



High School Students Work Together at River Learning Session

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Godfrey, Ill. – On Oct. 25, nearly 50 environmental science and biology students from Triad High School's Honors Biology class and East Alton-Wood River Community High School's Biology class will work together on river-related issues from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center's Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station, located near the Mel Price Lock and Dam.

The students will work in a professional setting and participate in "river issue solving" sessions, working together in small groups to form consensus, utilizing requested input from the experts in their critical thinking process, and then presenting their solutions to the group.

This year's topics include Sedimentation, Hypoxia (Dead Zone) and Invasive Species.

Afterward, the students will tour the facility and do water quality testing on the Mississippi River.

This educational program is co-sponsored and conducted by the Upper Mississippi River Education Committee, a group of non-profit organizations and higher education institutions working on introducing river education into high schools. Member organizations include the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, Lewis and Clark Community College, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Principia College, the Sierra Club and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

"Skills such as the ability to problem solve, think critically, design solutions and lead a team of peers are all needed to protect and plan for our natural resources," said Christine Favilla, Three Rivers Project coordinator for the Sierra Club.

“Experiences like the UMR Education Learning Session prepare today's youth to ensure our resources are well managed tomorrow,” said Dr. Elaine M. AbuSharbain, professor of Biology and Environmental Education at SIUE.

Volunteers from the Illinois Natural History Survey and United States Department of Agriculture will serve as river experts.

“The issue solving session is meant to mimic a real-world civic experience where students from two schools work together to form consensus,” said Natalie Marioni, environmental educator at Lewis and Clark Community College and The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. “It is rare to be involved in that method of learning at the high school level, so we hope we’re filling a void.”