

BioQuest!



Leatherback Sea Turtle, an endangered species that our students will help protect at the Pacuare Reserve.

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Dear PEAK Students, Parents, and Teachers,

WE MUST POSTPONE THE COSTA RICA TRAVEL MEETING because Capital High School will host incoming freshman at 6 PM on March 5. Instead, our final logistics meeting for sea turtle researchers and parents will be on March 19. See the schedule below.

This week we concluded the *Love of Wisdom!* unit as students debated the proposals that college should be free and we should eliminate age-related causes of death. Capital High School debate coach Nick Taffs guided the debate process, suggested strategies, and provided feedback. Students also completed an interest assessment to identify potential careers that fit their strengths. Eight grade students continued the discussion at our Wednesday meeting. The survey will be used to develop activities for the spring Leadership Conference—PLEASE PUT IT ON YOUR SCHEDULE FOR TUESDAY, MAY 28.

On February 27, we launch our next unit, *BioQuest!* This unit focuses on research and protection of vulnerable wildlife species in Montana, Costa Rica, and wherever the habitat is for the species students choose as their independent study subject. Students who travel to Costa Rica will do most of their research at the Ecology Project station in the Pacuare Reserve. Students not traveling to Costa Rica can research a species in Montana or elsewhere. Several wildlife experts have agreed to share their experiences and knowledge in the coming weeks.

On February 27, we will meet 6-8 PM **Carroll College Simperman Hall in room 212.** Dr. Grant Hokit will give us a tour of the science labs and share make a presentation titled, *"From the Amazon to Alaska: A Biologist's Research Career in the Field."* As a landscape ecologist interested in biogeography, infectious disease and animal behavior, Dr. Hokit has served Carroll College for 28 years as a professor of biology. His research career began in the early 1990's with investigations into the decline of amphibian populations around the globe. As part of a team of research scientists, they tested for the effects of UV-b radiation and pathogenic fungus on the decline of frog populations in Oregon. Dr. Hokit continued working with herpetofauna by studying the population viability of endemic species of reptiles and amphibians in the unique scrub habitat of Florida. More recently, he has worked on mapping the distribution of amphibian populations in Montana, Alaska, and the cloud forests of Ecuador. His research career has taken him all over the globe, mostly to remote destinations. His presentation will focus on what it is like being a research scientist studying animal populations in the field.

To get to Simperman Hall, enter the Carroll College Campus on Huntuhausen Way, off Lyndale Avenue. On Hunthausen Way, you will be looking at Simperman. Drive to the stop sign at the T and take a left into the parking area and there is a loading zone where you can stop to drop off. Enter the south door which is the closest to the drop off.

Upcoming PEAK 8-12 Meetings—Please note the different venues!

6-8 PM, Tuesday, February 27, **Carroll College Simperman Hall room 212.** Kick off new unit – *BioQuest!*—focused on wildlife research and protection.

Wednesday, February 28, CR Anderson 8th Grade Lunch and Advisor, Room 123. Bring laptops.

6-8 PM Tuesday, March 5: Most of the 8th grade students will be at Capital High School. The reset of us will meet in room 120 at Helena College.

Wednesday, March 6, CR Anderson 8th Grade Lunch and Advisor, Room 123. Bring laptops.

6-8 PM, Tuesday, March 12: **Montana Wild,** 2668 Broadwater Avenue. Meet first with Ken McDonald, director of Wildlife at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Next will be a presentation on Swift research in Glacier National Park by Last Chance Audubon. STUDENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SET UP CHAIRS at 5:30 PM—please let me know if you can come early.

Wednesday, March 13, CR Anderson 8th Grade Lunch and Advisor, Room 123. Bring laptops.

6-8 PM, Tuesday, March 19, Helena College **Room 003** – that's downstairs in the Donaldson Building where we usually meet. Required meeting for all Sea Turtle Ecology Course travelers and their parents. This will be our final meeting before we depart for Costa Rica.