

# Students from around the world study at Cary

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Staff Reporter

**MILLBROOK** — Graduate students from nine countries completed Fundamentals of Ecosystem Ecology, an intensive two-week course from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, on Friday, Jan. 14. Coordinated by Gary Lovett, a Cary Institute forest ecologist, the students lived together in houses on the institute's property, attended specialized classes in ecosystem science given by 16 Cary scientists and worked on individual research projects in the afternoon.

According to Lovett, they "eat, breath and sleep ecology."

The high-level course, which is given only once a year to select Ph.D. students, provided students with a holistic approach to analyzing ecosystems. The topics ranged from the grand Metabolic History of the Earth, taught by William Schlesinger, president of the Cary Institute, to the specialized Introduction to Microbial Redox Reactions, taught by Stuart Findlay.

The students were a global mix of nationalities from Mongolia to Sweden.



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**Students from around the world gathered together for a group photo after completing the Fundamentals of Ecosystem Ecology class at the Cary Institute of Ecosystems Studies. Gary Lovett, second on the left, coordinated the two-week course.**

This year Michelle Morton, a chemical engineer who is Shell Oil's biofuel sustainability compliance officer, was a member of the class and exposed the other students to the possibilities of using research skills outside the academic world. They

were surprised to learn about Shell's commitment to sustainable biofuel development.

Morton said she attended the course to learn about the fundamentals behind environmental science and was astonished to learn about

the massively rising levels of nitrogen in the soil caused by fertilizers.

It was a living and learning experience that bound the students together and established career-long ties among participants and the Cary Institute.