

## COMMITMENT, PASSION & UNITY

*Today's conservationists mentor future environmental guardians*

**Environmental stewards strive to sustain natural resources and our environment for future generations. These people apply their work to a variety of activities and operations that are environmentally responsible, often sharing their passion and commitment to promote awareness and cultivate that eco-commitment in others.**

One such person is Dr. Jeffrey Campbell, a research scientist at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), who is expanding his commitment by mentoring a group of future environmental stewards. Dr. Campbell acts as an advisor to a campus group of approximately 30 students with an interest in conservation. It's a relationship that he says came about naturally, though quite accidentally.

Four years ago, Dr. Campbell was an Aquarium member when he read about an Aquarium conservation event in *Watermarks* magazine. He joined the Aquarium Conservation Team (ACT) for a hands-on opportunity to contribute to habitat restoration. "I was impressed to learn that the Aquarium is more than an attraction," he says. "An attraction allows people to enjoy the animals, but it is the Aquarium's programs

that are really connecting people to the environment and helping them take steps to improve it."

Dr. Campbell met some of the stewards of UMBC's Students for Environmental Awareness at an Aquarium conservation event, and the relationship naturally progressed toward his mentoring role. "It's a student-led group and it should be. My role isn't to lead them, simply to offer guidance as I can and support their worthwhile efforts to really make a difference," he explains.

And, together, one restoration event at a time, they are making a difference. Though, as Dr. Campbell jokingly notes, stewardship has no calendar. "Animals don't care about the day of the week, they just want a healthier place to live and nest!" 🐾



*Dr. Jeff Campbell, an Aquarium Conservation Team leader, with students at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. The day's agenda included the removal of an invasive plant species, Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*).*

### For more information, visit:

[aqua.org/chesapeakebay](http://aqua.org/chesapeakebay)  
[aqua.org/conservation](http://aqua.org/conservation)  
[umbc.edu/marylandfrogs](http://umbc.edu/marylandfrogs)

## OPENING DOORS

"I'm set on a more direct path in life," says Margaret Smith, an intern at the National Aquarium, Washington, DC. A senior at the University of Maryland, College Park campus, Smith first came to the Aquarium with a love of animals and a major in biology that lacked focus. "I declared bio-engineering as my major in my freshman year," she says. "But when I switched it to biology after one semester, I wanted to make sure I explored all my options."

That exploration brought her to the Aquarium. Born in Massachusetts, Smith moved to Colorado when she was 12 years old. Though she loved the state she still calls home, she says she "missed being near the water." "I even brought a fish tank into my dorm room my first year at Maryland," she laughs. Smith decided to combine her love of water and animals by visiting both National Aquarium venues. Those trips prompted her to apply for an Aquarium internship, and she's been working with aquarists and herpetologists to hone her interests and shape them into a career since last September.

Now Smith's biology major has a focus in ecology and evolution that she will use to explore dune and marsh vegetation and the lifecycles of coastal areas. Smith credits her Aquarium internship with her new career path. "Everyone at the Aquarium has been so generous with their time and knowledge. Working with them has increased my awareness of the human impact on our wetlands and aquatic animals, and now I share their commitment to making a difference."