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Teachers learn from local ecology

By **RICHARD E. BALDWIN**
NIAGARA FALLS, NEWS
NIAGARA REPORTER

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NIAGARA FALLS—A group of science teachers is touring the Niagara River and Lake Ontario this week to get some hands-on learning about fish, fresh-water animals and the ecology of the Great Lakes to take back to their students in the form of lesson plans and homework assignments.

About 16 teachers—most from Western New York, but one each from Pennsylvania and North Carolina — are on a trip that began Sunday in Niagara Falls and continued Monday in Erie and Niagara counties. They head to Rochester today and then to Oswego.

“They act just like scientists as they handle the animals and learn about their habitats,” group leader Helen Domske said Sunday as she demonstrated the differences between crabs and oysters during a visit to the Aquarium of Niagara.

Domske, senior education specialist and associate director of the Great Lakes Program of New York Sea Grant, based at the University at Buffalo, said this week’s program is a continuation of an educational project to “teach the teachers.” The program began a few years ago in the Upper Great Lakes and has worked its way down to Lake Erie and now to the Niagara River and Lake Ontario.

“Each year, we have done a different lake,” she said. “The teachers interact with scientists; they learn scientific data and a new knowledge of the lakes. They are empowered by their firsthand experiences as they collect material that they can take back to their classes in natural sciences.”

Monday’s itinerary included visits to Olcott Harbor, Grand Island and the Buffalo State College Field Station on the Black Rock Channel adjacent to the Niagara River in Buffalo.

“They put on their wading boots and went right out into the river to handle the fish,” Domske said.

Domske, who teaches Great Lakes ecology at the UB North Campus, said those on this week’s trip typically teach from fourth grade to 10th grade in their respective schools.

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BEST BETS:

- Tue 7/27: Tuesday in the Park: George Thorogood & the Destroyers
- Wed 7/28: Steve Sasson
- Wed 7/28: Wednesdays on the Gorge: John Brown’s Body

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