

ONC Takes Observatory Science to Bamfield ^[1]

Submitted by Rory Lattimer Sun, 2012-07-15 00:00

In early July, the Ocean Networks Canada education team travelled up island to the quaint seaside community of Bamfield to meet with undergrad students and educators from across western Canada. The team was invited by the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre to introduce the Observatory to students attending the summer academic session and also to teachers and educators attending an annual workshop.

Students come for the ocean experience

Located on Vancouver Island's dynamic Pacific coast, the Centre is supported by five major Canadian universities including: the University of BC, University of Victoria, University of Calgary, University of Alberta, and Simon Fraser University. Students enrolled in these institutions journey to Bamfield to further their marine studies with hands-on learning. Ocean Networks Canada presented to over 40 undergrad and graduate students and professors from the Centre's five member universities, including a number of international students from the US and abroad.

After learning about VENUS and NEPTUNE, the students provided great feedback about using the data and video produced by the networks in their classrooms. The students also showed enthusiasm for Ocean Networks Canada educational initiatives, such as mentoring high school students and meeting industry reps from marine science. "They're seriously interested in professional development," notes Ellyn Davidson, Post-Secondary Developer, "and liked the idea of a national student network that we have been exploring."



Teachers come searching for new ways to inspire ocean awareness

This year, teachers and informal educators also came to the Centre to expand their knowledge of the oceans through a special workshop featuring activities, field trips and guest speakers. For the second year in a row, Ocean Networks Canada has been invited to introduce the innovative technology of the world's largest cabled ocean observatory, and highlight the major research themes it supports—from plate tectonics and tsunamis, to deep-sea ecosystems and ocean climate dynamics. In a lab setting, the educators were also shown the real-time data flowing from the VENUS and NEPTUNE Observatories. And at the end of the session, there was time to discuss a number of upcoming educational and professional development initiatives that Ocean Networks Canada is developing, including the new Ship2Shore Marine Educators program.



Working with the educators, K-12 Developer, Natasha Ewing, was impressed by their interest. "We find that teachers are keen to incorporate ocean studies in their programs, and have been very helpful as we develop program materials that are relevant to their students. We believe that learning about oceans through the ocean observatory science and data is an exciting and novel way to inspire ocean literacy in students of all ages."

During their visit to Bamfield, the Education team also met with the Centre to discuss opportunities for collaboration in post-secondary and public education. "The Marine Centre plays a vital role in advancing ocean literacy by providing unique hands-on learning experiences," says Rick Searle, Ocean Networks Canada Manager of Education and Public

Engagement. "We're excited about exploring ways to support their programs through the lens of Ocean Networks Canada's observatories".

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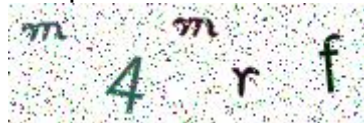
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