



American Water Grant to Help Launch River Program for High School Students

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GODFREY – A \$3,071 grant from American Water is helping the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center launch its pilot year of the Mississippi River XChange (MRX) program in 2012.

The MRX program is designed to connect high school students with one another and with the river through hands-on river-related activities and lessons. Students learn about their specific regions and then are able to teach each other and share their findings through a framework that includes video conferencing technology.

“Thanks to these funds, we will be able to provide teachers and students in this and other regions along the river with specialized materials for studying the river through a watershed approach, thus creating a platform for river stewardship,” NGRREC Environmental Educator Natalie Marioni said. “The more students and teachers that are connected to the river directly and are able to understand the Mississippi River as an important resource – to not only their region, but also to much of the United States – the more likely they will make decisions that take into account the Mississippi River as a multi-use and important natural resource.”

NGRREC is one of six recipients this year that will benefit from American Water’s Environmental Grant Program, which supports innovative, community-based environmental programs in regions served by the company.

“The Environmental Grant Program helps local organizations carry out initiatives that not only benefit our watersheds, but increase awareness and community participation,” said Karla Olson

Teasley, president of Illinois American Water. “The work completed through this grant will help to improve the understanding and protection of the Mississippi River and the precious resource it provides.”

Illinois American Water Vice President Barry Suits will speak of the company’s support of NGRREC education programs, specifically MRX, at a presentation at 9:15 a.m. on May 29, during the first day of NGRREC’s Intern Orientation Week. Partners in this grant include USACE, Meeting of the Rivers Foundation, and Living Lands and Waters.

For more information on the Mississippi River XChange program, contact Marioni at (618) 468-2783 or via e-mail at nmarioni@lc.edu.