

# THE ADVENTURES OF MEG A. MOLE, FUTURE CHEMIST



FEATURED CHEMIST:

DR. JENNIFER JENKINS

*In honor of this year's Chemists Celebrate Earth Day, I put on my snow boots and winter coat and made my way north to Vermont! There I met Dr. Jennifer Jenkins, Research Associate Professor and ecosystem scientist. Dr. Jenkins works with the University of Vermont, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, Gund Institute for Ecological Economics.*

So what does an ecosystem (environmental) scientist do? Dr. Jenkins explained to me that her work “seeks to understand how much carbon gets stored in trees.” She gets to do most of her work at her desk, by talking with other people,



and advising her students. Dr. Jenkins' students go all around, or “into the field” as scientists say, to collect samples. I was able to go with them in the field (it was like a field trip to me)! I watched as the students dug up their soil samples! Then they dried the soil in an oven and then put it into a special soil grinder.

After that, they used special tools to measure very small amounts of soil dust by putting it into a big machine that makes lots of noise!

Dr. Jenkins told me that she really likes



*Dr. Jenkins showed me a new presentation about climate change.*

speaking with others about the work she does. She gets “to do a lot of public presentations to keep people informed about climate change and what we can do to slow or stop it.” She also “thinks it's really important for all citizens, even if they don't have much of an interest in science, to understand the underlying basis for public policy aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions” and Dr. Jenkins loves “to give public presentations that get people thinking about what we can do to slow the pace of global warming.”

I also asked Dr. Jenkins about her interest in chemistry when she was growing up. She told me about her terrific science teachers in middle school and in high school. She still stays in touch with some of them! I am sure they are very proud of her accomplishments! Dr. Jenkins also told me she had a chemistry set in her basement and even made a volcano once. There are many fun activities and experiments you can do too! Just visit [www.acs.org/kids!](http://www.acs.org/kids!)



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So how does Dr. Jenkins' work impact everyone, and where do we as children come in contact with her work? "In your backyard," says Dr. Jenkins! "Did you know that the soil underneath your lawn is storing carbon that the plants take out of the atmosphere? The more carbon we can store in the plants and soil of terrestrial (global) ecosystems, the less there might be in the atmosphere to cause climate change." What we do today "to reduce emissions from energy sources (like transportation or electricity) will reduce emissions and will—we hope—lead to a future where the negative effects of climate change are minimized (lowered)." Dr. Jenkins' research has been so successful that in 2007 she shared the Nobel Peace Prize with former Vice President Al Gore for her work on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). How exciting!



*I helped Dr. Jenkins and one of her students inspect some samples from a tree.*

## *Personal Profile: Dr. Jennifer Jenkins*

*Favorite food?* Japanese food, especially sushi and shrimp tempura

*When is your birthday?* September 16th

*Favorite Pastime?* I love the train for and race in triathlons

*About your family?* I am married (my husband's name is Morgan) and I have two kids. My son, Zebulon is 8 years old and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. My daughter is 5 and is in preschool.



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