

# PEOPLE Learning Through Experience

In the summer of 2006, the department teamed up with the UW's PEOPLE Program to reach out to a diverse group of future college students. *The PEOPLE Program 2006 in Earth Sciences* is a three-week course for promising 10<sup>th</sup> graders focused on presenting short in-class lessons, learning and applying scientific methods, and day-long field trips in the Madison area. Many of the students had not experienced earth sciences before.

The program was made possible through the vision, enthusiasm, and support of Professor Jean Bahr, and field trips were funded through the department's C.F. Schiesser Fund. Dr. Richard Slaughter provided fossils for study.

Laura Mitchell and Carrie Moeller served as instructors for this year's summer course and developed both in-class and field activities for the program. Kimberly Dawes, a high school science teacher from Milwaukee, assisted in the classroom as part of the PEOPLE professional development program.

The students were able to explore and analyze concepts in a real world setting, while experiencing some of the work done by geologists. Activities included a hands-on paleontological experience identifying mammal fossils in cave deposits, a look at soil formation at the soil pits of Picnic Point, and investigating scientific writing with a "Question of the Day."

The course was augmented by incorporating National Geographic's *Forces of Nature* exposing participants to geology outside of Wisconsin and leading to a discussion of how our changing earth shapes the economic and social landscapes of the world's population.

In 2007, the department and the PEOPLE program plan to enhance the course by offering an optional overnight camping trip, supplying students with the gear they will need. This will be a great

opportunity to experience camping and working in the field, complete with campfires and s'mores! The course will continue to work on improving hands-on and field opportunities for the students in order to provide them with a chance to be exposed to geology and to learn to understand and appreciate natural features. ●



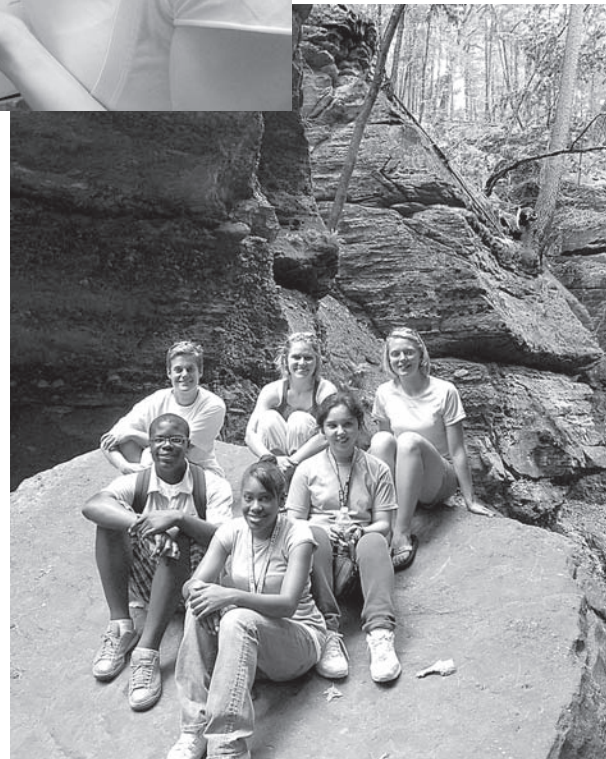
**Bryson Green examines groundwater during a day in the field with Jean Bahr.**



**Left: Tashina Guzman identifies a soil texture at Picnic Point.**



**In a class lesson, an unfurled roll of toilet tissue, reaching the length of the museum lobby floor, is used to plot geologic time.**



**Taking a break during a day trip to Devil's Lake State Park and Parfrey's Glen are, (left to right) back row, Laura Mitchell, Kimberly Dawes, and Carrie Moeller. Front row, Bryson Green, Kourtnei Robinson, and Cesilia Gonzalez.**

*(Photos courtesy of Carrie Moeller)*