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## From Dayton to Pittsburgh

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*University of Dayton*

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Friday, December 23, 2011

# From Dayton to Pittsburgh

Allie Rakowski

Dayton's rivers hold a lot of importance to the city and the people around them. After spending last semester learning about the conservation of these rivers I thought I'd look and see what Pennsylvania does to promote the awareness and the conservation of its rivers. What I came across was pretty cool. Pennsylvania has been awarding rivers "River of the Year" since 1983. This is the second year that the selection process has been done through a public vote. Basically these nominations and the River of the Year honor are designed to raise public awareness of the selected rivers and to promote the conservation needs and achievements. Last year's "River of the Year" was awarded to the Delaware River, which is the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi.

After a river is selected, local organizations organize year round activities intended to celebrate and promote the waterway. One of these activities is a sojourn. A sojourn is an extended paddling trip for people who like to canoe, kayak, or simply enjoy the water. The sojourn is aimed at raising awareness of the recreational, environmental, and heritage values of our rivers. The Delaware River sojourn was a weeklong paddle that covered over 80 miles of waterway. Each day there were two programs that were offered that dealt with conservation, recreation, or history of the area.

I thought this sounded kind of like our River Steward orientation paddle. I also thought it would be awesome if this idea were implemented in Ohio and other states. For me, getting on the water was where I felt the most connected. I think that this is a great way to raise awareness and promote recreational value and the importance of the conservation of our waterways.

Happy Holidays!