

Prison Teaches Beekeeping, Environmentalism To Inmates And It's All The Buzz

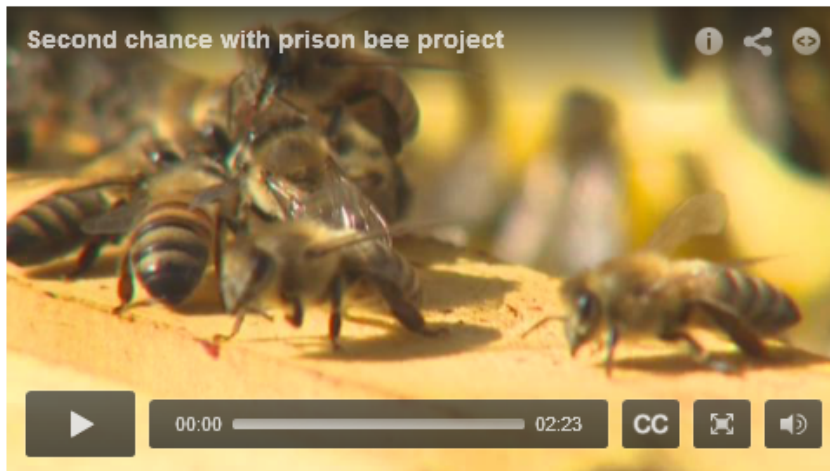
Teaching environmental sustainability could help inmates re-enter the work force after prison.



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Posted: 08/31/2015 01:18 PM EDT | Edited: 08/31/2015 04:09 PM EDT



Insects are helping Washington inmates make a big impact on the planet and their future.

Cedar Creek Corrections Center, in Littlerock, uses [beekeeping to teach prisoners about environmental practices and help them develop skills](#), that can be applied to a future career, King 5 reported.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/beekeeping-inmates-protect-the-planet-and-prepare-for-their-future_55e0aee2e4b0c818f617c9c6

"It gives me an open communication line we can talk about and share," Glenn Epling, corrections officer and program instructor, told the news outlet. "It helps me bring something to these inmates that I'm finding out they're very interested in."

The program is part of Washington's [Sustainability in Prisons Project](#), which began at Cedar Creek in 2003, but grew to be formally implemented in 2008 in four prisons around the state, according to the project's website. The program includes a number of environmental initiatives, including breeding threatened butterflies and growing flowers, [the Associated Press reported](#). Inmates conduct research and implement that knowledge into these programs.

"It makes sense that we engage in activity that make prisons safe to run, reduce negative inmate behavior and contribute to the community," Dan Pacholke, prison director for Washington State's Department of Corrections, told the Associated Press.

Today, [all 12 prisons in Washington State have sustainability programs](#), with the project currently working with the Olympia Bee Keeper's Association to [fund a beekeeper apprentice certification program](#), according to King 5.

"If I'm calm around the bees, I'm alright," inmate Jack Boysen told the news outlet. "It's better than a lot of jobs in prison. It gives us more opportunities, more chances."