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**Portland Community College, Rock Creek Campus
Portland, Oregon
Spring 2008, Dining Services**

BACKGROUND

Campus Profile

The Portland Community College (PCC) Rock Creek Campus is located on a spacious, 256-acre site in a high-tech corridor near Hillsboro, Oregon. It is situated about 12 miles west of downtown Portland, in the rapidly growing Beaverton-Hillsboro area of Washington County. The Rock Creek Campus sits amid farms, forests and wetlands, perfect for PCC's Veterinary Technology, Landscape Technology and Biology programs. It's also a fine venue for its Diesel Service Technology, Agricultural Mechanics, Auto Collision Repair, Building Construction Technology, Aviation Maintenance Technology and Biotechnology programs. The science-technology building, completed in 1995, houses up-to-date laboratories and classrooms.

The Rock Creek Environmental Studies Center (RCESC) is a natural area within Portland Community College's Rock Creek Campus that is considered to be an important natural history area by both the Portland Audubon Society and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The natural area that comprises the RCESC includes about 44 acres of woodland, 11 acres of wetland and 44 acres of grasslands. Several smaller unique ecosystems are also present in this site, including several springs and a small pond ecosystem. There are two sections of Douglas fir-dominated forests that include such tree species as Western hemlock, Western red cedar, Pacific yew and Big leaf maple, in addition to a wide variety of shrubs and plants. The site contains some bottomland forested areas, which include Red alder, Oregon white oak, Beaked hazelnut, among other species. Several wetland plant communities and a large grassland area also occur within the RCESC. These areas provide habitat for several groups of wildlife including nesting areas for waterfowl, quail, pheasants and song birds; and they are homes to mammals such as deer, beaver, muskrat, mink, raccoon, fox and coyote.

The Rock Creek Environmental Studies Center is a vital and diverse grouping of habitats that occur on Portland Community College's Rock Creek Campus. While human endeavors such as farming and the construction of nearby housing, roads and parking lots have modified parts of this habitat and its hydrology, through outside grants, previously farmed and overgrazed lands are slowly being returned to a more natural state. We are monitoring changes in the quality of habitat throughout the restoration process, which includes removal of invasive plants and plantings of native vegetation. Changes are being monitored through data collection on plant and animal species, water quality sampling and photography. In addition, there are several ongoing studies being performed by PCC students and volunteers; these include microclimate studies and the surveying of wild flowers, lichens and amphibians.

The Rock Creek Campus serves some 15,500 students annually under campus President Katherine Persson.

Contact

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GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**Goals**

Paper coffee cups, containing a thin layer of plastic on the inside are non-recyclable, and 1,000 of them generate about 60 pounds of trash. The Rock Creek Mug Board initiative was created to address this waste problem. If 1,000 people save a cup a day for one year, more than 11 tons of waste can be reduced.

Accomplishments

This astounding fact was what motivated the sustainability branch of the Associated Students of Portland Community College (ASPCC)-PCC Rock Creek to construct a “mug board.” Students, staff and faculty have access to clean, reusable mugs in place of the non-recyclable paper cups provided by the coffee stands and cafeteria. Everyone follows three simple steps: Grab a mug from the board, use the mug, and return the mug for it to be washed by food services. This sustainability initiative has brought many benefits and much positive feedback from the campus community. And every day the mug board reminds members of the PCC community about the importance of waste reduction and recycling for a healthy, sustainable future.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**Leaders and Supporters**

Food Services, led by Jean Atkinson, and the Student Government Sustainability Branch, especially Mariko Newton, provided leadership to the project.

Funding and Resources

Used mugs were donated by faculty, staff and students. Mug board supplies were funded by ASPCC.

CLOSING COMMENT

The Portland Community College Rock Creek Student Government emphasizes the 3 Es—equity for all people, environmental stewardship and economic sustainability. We see this mug board as furthering people’s understanding of another way we can all be better stewards of the environment.