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**Portland Community College, Rock Creek Campus
Portland, Oregon
Spring 2008, Educational Outreach**

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

Human Art Project

As part of the “Conserve-Precycle-Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Restore” 2008 Earth Week Celebration hosted by the PCC Rock Creek Campus, the Associated Students of Portland Community College (ASPCC) coordinated a bird’s-eye-view image of a “human globe.”

Accomplishments

White sheets were used for the ocean, and student, staff and faculty volunteers were asked to wear black t-shirts to form the continents. The underlying theme of this project was that global warming is a black-and-white issue, and we must take actions immediately to stop this global catastrophe.

Challenges and Responses

Several measurements and types of mapping were involved with designing the basic outline of the globe: figuring out the coordinate of each major point on the continent, the diameter of the globe, and the total area occupied by land and water. The number of volunteers and sheets needed also had to be determined to successfully carry out the project.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

Sculpture instructor Ben Buswell came up with the idea of making this human art piece in black and white. The Student Government Sustainability Branch, especially Mariko Newton, carried out the project.

Funding and Resources

New and used 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. This activity brought people together and encouraged further discussion about climate change. The Human Art Project was a creative, educational way to engage members of Rock Creek Campus in addressing environmental problems and recognizing practical strategies to such issues. It truly emphasized the fact that everyone is responsible for protecting ecology and life through individual measures.