

Students earn hands-on science experience

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Grade 8 student Ryan Buttazzoni, 13, helps project leader Ngaio Baril, right, of the Foothills Research Institute during a stream bank remediation project the afternoon of Sept. 22. In the background is a geotextile arch, which replaced an old culvert where the creek crosses Robb Road south of town. Photo by Tyler Waugh

Eighteen high school students learned that science can be hard work sometimes during an outing Sept. 22. The students, from Mr. Glen Allen's French immersion Grade 8 science class at Harry Collinge High School, spent an hour and a half helping members of the Foothills Research Institute with a stream bank remediation project.

"It is a good opportunity for them to see science in action as opposed to just your standard classroom learning," Allen said during the excursion. The science class curriculum will include studies of fresh and salt water systems later this year, including the effects of things like bank erosion on those systems. Students planted willows along the banks of Hardisty Creek in an area where a state-of-the-art stream crossing called a geo-textile arch was built earlier this summer. The arch replaced an old culvert system where the creek passes underneath Robb Road around five kilometres south of Hinton. Project leader Ngaio Baril of the Foothills Research Institute spent a few minutes before the work began to explain the importance of planting willows on the creek banks. "We don't want sedimentation in the creek," she said, adding that it raises the temperature of the water. "It also covers up all these great rocks, which is good for the fish and spawning."



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