

**Introduction to our local plankton community**  
**James Byrum**  
**Laing Middle School**  
**November 2015**

In this project 6<sup>th</sup> grade students were introduced to their local species of plankton by building plankton nets, collecting samples, and using microscopes to identify the various species. GEMS provided us with a new digital teaching scope that allowed us to project some of the species students found. Students used identification guides (provided by NOAA) specific to our area. After determining what species they thought they had, students used an iPad to record a video about what they found. These videos were then shown to local experts to confirm the species.

The students had a great time exploring the water samples. When a student found something exciting (copepod, barnacle larvae, diatom, etc.) they put the slide on the new teaching scope so that they could show everyone what they had found.

Student Shawn Jefferson said, “I can’t believe these things live in the water and I would have never known if we didn’t have microscopes to look through”.

“I love seeing the zooplankton move around on the screen. It’s like watching a movie,” said student Alysa Deal.

