

Video Transcript - Observing Life in a Biocube

Liittschwager: You wouldn't think there's very much going on in this small space. But I think what we're going to find is that there's a huge amount of stuff going on.

Chris Meyer: It's also not that everything was there at one time, it's that we're watching it over an extended period of time to see who would be in there during an average day. So it takes a long time to observe it.

Liittschwager: [00:00:30] And then we'll watch it over time. We put this out in a place where there are lots of small foraging birds or other creatures, and stand back from it so we're not too much of a presence, and then see who comes. Who uses that space.

Speaker 3: I see it!

Speaker 4: There are these things.

Speaker 3: Oh, it looks like a grasshopper, yeah.

Speaker 4: Then it's kind of like, where'd you go? [00:01:00] It's kind of like a jade green.

Speaker 5: Could this be ... Oh, this is called purple nettle grass, I think. Purple nettle grass, question mark.

Speaker 4: Go bio!

Speaker 5: Is that poop?

Speaker 3: That looks like droppings.

Speaker 5: Yeah. That looks like poop.

Speaker 6: That is deer droppings.

Speaker 5: Yeah, that looks like poop.

Speaker 4: Wait, that's so cool. That means that-

Speaker 3: Well, that means [inaudible 00:01:19] they were over it. That's cool.

Speaker 6: There was a deer in the cube!

Speaker 5: That means there was a deer here.

Speaker 4: Oh now there's a bug. There's a bug. [inaudible 00:01:25].

Speaker 5: I'm going to say it's a cat-tail.

Speaker 6: This is our human impact,

Speaker 6: [00:01:30] the region outside of it.

McKeon: Do you have a story that came out of your cube?

Speaker 5: In our cube we had at least five types of grass and we saw at least three types of different bugs. And the cool part was that while we were trying to get the bottom part of the grass that connected to the seed packets, we also saw some deer scat, which was kinda like . . .

Speaker 4: Yeah, whoa.

McKeon: You can slowly [00:02:00] start piecing together the diversity of an ecosystem from its component pieces. That's what Biocube is about. You're getting a close-up view of a very small area, and even here you're running into challenges in measuring diversity.

Liittschwager: Observing life in the cube. Avoid disturbance until you are ready to collect. Spend some time at a distance to watch for birds or other small vertebrates. Start [00:02:30] making a list of the plants and animals in your cube. Many larger creatures, and by this I mean anything larger than insects, can be identified using a field guide.