

HIGHLIGHT

New focus on environmental education for high school students



(Above left) Dr. Gary Chastagner discusses conifer experiments with UPS summer high school science students);
(At right): Dr. Rita Hummel (far right) talks to the UPS class about her ornamental pear tree experiment)



Throughout the year, faculty and staff host science students to view and discuss environmental research underway at the Puyallup Center. This summer, a special high school tour and a proposal from two Puyallup High School teachers helped develop new ideas for expanding environmental education at the WSU Puyallup campus.

In July, students from the University of Puget Sound (UPS) Summer High School Science Program for local youth visited to learn about using genetics for sustaining the environment. Dr. Gary Chastagner, discussed propagation techniques for conifers. Dr. Rita Hummel talked about selecting superior trees for sustainable landscapes. Soil scientist Andy Bary gave a tour through the organic production systems and Dr. Jon Johnson showed the group riparian buffer strips planted with hybrid poplars. Extension Coordinator Norm Dart introduced them to applications of DNA fingerprinting for plant pathology forensics and Scientific Assistant Katie Coats showed the group equipment used in the molecular biology lab to aid in basic biological research.

In August, Puyallup High School (PHS) teacher Dave Wetzel met with WSU faculty and staff and initiated a proposal for a high school environmental education program that could expand into middle schools as the program grows. Wetzel and PHS teacher Meri Miller have been bringing science students to visit research projects at the Puyallup Center for several years. This summer, an advisory WSU committee (Andy Bary, Jon Johnson, Gwen Stahnke, Dory Clausnitzer and Tanyalee Erwin) began work with Wetzel and Miller to establish the creation of a WSU wetlands educational site where students can conduct small research experiments while working to monitor and restore the project area.

(Inset - top): PHS science teacher Meri Miller (center) shows students two wetland plants;(bottom) PHS student maps a WSU wetland.)

WSU Puyallup: Solutions for the Region; Programs for Its People

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