



Illinois RiverWatch to offer training for adults, 4-H and student groups

February 3 2016 4:18 PM



ILLINOIS – The **Illinois RiverWatch Network** is offering Illinois citizens and educators the chance to train to become citizen scientists and join the network of more than 250 volunteers throughout the state who monitor water quality of Illinois streams.

A series of RiverWatch volunteer training workshops will be held throughout the state this spring and summer. The workshops will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and combine both lecture and classroom time with field training in a local stream.

Registration is \$50 per person for most workshops, and must be paid in advance of the workshop. Registration is free for Illinois 4-H groups.

“Our rivers and streams are some of the most important natural resources we have, providing clean drinking water, pollution reduction and wildlife habitat, while also playing a vital role in many sectors of the economy,” RiverWatch Coordinator Matthew Young said. “The scientific monitoring of our streams is important to safeguard the future of Illinois rivers and streams.”

RiverWatch is a statewide partnership of organizations and individuals working to protect Illinois streams and waterways. Established in 1995 as a sub-program of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources’ Eco Watch Network, RiverWatch certified volunteers, called citizen scientists, examine indicators like stream habitats and macroinvertebrate (stream bug) communities to provide reliable water quality data that can be used by scientists to determine how the conditions of streams are changing over time.

RiverWatch offers two programs to become involved with: RiverWatch Citizen Science (for adults and 4-H groups) and Stream Discovery (for grades 5-12 educators who wish to involve their students in stream monitoring). Both training workshops are for volunteers who have received no training or partial training through RiverWatch programs and who wish to become a part of the certified network of volunteers throughout the state.

“While there are government agencies devoted to stream monitoring, resources are limited to monitor all streams regularly,” Young said. “This is why RiverWatch Citizen Scientists are so important, they provide reliable scientific data on stream health where none previously existed and also can provide broader watershed perspectives on the quality of Illinois streams.”

RiverWatch and Stream Discovery are programs of the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, a partnership between Lewis and Clark Community College, the University of Illinois and the Illinois Natural History Survey.

Since its founding in 1995, more than 1,800 individuals have received certification through RiverWatch, and 800 stream sites have been established for annual water quality sampling. RiverWatch data can be accessed at www.ngrrec.org/Riverwatch/.

To register for a workshop, contact Young at (618) 468-2784 or riverwatch@lc.edu. For more information about RiverWatch Citizen Science, or to register for a workshop online, visit www.ngrrec.org/Riverwatch. For information about the Stream Discovery Program for educators and students, visit www.ngrrec.org/Stream_Discovery.