



RiverWatch Volunteers Monitor Stream Health Across Illinois

by Hannah Griffis

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EAST ALTON - Illinois RiverWatch Network will host several training sessions across the state in March and April. The sessions will teach community members how to monitor the health of their local streams.



RiverWatch, a community science program, is coordinated by the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRRECsm) at Lewis and Clark Community College. Each spring, RiverWatch offers workshops where volunteers learn to collect and

identify stream macroinvertebrates (water bugs) and describe the physical condition of the stream habitat.

Upon completing training and becoming certified, volunteers may adopt a stream site where they can monitor water quality and contribute to a state-wide dataset using RiverWatch survey methods.

“Macroinvertebrates are in all of our streams and many people don’t know they are there,” RiverWatch Volunteer Coordinator Hannah Griffis said. “The critters in our streams are impacted by changes in the health of our streams, whether natural or caused by humans. Based on what we find living in the stream, we can get an idea of the overall health of the stream.”

No previous knowledge or experience is required to attend RiverWatch workshops. The workshops will provide enough information for volunteers to monitor streams, whether they have a biology degree or just want to better understand the stream in their own backyard.

Upcoming RiverWatch Training Workshops

- 3/11 – Makanda, Jackson County
- 3/18 – Godfrey, Madison County
- 3/24 – Alton, Madison County
- 3/25 – Monticello, Piatt County
- 3/26 – Bloomington, McLean County
- 4/1 – Joliet, Will County
- 4/1 – Genoa, Dekalb County
- 4/2 – Byron, Ogle County
- 4/5 – Chicago, Cook County
- 4/7 – Lake Forest, Lake County
- 4/15 – Ingleside, Lake County
- 4/29 – Richmond, McHenry County
- 4/30 – North Aurora, Kane County
- 5/6 – Galena, Jo Daviess County

Continuing education credits are available for current Illinois educators. Those interested should make a note on their registration form, which is available at <https://conta.cc/3ltLaoI>.

The registration fee is \$50 for adults, which includes a copy of the RiverWatch manual as well as invertebrate identification resources. Up to two children per registered adult may attend at no cost.

For more information, visit www.ngrrrec.org/RiverWatch or contact Griffis at hgriffis@lc.edu or (618) 468-2781.

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.