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S1: So right now, I'm making twenty five an hour.

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S2: I don't think I've ever been happier and I told my boss, I told, I said, You know, I do this job for free, so

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S3: I don't think these jobs are ever going away. These jobs travel well. So even if you don't see your future in the state of Georgia, no matter where you go on this planet, there's going to be some type of career in the environmental industry.

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S1: If you're struggling with something, it's nice to know that the professor is there to help support you because at the end of the day, if you don't feel like there's there's passion in the program, like why would you want to succeed?

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S2: And that's just something that really excited me. I wanted to do something for the environment, something that was, you know, helped give back

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S4: ninety eight point seven chat tech, where ninety eight point seven percent of our students earn a career. On today's episode, we're going to look at environmental science technology. This is the program that will teach you how to use the industry approved procedures and equipment for collecting and analyzing environmental samples. This program features a focus on green clean technologies to assist in conservation and restoration efforts. On this episode, we're going to talk to a couple of former students to get an idea of what kind of jobs you can get after you finish the program. But first, speaking of jobs.

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S3: My name is Stephan Anderson and the environmental science instructor for Chattahoochee Technical College. I don't think these jobs are ever going away. These jobs travel well. So even if you don't see your future in the state of Georgia, no matter where you go on this planet, there's going to be

some type of career in the environmental industry. And, you know, we always think stateside. But you could go to any country and it might not be as developed as what we have here. But there's going to be jobs or some type of thing you can do to work in the environment. I mean, everywhere has got to have water. Everywhere has got to take care of where they live. And if our current trends continue with the environment, it's just only going to ramp up in the future. We're going to need more and more people being good stewards of the environment.

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S4: That's right. There are a lot of jobs out there.

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S1: So I'm brandy. I am going to Chattahoochee. I got my degree in environmental technology. I graduated in 2018, and since then I have been working in telecommunications.

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S4: Drafting brandy was actually offered one of those opportunities overseas that Mr. Anderson just mentioned.

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S1: Yeah, I actually I ended up not taking it because I didn't know how I felt about the United Arab Emirates or living in Coober Pedy, Australia. So I'm currently living in Denver, and I love it here.

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S4: And after you finished the Environmental Science Technology Program, the whole world will be open to you. But that doesn't mean that you can't find a job right here at home

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S3: with my advisory board, which is the people I work with in the industry. The thing that I always hear their term for for the past two or three years has been the silver tsunami for treatment jobs because over, I'll say, starting about a year ago, two years ago, between that time and five year range, over 50 percent of the water treatment workforce in the metro Atlanta area alone becomes eligible for retirement. Most people don't retire as soon as they become eligible because they like the job and the benefits. But theoretically, you know, starting two years ago, so in three more years, up to 50 percent of the workforce could technically retire if they wanted to. So they're definitely trying to fill those jobs, and

our treatments out of jobs is just a job that are not a lot of people know exist. You know, you turn on your water and it comes out. Nobody thinks about the journey it took to get there. Most people drive by water treatment plants frequently and don't even know they're there or what they do. It's just not a lot of job people know exist.

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S2: I am Paul Hardy. I work for Cobb County Water. I am currently a night shift lead operator, which basically I'm a supervisor. I run a team of four and I work at the R.L. Sutton Water Reclamation Facility down on the Chattahoochee at the Cobb Atlanta border. Graduated in two thousand sixteen from Chattahoochee Tech North Metro Environmental Tech. I work for Pallidum County first. I ran a night shift at the noonday Cobb County facility, which is in the Northeast Cobb and then with Cobb County for four years, four and a half years and had a year following. I was an automotive tech before I retired from that. Twenty five years. So a lot of mechanical experience, which really helps with the job, you know, working with all this heavy equipment, arms motors. This is just something that really excited me. I wanted to do something for the environment, something that was, you know, helped give back. You know, all these years I've been fixing cars and, you know, knowing that increases leaking on the ground and oil's leaking on the ground and all that, all that getting into our water system. It just it just gave me a nice direction to go. I took the intro to environmental technology, which really let me decide what I want to do. I also took their horticultural class entry level, don't know what was called an environmental tech. Just seem to be the way to go. It gave me more purpose. I guess it. It just gave me a really nice direction. And the more the more classes I got to take to get through the program, the more comfortable I was with my decision made it easier for me to decide this is what I wanted to do. Yeah, so it just makes me happy.

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S4: Let's talk about the classes for a minute.

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S3: So we have some of our courses in the environmental science program that are more broad focused. We have a gas course which teaches them to basically build for the lay person. It's like a Google Maps, but it's like Google Maps related to science. So whereas like Google Maps, you go in there and you search for what's the nearest restaurant? Where's the nearest Target or Wal-Mart? We can go through and we can plot data and look for, you know, what's the risk of flooding here or what's the risk of, you know, heavy metal elements being deposited if there's a flood that comes to this old closed down landfill? We have some of our. College courses are intro courses, you have evidence courses, but a lot of hours since we are a program focused on water are related to water and we we look at it in two main areas. We have what we call the field study of water where we're out doing stream samples or we're out, you know, testing infiltration rates or taking samples. And then we also have treatment courses that train people to work in the water treatment industry, whether it's treating drinking water to get it ready

to go to the public, whether it's receiving what we call wastewater and getting it ready to either go back in the environment or be returned to the public. And we focus on distribution, which is sending it from either the drinking water facility to the customers or taking waste from a customer and taking it to a wastewater facility. So we have a series of courses, an embedded certificate that actually gets people ready to start their journey, to earn their certification, to work in the water treatment industry in Georgia.

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S2: When I took the wastewater class in spring, I like totally fell in love that everybody in the class thought I was nuts. They're like, Why would you want to do wastewater? I'm like, I just really like the fact that it goes back to the environment and contributing back. I make sure that the water's clean before it hits the creek and flows out. And I don't, you know, I have to worry about the aquatic life. I worry about turtles. I worry about, you know, algae blooms. I mean, all these extra little things. I know there's just something about wastewater and going through it. And maybe it's because of the first class I had where we're going with electric motors and work with pumps and moving stuff around and adding chemicals to it to help out things and learning about the bugs that are in the sludge and what their purposes and what ones you want, which ones you don't, and how to look at them in a microscope.

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S1: Hi. Hi, boys and girls. Today we're going to learn about wastewater treatment. Oh boy, did you know that modern sewage

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UU: treatment started in London? Back in 1850, that sure is

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S1: a long time ago.

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S4: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Never do that again.

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S3: So one of the first things we teach them in our field courses is how to go out in the field and take soil samples, bring those back to the lab and test. Then we move into our forest art, which we just say for us,

but it's really going out to the field. Learning how to section off an area of land, identify all the plant species, take your measurement and then make data and predictions based off of what you've collected. And then we have our water area where we actually go out in the field. We take all our measurements, you know, our stream flow, our turbidity. And then we actually do species samples, which that's one of the students in the program's favorite activities is electro fission, where we've got a backpack electrode fisher and I'll show my age here. But it looks like the old school Ghostbusters backpack that you put on. It's got a lot more battery in it, and we can adjust the voltage and the pulse rate and all that stuff. And you basically you stun the fish, they float to the surface and we collect them and then we identify their species and then we run what's called an abney and we determine the health of the stream based on our physical characteristics and the species characteristics.

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S5: You know, it's just occurred to me. We really haven't had a completely successful test of this equipment and no sense worrying about it now. Why worry each of us is wearing an unlicensed nuclear accelerator on his back? Switch me on

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S1: to the things that really stuck out because I struggled so much with it were some of the water treatment classes. It's not that the concepts were difficult. I actually really enjoyed that class, but the math aspect of it was really difficult for me. Since I have dyscalculia. It is a learning deficit basically where math doesn't make sense to me. But fortunately, my professor, Steven Anderson, was really good about working with me and I went to tutoring and I was able to get through that and make it work. And it was actually really wonderful for me because I've always struggled with math and to have math be such a big portion of the course and still get through. It was huge for me. The other funds, the more fun stuff that I remember were when we were doing the field sampling, specifically when we did our stream survey. So much fun. I really love that we got to catch fish all day. So no, no, no complaints from me on that class. And then the other thing that really stuck out to me, though, was just how even though I had classes where I would struggle, learning it and getting all the information was really worth it to me, just like I have so many different fields of knowledge that I can pull from. It's it's fantastic. I really loved all my courses. I would go back again.

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S4: So how is Mr. Anderson as an instructor?

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S1: Just the way that the courses are taught, even though it's a lot of information, it's really delivered in a way that's easily too easy to digest and understand and also retain, because that's super important. He would actually make time for me after classes so that we could work on certain things where I was

having issues. I thought that was really great because I've had other college professors in the past who just did not make that time for their students. He's a fantastic professor, definitely one of my favorites I've had. If you're struggling with something, it's nice to know that the professor is there to help support you because at the end of the day, if you don't feel like there's there's passion in the program, like why would you want to succeed? I ended up falling in love with this, so I just really pushed that as far as I could, and it ended up leading me into the drafting area. And that's what's great. I think about the environmental technology is it's such an interdisciplinary thing that you can take it in a million different directions.

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S4: Let's get back to Paul. That guy absolutely loves working at the wastewater treatment plant.

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S2: I find a lot of pleasure and dedication, dedication and the fact that I know that I can take something that nobody wants because they flush it away and I can turn it into something that I can put back into the environment that, you know, is still it's safe for the aquatic life. I don't have to worry about algae blooms at noon day. I had turtles everywhere, and I really love that, and I knew they were safe to go back into their water into their environment. I'm able to put, you know, clean water back into the environment so that it can evaporate eventually and become rain and come back down on us and maybe not be as acidic. I find a lot. I also, you know, the plants because they have to have such a certain area. I mean, I. At New Day, I have what I call my herd. I had, I don't know, 10 those two bucks, but I just thought I was the coolest thing. You know, I got all this wildlife around me. Yeah, it smells at one end of the plant. But so what? And you know, I get to I get to put something back into the environment that I know is safe for the environment, for the for the animals. Those coyotes can go drink out of the creek and I don't have to worry about them, you know, getting getting too much chlorine in them. Yeah. And I know there's fish in the in the thing because people always stop it from the plant and they've got fishing poles out there and they're they're catching fish and, you know.

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S4: We've learned a lot about the environmental science technology program and the jobs you can get after finishing, but what kind of people will find success with this degree?

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S3: I mean, first off, they've got a lot being outdoors, regardless of which type of job you get in this industry. At some point, we jokingly say you're going to put boots on the ground, which even if you're running a sample crew, you're going to go out there with them at some point in time and have to work. A lot of people from the military are really successful. You know, I think it's part of this whole regimen where we we have said instructions that you have to follow when you're conducting these in field

experiments. And you know, a lot of these military people are really good at following instructions, but it'll sound. I don't wanna say corny, but a lot of them just have a passion for whatever area they're in, whether it be GIS mapping, whether it be air sampling or whatever. Independence. If you can wear independent, you're going to do very well because a lot of our jobs like for groundwater sampling, you're literally going to get a map and you're going to go out to 15 locations around, you know, like a closed down landfill and you're going to be holding water samples, pulling water data, putting meters out and it'll just be you out there all day. But you have to be independent and self driven and really want to do this.

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S2: Show me the money. Jerry, but was dropping

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UU: by just in time to take.

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S2: Let's talk money we pay in Cobb County, you pay \$13 and 10 cents to be a trainee. Once, once you've got 90 days of experience and you've taken a wastewater class that the state recognizes, you can go take your test and then you get your license. You apply to it through the state and Cobb County will take you up to. We've done a race since then, so I don't know the exact numbers, but it is. It's over fifteen dollars and fifty cents because it was 15 50 before we got the race. As a class one, you can make twenty twenty one dollars, basically an hour. OK, so then if you go in the private industry, like if you go work for the water authority, my understanding is they start at twenty two dollars an hour. At the training, you can make twenty five when you get your class three. And I've heard of people at Dobbins making well at Dobbins and pretty much name their price, but I heard they can make thirty five to forty five dollars an hour. That's a Class one operator for wastewater at Dobbins.

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S3: Well, the private industry is always going to pay more. So that was hard to tell. I will say that most people right now and in whatever, twenty twenty one with the private sector probably going to come in and I'll say start with no experience, probably just under 40 for the water treatment or wastewater treatment. So it's a little bit lower. But sometimes you're selling this higher with you moving up in certification. So like in Georgia, you can start the class four, but nobody does. Typically, because it's a small system certification, most people started the class three and then through classes and passing other tests and experience, you can move up to a class one which certifies you to run a plant and then you can get supervision experience. And you know, that pay definitely goes up from there. But most people start. I say around here thirty two to thirty five, just in our little bubble area north of metro Atlanta. And if you go into Atlanta, of course, they're going to pay more, but the ceiling is high.

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S1: So right now I'm making twenty five an hour, but I'm hoping to be getting more. I have a year in review coming up and then also I will be self-promoting sooner rather than later. I hope to resign or two. And then both of those should come with raises.

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S4: How much help does Chattahoochee Tech give you when it comes to finding a job? A lot, actually. Mr. Anderson and Chat Tech go above and beyond to help you start your career.

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S3: We have resumé and soft skill builders. We've got video lessons they can always review. We have resume building assignments where they do that. We have people come in and give lectures about, you know, how to do a resume, how to do an interview before the pandemic. And this is something we'll start back up once we get the all clear. We even did handle interviews like mock panel interviews in my courses, so a lot of treatment jobs now are panel interviews, not one on one like it used to be. You may have the superintendent for three or four facilities interviewing you at one time. So what we would do in a class is we would have students. We'd give them three or four jobs they could apply for and we would put them through a mock panel interview with actual members of the industry. Just because none of them, a lot of them have not experienced that. And then, second of all, just working with the industry itself because, you know, you'll get emails from these people in the industry once they know your exist, they're like, you know, Hey, I didn't know you were doing this. You know, I've got these two positions I need filled. You have anybody who's interested in, you know, a lot of students, if they didn't get a full time job, they got part time and experience or an internship, you know, just something that way. So it's just a good conduit because, you know, once people realize we're here, it's easier to reach out to me and say, Hey, do you have anybody who's finished who might like this instead of, you know, posting on an indie or monster and getting 50 applicants?

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S4: So what are you waiting for? Get online and check out the Environmental Science Technology Program at Chattahoochee Tech. Find out everything you need to know at Chattahoochee Tech, Edu and.

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