



New RiverWatch Technician Grew Up In The Program

September 12 2020 8:00 AM



GODFREY – Although Hannah-Beth Griffis recently joined the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) as a RiverWatch Technician, she grew up in the program. Her father, John Griffis, is a retired biology professor and current adjunct at Joliet Junior College (JJC). He's also a long-time RiverWatch volunteer scientist and introduced Hannah and her siblings to his work at a young age. Griffis joins NGRREC

with both a Master of Science and a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Her undergraduate work concentrated on integrative biology, with a minor in anthropology. While in grad school, she focused on ecology. "I began helping my dad when I was in middle school," she said. "I started helping him just by pointing out macroinvertebrates in his samples. When I was old enough, I began to go out into the field and helped him collect stream samples." While taking one of her father's research courses at JJC, Griffis' project earned her the opportunity to do a presentation at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research (NCUR) and publication in the NCUR Proceedings. "That experience is what solidified my interest in the field of biology," Griffis said.

"I was very excited when I heard about the position for RiverWatch technician. I'm very thankful."

Hannah-Beth Griffis recently joined NGRREC as a RiverWatch technician. for the program because it gave me my first professional experience with research and motivated me to continue in the field of science.

"While at SIUE, Griffis worked as a teaching assistant, instructing genetics, anatomy and physiology, bacteriology, biostats and mammalogy. As a RiverWatch technician, Griffis' responsibilities include writing for the RiverWatch newsletter and blog, updating the program's statewide database, exploring potential partnerships with other organizations and identifying macroinvertebrates. Currently, Griffis is working with the RiverWatch program to expand sample methods in an effort to better track pollution in Illinois' streams.

"We want to implement microplastic measurements to our current sample methods," she said. "I really like research, doing it and learning about it. I like to know what kind of studies are happening currently in the field." Griffis hopes to expand the RiverWatch program by forming partnerships and getting more people involved. "Water is necessary for life," she said. "Understanding the dynamics of local watersheds helps connect people to nature. Volunteering with RiverWatch is an easy way for people to get a basic understanding of how research can work and gives people a firsthand look at how pollution can affect local environments."

Those interested in the RiverWatch program can contact Griffis at (618) 468-2900 or hgriffis@lc.edu for more information, or visit the RiverWatch website at www.ngrrrec.org/Riverwatch.

