

## **WWU Receives Grant to Study Impact of Centralia Floods**

Contact: Rebekah Green, (360) 650-4337, or [rebekah.green@wwu.edu](mailto:rebekah.green@wwu.edu).

Jan. 18, 2008

BELLINGHAM – Western Washington University’s Institute for Global and Community Resilience, an organization within the Huxley College of the Environment, has received a \$2,500 Quick Response grant from the Natural Hazard Center to research the effects of last December’s Centralia River flood on the area’s businesses.

The IGCR works with citizens, experts, and business and civic leaders to understand the characteristics of disaster risk. A team of about 10 students from the Huxley College of the Environment, led by Research Associate Rebekah Green and Assistant Professor Scott Miles, will spend at least the next three months working with the Chehalis-Centralia Chamber of Commerce to study how businesses recover in the wake of this natural disaster; Green said she hopes to extend the project’s duration with more grants this spring.

Green, who just returned from the affected area, said that while the town is still suffering from the effects of the flooding, its community members remain resilient.

“Many of the businesses we talked to sent out word that they just couldn’t open, let alone serve their clients,” she said. “Following the flooding, those same clients showed up, with shovels in hand, to help that business owner dig out and clean up. There’s an amazing level of support there.”

The team from Huxley will evaluate the business community’s pre-disaster planning to find how it helped mitigate the damage caused by the flooding or, conversely, what businesses could have done differently, and will work on a map of the area showing the level of damage to businesses.

“This is going to be an amazing opportunity for the students,” Green said. “Working on theories and concepts from a text book is one thing; working with the people going through a disaster is going to give them a level of experience they never would have gotten otherwise.”

For more information, call Rebekah Green at (360) 650-4337, or e-mail [rebekah.green@wwu.edu](mailto:rebekah.green@wwu.edu).