

Silver Lake Serves as Local Resource for Students



Cell Biology Students (L to R): Rachel Evans, Ryan Dueppengiesser, Tyler Cowie, Tycen Musclow, Donovan Bush, Mathew Tallman, Lydia Boyd, Jessica Kelly, Grace Huff, Sydney Bell, Coleen Flynn, Alex Jensen, and Mia Rogers.

“For years, I’ve been trying to get our kids involved at Silver Lake,” said high school science teacher Todd Shuskey.

Shuskey was able to make his goal a reality by establishing a partnership between his college-level Cell Biology students and the Silver Lake Association.

At the end of last school year Shuskey worked with Dr. Frank Bright, a chemistry professor at the University at Buffalo and the co-vice president of the Silver Lake Association, to identify projects that would allow students to participate in real science investigations involving Silver Lake.



Photo provided by Todd Shuskey.

The first project under the new partnership involves the identification and repair of damaged riparian areas (interface between land and stream). Areas need to be repaired so nutrients don’t run into Silver Lake, causing algae to grow. This includes the replanting of native vegetation to help ease nutrient runoff. Shuskey and his students traveled out to Smith Road at the end of September to survey the plants that currently live in that area. Students will have to monitor the vegetation regularly. This project is in conjunction with the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District. The Silver Lake Association received a grant to purchase vegetation for that area, which is a project that students could help with in the future.

Along with the new partnership, Shuskey is in the process of establishing a Silver Lake Environmental Club at PCS for any high school student interested in joining. This would provide additional opportunities for students to get hands-on environmental and science experience from a local water source. Any data that is collected can be used by the Cell Biology students to conduct further research in class.

“This is something local that impacts our entire community,” said Shuskey. “I’m hoping the kids will see the importance this has on where they live. Any interaction between our students and community is a wonderful opportunity.”