

# Forestry Project Challenges GMS Students for Years to Come

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Staff Writer

On May 20, students from Angela Gospodarek's seventh-grade science classes trooped into the woods outside Gorham Middle School accompanied by Shane Duigan, Cumberland County District Forester. They were setting up a Forest Inventory Growth (FIG) plot that they and future students will monitor to see how trees located there are growing. Funded by a \$500 grant Gospodarek received from the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCRCM), the project involves identifying, tagging, and measuring trees. Students will enter results into a database. Currently, there are 3,700 FIG plots in Maine that help determine allowable annual cuts on public land and serve as indicators of the health of Maine forests.

Three classes are involved in the project. Under Duigan's direction, students first determined the

boundaries of the plot by marking a circle from a central point. They looked for all the trees within the circle that were at least 5 inches in diameter. After students tagged them, Duigan demonstrated how to measure the diameter using a Biltmore stick. Students are learning how to identify trees in the plot and how to determine their height from the ground. Gospodarek plans to monitor the plot for changes in the fall and spring of every year.

The NRCRCM, a non-profit organization, awards grants for projects "that educate and engage students in Maine's environment and the value of protecting it." GMS students are engaged in activities to meet this goal. Megan Roberts and Emmeline Nelson said they appreciated a class that brought them "outside interacting with nature." For Reed Henderson, the project is "cool because it will go on forever."



Photo credit Kathy Corbett

District Forester Shane Duigan showed Denisha Beeler how to measure the DBH, diameter at breast height, of a tree while Will Lamont and Colby Leavitt looked on. Calculating the DBH is one method of determining the diameter of the trunk of a standing tree.

## School Notes

Superintendent Heather Perry's newest **blog post** can be found at <http://gorhamsuperintendent.blogspot.com/>. Perry wraps up the 2015/16 school year by highlighting some

of the great things our schools and students have accomplished this past year and encourages everyone to get out and vote on June 14 for the proposed FY 17 budget.

Village School is conducting a **shoe drive** now through the end of school. Students

are trying to collect 2,500 pairs of gently worn shoes to be donated to Shoes with Heart. The shoes will be refurbished and distributed to third world countries where shoes are a desperate need. The school plans to purchase new shelves for the library as well as make a donation to

the Gorham Food Pantry with the money they will receive for their donation. Please help students reach their goal by dropping off any gently worn men's, women's, and children's shoes in the entrance of Village School.

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