

This project was fun. I love being outdoors and hiking. I loved being able to combine one of my absolute favorite activities with school. I will admit that the writing was far more of a challenge than the hiking. Yes, I did traverse where, “the hills are the steepest and the river the wildest,” but ever I found the writing more daunting. I have spent a lot of time on it, and I hope that it shows. The best thing about the project was the hiking, but I really liked my trail journal piece. I also liked reading something and realizing, “oh wow, that was just another example of what Mr. Zemsky and I were talking about!”

In my research, I learned many things I had not known before. Many of these things I included in my project, but there were a few fascinating facts that I simply could not fit in. My favorite of these is the story of Princess Bluefeather. At Indian Steps Museum, there is a buckskin outfit and a set of letters belonging to Princess Bluefeather. She was an Aztec princess visiting Vandersloot. Bluefeather wished to have some lullabies copyrighted. The copyright company wrote back to her and wanted to know the exact date she had written these lullabies and were wondering if Princess Bluefeather was really her name.

The topic of my project is hugely expansive. Taking this into consideration, this finished project would not be complete with out a list of a few improvements I would make if I had more time. I would find a more professional way of publishing this; I would wish to make the finished product a booklet. In this booklet I would make the addition of my pictures printed on the pages, with captions. I would also have a map before each section of the trail in my trail journal, showing the portion of the trail it describes. Finally, I would have a good map of the trail in its entirety.

In doing any project of such scope, one must ask, “What next?” In the past I have made up many such answers to science fair projects, none having ever been acted upon. This project has been far more meaningful to me than any of my science fair projects, hence the question, “What next?” too is much more significant. There is always the possibility that for another Magnet I could hike more of the trail. I would love to see more of it, but I think for my next Magnet I might want to explore something different. In the Visions of the Susquehanna exhibit at York College, there were a few paintings of the northern Susquehanna at its origins in New York. My mom and I were quite inspired and we would love to visit Binghamton, one of the towns in New York along the river.

It is my dream to someday thru-hike the Appalachian Trail. The hiking of the blue trail did not prepare me for such an experience; day-hiking with a day pack is nothing like backpacking with a 30 pound pack for six months. I believe the thinking and observing I did while hiking and writing is what helped me with my dream. My appreciation of nature and enthusiasm for the idea of a thru-hike has increased as a result of this project.

I really have no idea in what I will major when I am in college, or what I want to do when I am out of college, but this project has also helped me a bit in that area. I would love to do something with protecting the environment, or maybe English. This project allowed me to do both. The examples of the eagles and Lauxmont Farms are inspiration for a career of protecting such magnificent nature.