Web of Water Webisode 3: In the Sandhills

Transcript

Chief Chavis: Haikola, it means “Hello.” Pretty much all of life comes back direct or indirectly to the water.

Ian Sanchez: We talked a lot about these cycles, and how everything is connected and balanced…Native Americans seem to understand the balance of nature early on, and respected the balance of nature.

Chief Chavis: It doesn’t matter what part of the country you were from. The east coast, the mountains, the west coast, the northwest, you built your lodge, your village around where there was water. You needed it as an individual, the rest of your family needed it, also your animals needed it.

Karen Kustafic, Park Ranger: Well this is a really dynamic system. The Broad is a huge watershed and it drains a great deal of the upstate. So while it looks pretty calm today, in flood if we were standing here, the water would be up over our heads. And so this rich floodplain forest that's on the sides of us has accumulated over years of deposits of silt from the upstream. It's a really healthy nourishing system; if we go downstream a little bit today we'll get to see how wonderful and diverse it is. And as we come through we'll see lots of braided islands where the Saluda and the Broad have met…over millions of years they've dropped and interplayed together, dropped sediment and formed all these great islands and they are home to all sorts of wonderful secrets. I hope we get to see lots of that today.

The cool thing is, right over here, all the way on the far shore you can see where that little white sign is? That white sign is part of the Saluda Hydro warning system, letting you know that the Saluda River level may change rapidly, if that horn goes off you are responsible to get to on a high spot on the bank of the river up out of the river on the rocks. But I really want you to see this because you've been paddling down the Saluda, and here is the first spot that the Saluda touches the Broad River, so we're at a real "you are here" geographic spot. This is where the Saluda comes into the Broad and we begin this about half-mile of braided river that's the confluence of the Saluda and the Broad. When we get down to the Gervais Street Bridge, it turns into the Congaree, but

in this area, there's all this interplay. The Broad can be up and flooding, it can actually, when the Broad's running in flood, it can back up into the Saluda and wash out that bottom rapid, Shannon, can be completely go from a 10 to 12 foot gradient to about a foot, and then conversely if they decide to generate on the Saluda when the Broad is running low, that flow will come all the way across and fill the riverbed here. So it's a very changing, dynamic system we've got between these two rivers and this is a really good spot to see it.

Ian Sanchez and students (singing): "The plants are the ones that make food from the sun, they're called producers, they're called producers."

Ian Sanchez: Isn't that fantastic! The water that's in your body right now might have been up in the Appalachian Mountains, in fact, it might have been in Africa at one time. It might have been in the crust of the earth. It might have been drank by a dinosaur.

Students: Ewww!

Ian Sanchez: It might have been grown in a plant and sucked up by the roots!

Students: Ewww!

Ian Sanchez: It might have shot through those leaves and went back up in the air.

Students: Ewww!

Ian Sanchez: It might have, probably traveled, right down this waterway right here and was sucked up by something else. And then you went ahead and you drank it. And now it's running in your body right now and all the stuff that's in it. Can you imagine that [end]?