Examining submersed plants collected with a modified rake.

TYPE OF WORK
I examine and measure the aquatic plants in lakes and rivers. When invasive non-native species are found, I monitor the growth and research methods to reduce their impact on native plants.

Jenifer Parsons
Aquatic Plant Specialist
Washington State Department of Ecology
Aquatic Plant Specialist

TYPICAL DAY: In the growing season, I assess plants that may be at risk in lakes where invasive species are established. This includes sampling from a boat or by snorkeling and measuring growth using both instruments and direct sampling. In the winter, I analyze the data and write papers and reports.

CAREER PATHWAY:
I always enjoyed being outdoors and had several summer field jobs for various federal agencies as a student and between my bachelors and MS degrees. Therefore, when my current job was open I had the education and years of practical experience to qualify.

IMPORTANT SKILLS
Botanical classification, statistically meaningful sampling design, statistical analysis

EDUCATION
Master's Degree

TOOLS OF THE TRADE
GPS, GIS, data analysis software, hydroacoustic mapping equipment, snorkeling equipment

"I enjoy being outside and working with other people to reduce the impact of invasive species. It is especially gratifying when results of our efforts restore native plant species in a lake." - Jenifer Parsons

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