

## newsinbrief

# Student stars in program on N.C. wetlands

### Docs revise tumor sorting system

Thousands more lung cancer patients each year could be offered surgery or other aggressive therapy under a new system that classifies many tumors as more treatable than in the past.

It is the first big overhaul of a decades-old method used to predict survival and help determine whether a lung cancer patient will have surgery, chemotherapy or be treated at all.

The system was developed by the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer, a group of lung cancer specialists from around the world.

### N.C. drought conditions kill fish

RALEIGH — State environmental officials found up to 2,000 dead catfish near the mouth of the Neuse River Monday, and they believe the drought conditions may have caused the fish to go belly up.

The fish likely died from excess exposure to salt water, said Susan Massengale, a spokesperson with the state Division of Water Quality. Officials believe the saline water, aided by wind and low river levels, mixed into normally fresh water habitats.

### Study says men want hot women

WASHINGTON — Science is confirming what most women know: When given the choice for a mate, men go for good looks. And guys will not be surprised to learn that women are much choosier about partners than they are.

Men's choices did not reflect their stated preferences, the researchers concluded. Instead, men appeared to base their decisions mostly on the women's physical attractiveness.

BY REBECCA WU  
THE CHRONICLE

As a doctoral student in ecology, Ariana Sutton-Grier spends much of her time researching the plants and animals of North Carolina's wetlands. But on one trip last fall, she ventured out to the swamps with new companions: cameramen, a production crew and three middle school girls.

Sutton-Grier took students Sarah, Valencia and Sophia on a bioblitz that was filmed for the sixth season of "Dragonfly TV", a Public Broadcasting Service television series featuring hands-on science activities and investigations.

The episode, which was filmed in Fall 2006, has already aired in some parts of the country. It will also be aired on UNC-TV 4 p.m. Friday, and the Museum of Life and Science in Durham will hold a party Thursday night where Sarah, Valencia and Sophia will answer questions about their experience on the show.

"It really was lots of fun," Sutton-Grier said. "The three girls I got to work with were very enthusiastic. I had so much fun because I don't get to work with that age group very often."

The three girls and Sutton-Grier went to visit three kinds of wetlands: a cypress swamp, a salt marsh, and a pocosin forest.

Mark Fischer, an associate producer for "Dragonfly TV," said the girls he filmed had a high level of interest not only in science, but also in television production.

"We got to see a lot of different kinds of wetlands, and it was



SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Ecology graduate student Ariana Sutton-Grier will appear on a forthcoming television show.

a good old-fashioned road trip around the state," he said.

Sutton-Grier said she hopes the episode will inform viewers about wetlands and clear up any misconceptions they might have.

"In pretty much any state or any part of the country, there is some kind of wetland present in that region," she added. "It's really exciting to introduce a whole generation of kids watching [the show] to what is a wetland."

Sutton-Grier said the exhaust-

ing filming process tested her stamina, but she still enjoyed the experience.

"There were about three days of filming and we would usually start pretty early and end pretty late," she said. "I had to bring some snacks along too because we would eat meals at surprising times."

The wetlands episode of Dragonfly TV may lead to a new TV show called "SciGirls," an after-school program that encourages

girls to take an interest in science, said Margaret Duden, research and outreach coordinator of "Dragonfly TV."

"With that particular episode, we were working on a couple of new ideas," Fischer added.

On most episodes of "Dragonfly TV" the specialist is interviewed separately, but in the wetlands episode Sutton-Grier accompanied the girls on their bioblitz, Fischer said.

"Having Ariana there was an absolute dream," he said. "She had a fantastic spirit and excitement about science and life. We really lucked out in finding [her]."

Sutton-Grier said the opportunity to be on "Dragonfly TV" made this particular research trip different from most of the work she has done for her Ph.D.

"[The filming experience] really [provides] a different take on the world," she said. "I was doing the normal activities I'd usually do when I'm out in the field, but from a totally different perspective, now looking at the world through TV."

The Museum of Life and Science decided to throw the party in order to introduce new audiences to the show and get students excited about science, Shawntel Landavazo, senior director of guest and school experiences for the museum, wrote in an e-mail.

"I think the show is great for promoting science to upper-elementary and middle-school kids," she said. "It is one of the better science education programs I have seen in a while."