David Stauth, OSU News Service

Norm Anderson, a professor of entomology at OSU, uses a net to obtain samples of aquatic insects from Clearwater Creek in August 1989. This is the exact area shown in the aerial view (above right.)

continuing danger of another eruptio
ing above us at all times. And becau
to work, we did a lot of foolish thing

Among those things, Sedell said,
of Spirit Lake to obtain samples. Ac
sor of fisheries and wildlife at OSU a
Forest Service, it was not a great pl

The water was choked with explo
methane and carbon dioxide bubbled

From a biological perspective, the
robic bacteria that fed on nitrates an
such noxious conditions, and they pe
teria in each milliliter, or one-quarte

"I'd never seen anything like it,"
world. Almost all the traditional life
everywhere."

Ecologists such as Sedell, and thos
ment agencies, realized they had a re
study the natural recovery processes
forms had been virtually wiped out.

"It was a struggle, at first, to get t
logical aspects of the situation," Sede
other disaster, like a forest fire. Ecol
voyeurs, who didn't really belong ther
the area."

Nature repairs scars

But scientists, including many from
and stream ecology; insects and other
turn of trees, plants and animals.

And in the past 10 years, the most c
tists has been surprise at the speed of
ture could repair such devastating wou

"Things have really boomed back fa
"The life returned in successional patt
There are now fish in the streams. And
been stocked with fish, the zooplankton
any predators to eat them."

Region now living laboratory

By Carolyn Homan
OSU News Service

The early lessons of death and destruction on Mount St. Helens have given way to recovery and regeneration in the 10 years since the blast.

The mountain has many lessons left to teach, according to Fred Swanson, a professor of geology and forest science at Oregon State University, and U.S. Forest Service geologist. To scientists, students and visitors alike, Mount St. Helens stands as a marvelous living laboratory.

Swanson, who works as part of an ecosystem group at the Forestry Sciences Laboratory at OSU, said the eruption was "the chance of a lifetime" to study the geological-ecological interactions in a relatively accessible place.

In the early post-eruption days, a new visitor to the mountain faced a day of "oh, wows," he said. "It's just so overwhelming at first."

But the educational aspects soon take over because of the "tremendous spectrum of opportunities." As an educational resource, St. Helens stands out.

"A lot of other volcanoes have erupted, but this one is special," Swanson said. Because of pre-eruption studies and instrumentation in place before and during the blast, scientists have a much better record of the events than virtually anywhere else in the world.

The early "death and destruction" view has given way to an historical perspective. Perhaps the most powerful aspect of the interpretive education program throughout the "devastated" area is the rapid recovery and regeneration of forests, streams and lakes, Swanson said.

Many projects were funded that fostered communication among scientists in many disciplines and allowed ecological studies to be placed in their geological context. Some of the research is reflected in the public interpretive program at the visitor's center.

Quite a few students have done graduate and undergraduate work on St. Helen's and participated in field trips and workshops, primarily because of the rich nature of possibilities: water quality work, soil erosion, vegetation succession and regeneration, wildlife studies.

"Students see the effects of the intensity and duration of the disturbance very clearly," said Arthur McKee, site director of OSU's H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest. He has primarily researched recovery of vegetation on stream and lake shores.

The educational value multiplies because of the diversity, McKee said. Students were amazed by the example of Grizzly Lake, for instance, a body of water blasted completely out of its bed by the eruption.

Interference by man has clouded the interpretation of some data, but "in general," McKee said, "it's a fine laboratory. The students are awestruck by what they see."

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Dave Barry

CORVALLIS G-T
May 13, 1990
Sec to C1

Recently I got a long letter from Bob Dole. Bob, of course,

pulling the legs off a live rabbit, and poof, th