

My time at Manitou also taught me that how you treat people matters far more than any other measure of success in life. My dad (who just happens to be the district superintendent) would tell my sister and I every day before dropping us off at school: "Be kind to everyone you meet and confident in who you are." The Manitou community showed me how to put his advice into practice — by valuing friendship over efficiency, compassion over criticism, and others over self.

Artist of the Week



Artist: Mary Kilpela, 8th Grade, Manitou Springs Middle School

NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS THIS FRIDAY, APRIL 27.

