



JAYDEN BONDY

My Most Vivid Memory Concerning Water

The Element of Happiness

“Alright,” my grandfather’s voice boomed out, on a humid day following a huge rainstorm from the day prior, “who wants to come with me to go and check the water level at Matejcek Dam!” And without hesitation, a resounding “Me, me, I do!” came from my brother and I, and we quickly made our way to his truck. I don’t specifically remember the first time I went to that dam because I’ve lived here my whole life and have had some of my most joyful memories there. However, I share with you a small picture of what it was like to not only enjoy but appreciate and care for the rural water. Through this, I gained knowledge of how rural water systems work, and what they provide to the community. My grandfather, who is now 71 years old, could definitely tell you every little thing you could ever think about concerning rural water systems, and trust me, I know, because I asked. Be that as it may, it is because he cares about it so much that I also have a great passion for it.

My most fond memories regarding water span all the way back as far as I can remember but my grandfather started his journey with the water community many years ago. He has proudly served on several local water boards for a combined total of 31 years so far. Including his service on the Tri-County Rural Water Board since 1993, and the Walsh County Water Resource Board since 2016. In his time, he has influenced major changes in our community concerning the water. To illustrate, when my grandfather was growing up, in our area, there were only three-four wells available to support all the local families and farmers. This made daily tasks in his profession, like watering the cattle and spraying the crops, nearly impossible to achieve. So, in the 1990’s my grandfather, along with several other board members, worked relentlessly to provide rural water for our community. And, low and behold, it worked! All the families in the area were provided with the resources they needed to keep their farming operations alive, including my own father’s. I am so proud to be related and to be learning from someone who can influence so much positive change right here in a small corner of North Dakota.

Although my grandpa has created an impressive list of accomplishments, I too am dipping my toes into the water community, to do my part and to make it last for many years to come. In the summer of 2022, when I was just 16 years old, I applied for a job to be a groundskeeper at Fordville Dam, which is another local dam in my area. This dam is operated by the Grand Forks Water Resource District, and I have had the honor of getting first-hand experience in understanding complex water systems, such as these. I do many tasks at my job from mowing, weed-eating, and tree-trimming to chopping logs, and preserving the water area of the dam. Even though my job entails a lot of hard work and physical labor, it is all worth it to stand on the top of the dam, in the cool summer mornings, before any of the campers are even awake, and look out and see nothing but the quiet blue sky speckled with orange from the rising sun, the vibrant green and yellow grassland preserved in the dew, and water moving in small ripples with nobody to change its course. It’s a calm and surreal view you cannot get anywhere else, and I would not trade it for anything.

Water is something so special, yet an element that is taken for granted. If you think back into your own memories, I think you will find it has a special place in your heart, at least, I know it does in mine. Thank you for the opportunity to share a fragment of my life with you, and I challenge you to think about how water has changed your life and what you are doing to protect its life.