

Cloud Rimer

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Dr. Harnish

FURSCA End of Summer Report

My name is Cloud Rimer, and I am a rising senior at Albion College. I'm a double major and a double minor. My majors are Anthropology and History, while my minors are Educational Studies and Paleontology. This summer, I got to do a FURSCA project with the Albion College Department of Anthropology and Sociology. My project had many goals originally, including monitoring the wild rice in the Kalamazoo River that runs through the Albion College Whitehouse Nature Center, making one interpretive sign, and creating a ten-minute thematic presentation. Right before my project started, Dr. Harnish, the professor I worked with, received a grant that covered the funding for creating signs. As a result, my project changed paths to focus more on the interpretive program instead of the sign(s), and my FURSCA project's funding was allocated to fund me taking a course through the National Association for Interpretation.



The first part of my project was spent finishing projects that had been started during the spring 2025 semester in Dr. Harnish's Anthropology Methods course, doing background research for the rest of my project, and beginning to

monitor the wild rice on the river. In addition to finishing old projects, we also started a new one: animal floor mats. We are making twenty-four floor mats with animals on them for programming that can be used at the Whitehouse Nature Center. While this was happening, I was also learning how to monitor the rice on the river, and I was working to create a plan for others to follow and do the same. This involved floating the river every ten days, taking soil and water samples, and running various tests on both. We learned during our project that the tests we were running were too simple and that we would need to buy more specific tests if we wanted an answer better than something like “the pH of this water is between 6-8, which is required for living organisms.” We have also been taking lots of pictures at our locations to document where things are growing and the animals and plants that are around. This information is being used to be better caretakers of the rice, better partners to the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (Albion College’s tribal partners with whom we have been working), and for educational purposes. I made an interpretive program about the rice, which I will mention in the next paragraph, but this can/will also be used for classes and other programming.



The next portion of my project, the faculty that I was working with took the reins on monitoring the rice. This was because I was busy taking the certified interpretive guide course through the National Association for Interpretation. This course lasted two weeks and taught me how to be a good interpreter and how to create and deliver quality interpretive programs. At the end of the course, I passed the program, becoming a certified interpretive guide. I also created and delivered a ten-minute interpretive program about harvesting Mnomen (wild rice) with a

specific lens on how this process showcases resilience, community, and the braiding of Western and Indigenous knowledge. Creating and delivering this program was a great experience and challenge. I would recommend this course to anyone interested in interpretation, especially with instructor Rita Nethersole, who was an amazing help and guide the entire time.



This project was not only important in my process of learning how to be a good interpreter, which I believe will be fundamental to any career path I choose, but also for me to learn what it means to be part of a community. There was virtually no part of my project that could be attributed to just one person; it was a widespread effort with everyone pitching in their piece. This was an integral learning experience for me in my academic career, but also for my personal and professional growth. The skills that I learned this summer will continue to aid me for the rest of my life. I am so incredibly grateful that I was able to participate in this program and very excited to share my work at MidSURE in July of this year and at Elkin Isaac in the spring.

