



Can students be trained to isolate
and identify benthic foraminifera?

Sort of.

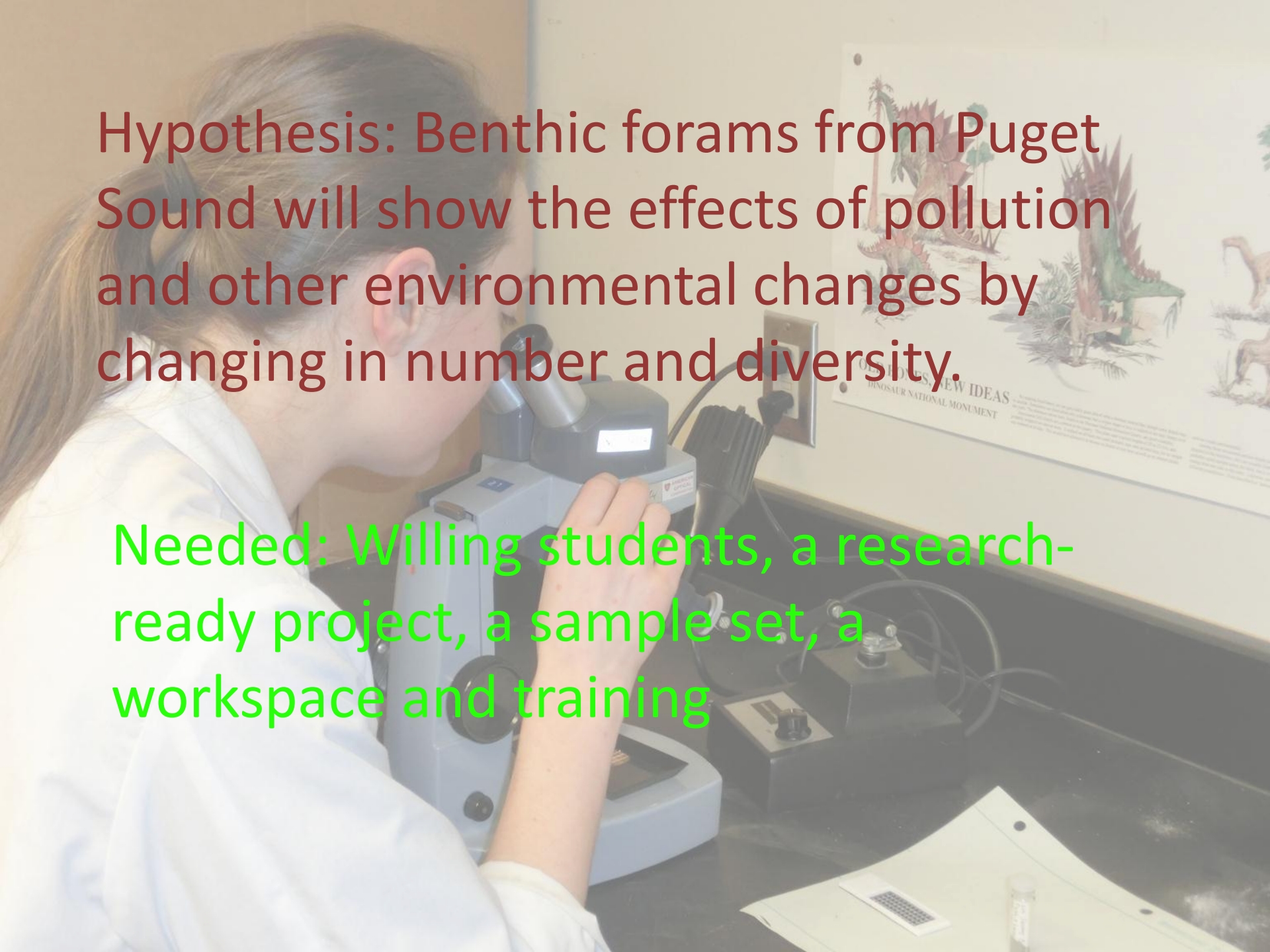
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Elphidium excavatum, a common, pollution-tolerant species

Hypothesis: Benthic forams from Puget Sound will show the effects of pollution and other environmental changes by changing in number and diversity.

Needed: Willing students, a research-ready project, a sample set, a workspace and training



Results: Students were enthusiastic initially, then the reality set in. After several hours of foram picking, there was some fatigue, even when spread out over several days. Smaller, deformed or broken forams were routinely missed. Non-planispiral species were particularly hard to pick out.

Stn #	latitude (DM)	longitude (DM)	Total sediment amount picked (g)	E. hannai	missed	B. frigida	missed
3	48° 55.790'	123° 07.349'	1.91	162	44	31	22
13	48° 09.300'	122° 52.000'	0.8	207	50	9	13

Closing the loop: fewer species, larger tests, more training