McNicholas science teacher explores opportunities through Miami University's Global Field Program

McNicholas High School science teacher Ms. Lauren Walkr recently traveled to the Amazon for the completion of her third Earth Expedition as part of her master's degree work for Miami University. Earth Expeditions are accredited excursions for teachers and adult students who are seeking to earn their master's degree from Miami University through the Global Field Program.

According to their website, the Global Field Program (GFP) at Miami brings master's degree candidates such as scientists, educators, and community leaders together by giving them access to conservation areas in Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas, for firsthand experience with inquiry-driven education, environmental stewardship, and global understanding. GFP candidates join a growing network of leaders who work collaboratively to bring about change in local and global contexts.

When Walkr first became aware of the GFP program at Miami, she knew she needed to participate in it. "My passion for science and learning within the context of the global community converged when I was informed of this graduate program," Walkr said.

Each Earth Expedition is worth a total of seven credit hours, and each student is required to participate in three trips before graduation. Walkr's first expedition took place in Baja, California, where she, along with the others on the trip, studied desert and marine ecology.

In Peru, she studied avian ecology. She would wake early in the morning in her mosquito-netted bed when the birds were the most active to track and record various characteristics, such as molting and change in size. On her latest excursion to the Amazon, she studied evolution and maintenance of biodiversity, as well as the effects of human intervention.

For those who seek to pursue similar routes of conservation and animal/environmental studies, Walkr shared some helpful advice.

"When looking for a school, class size is definitely important," Walkr said. "Express your interest in studying abroad early on, even if it's taking an alternative spring break."