Biologically Active Compounds in Surface Waters to be Discussed at NGRREC Seminar

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A special seminar on biologically active compounds in Midwestern watersheds will be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday, July 16 at the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center's Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station.

NGRREC watershed scientist John Sloan will host the seminar, and Alan Kolok, director of the Nebraska Watershed Network, will present a lecture entitled "Agrichemicals in Midwestern Watersheds: The Hourglass." Kolok is also a professor and the director of the Aquatic Toxicology Laboratory at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The seminar is free and open to the public.

"A better understanding of the fate of the compounds in Midwestern watersheds enhances efforts toward better environmental stewardship, for both water professionals as well as an empowered citizenry," Kolok said.

Through the use of basic research approaches, local field stations and citizen scientists, the Nebraska Watershed Network has been tracking the movement of biologically active compounds through rivers in eastern Nebraska. In these watersheds, biologically active compounds are driven into surface water by rain.

"Biologically active compounds, such as steroids and pharmaceuticals, occur in alarmingly high concentrations in surface waters throughout North America," Kolok said. "The fate and transport of these compounds, when released from point sources, such as wastewater treatment plants has been fairly well described, however the release of these compounds from non-point sources is much less well described."

NGRREC is situated in a unique position near a significant, yet relatively unstudied, ecosystem created by the confluence of the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois rivers. Few ecosystems are as closely linked with the development of human civilization as great rivers, and few ecosystems have been as greatly altered by humans.

The Field Station's scholars and scientists study the ecology of the big rivers, the workings of the watersheds that feed them and ties to the river communities that use them. NGRREC aspires to be a leader in scholarly research, education and outreach related to the interconnectedness of big rivers, their floodplains and watersheds, and their associated communities.

For more information about NGRREC visit www.ngrrec.org.