

RiverWatch Seeks Winter Volunteers To Study Road Salt Impact

by Jen Young

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EAST ALTON - Winter is quickly approaching, and Illinois RiverWatch is hoping to train community members to monitor for chloride levels in local streams to identify areas where salt use is impacting water quality.

During the 2021 winter season, the Illinois Department of Transportation reports using more than 522,000 tons of salt on roadways throughout Illinois.

“Much of this salt ends up in local rivers and streams where it harms aquatic life,” said Danelle Haake, RiverWatch director and stream ecologist. “We are seeking volunteers who are willing to check on their local streams several times between October and May. Each monitoring trip could take as little as 15 minutes!”

The training is held virtually on:

October 26 from 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. Register at <https://conta.cc/3TxYgOF>

November 14 from 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. Register at <https://conta.cc/3TGZB5x>

The RiverWatch staff will provide participants with the information needed to become a Winter Chloride Watcher.

“Our goal is to show whether cities’ efforts are working to lessen the impact of road salt entering streams as the cities adopt Best Management Practices for the application of salt onto roadways,” Haake said.

For more information on the trainings contact Haake at dhaake@lc.edu or (618) 468-2784.

To learn more about the ecological impacts of road salt in local streams visit <http://www.ngrrrec.org/News-Stories/Winter-Road-Salt-Impacts-Aquatic-Ecosystems/>.

National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC)

Founded in 2002 as a collaborative partnership between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Lewis and Clark Community College, NGRREC is dedicated to the study of great river systems and the communities that use them. The center aspires to be a leader in scholarly research, education, and outreach related to the interconnectedness of large rivers, their floodplains, watersheds, and their associated communities. To learn more about NGRREC, visit www.ngrrrec.org.