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High school students test local drinking water at Laurier's Centre for Cold Regions and Water Science

WATERLOO – Over 70 high school students will learn about current water issues and gain invaluable hands-on experience in a research laboratory during the Aquatic Science Outreach Network for the Grand (AQUAsong) workshop at Wilfrid Laurier University this fall.

"This project will emphasize our connection to our local watershed and show high school students that they have an impact on their water supply," said Research Instrumentation Technician Gena Braun, who organized the workshop. "Clean water is an increasingly valuable resource and this opportunity allows students to experience water science at Laurier."

Students work in the field during the morning portion of the workshop, gathering water samples along the Grand River. In the afternoon, students help to analyze the water samples for dissolved metals and nutrients, as well as temperature, pH and other indicators of water quality, learn about and observe cutting-edge lab techniques at Laurier's Centre for Cold Regions and Water Science, and meet graduate students and faculty involved in aquatic research at the university.

"This is a pretty neat opportunity for students to actually take samples from the Grand River, using proper techniques, and then get to go back to the lab to see how those samples might be analyzed," said Scott Stevens, a teacher at Woodland Christian High School whose students participated in the Oct. 12 workshop. "It's important for students to understand what goes into their waterways and to see how water affects their lives."

Two grade 11 and 12 high school classes from Woodland Christian High School and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate have already completed the project; students from Elmira Secondary School will participate in the project October 25. Additional groups from the Waterloo Region are tentatively scheduled for the spring.

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