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27th annual St. Louis River Quest set to deliver estuary education and fun

DULUTH, Minn. – More than 1,500 sixth-graders from throughout the region will once again converge on the Duluth waterfront May 13-16 to participate in the 27th annual [St. Louis River Quest](#) program. These students represent a new generation of learners participating in the unique outreach education program that has already spanned a quarter century.

During their 2.5 hour excursions, students will actively seek answers to questions about the Duluth-Superior Harbor – to learn all they can about the St. Louis River Estuary – as they move through a dozen learning stations on land and water.

During each morning and afternoon session, small groups of students will participate in a series of unique hands-on learning stations; six aboard the *Vista Star* and six inside Pioneer Hall at the DECC. They will be introduced to topics ranging from pollution prevention, stopping aquatic invaders, fishy physics and piping plover habitat to industrial water reuse, sustainable forestry, waste water treatment, oil spill response, hydroelectric power and commercial shipping. Sessions on hypothermia, rip currents and lifejackets/boating safety conclude each session.

Students carry River Quest passports to document their adventures. Afterward, they are encouraged to submit essays or poems about their experiences for the program’s annual writing contest. A St. Louis River Quest Facebook page launched in 2018 to enable friends and family to sample some of the lessons and see how much fun the kids are having. Students, teachers, chaperones and volunteers will also be encouraged to post comments about their River Quest experiences on Twitter using the #stlouisriverquest hashtag.

St. Louis River Quest is a community-based, volunteer organization founded in 1993 to provide regional sixth-grade students with hands-on learning experiences that enhance awareness and understanding of the St. Louis River ecosystem and the interrelated commercial, industrial, and recreational activities in the Duluth-Superior Harbor, part of the St. Louis River Estuary. From its launch, this outreach education program has continued to grow and evolve. Station sponsors now work directly with educators to align resource materials with Wisconsin and Minnesota science and social studies standards to make the experience an even more effective teaching tool. More than 25,000 students have participated in River Quest since its inception.

“Visionary leaders launched this program a quarter century ago to help young people become more civically engaged, more environmentally conscious,” said Adele Yorde, River Quest board member. “We continue to build on that momentum by helping students understand the impact we *each* have on the environmental health and the economic vitality of this estuary ... and that thoughtful partnerships between industry, government and the public can result in safe, productive use of our natural resources.”

River Quest relies on the support of hundreds of local businesses, nonprofits and individuals who donate their time, talents and resources each year to engage and educate area youth.

2019 River Quest Learning Stations and Sponsors on the *Vista Star*

<i>Cold Hand Luke (Hypothermia and Water Safety)</i>	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
<i>Pollution and the River Watershed</i>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<i>What is the Es-chew-air-ee?</i>	Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (M/T)
<i>It floats, you don't. Wear your life jacket!</i>	Duluth Sail and Power Squadron (W/Th)
<i>Get Habitattitude!</i>	Minnesota Sea Grant Program
<i>Fishy Physics</i>	Great Lakes Aquarium (M/T)
<i>Bringing Back the Piping Plover</i>	St. Louis River Alliance (W/Th)
<i>Observation Station</i>	St. Louis River Quest

2019 River Quest Learning Stations and Sponsors in Pioneer Hall (DECC)

<i>Break the Grip of the Rip!</i>	Twin Ports Rip Currents
<i>What's the difference between Storm and Sanitary Sewers?</i>	City of Duluth – Utility Operations (M/T)
<i>Maritime Oil Spill Response</i>	U.S. Coast Guard & USCG Auxiliary (W/Th)
<i>Industrial Water Use: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!</i>	sappi (M/T)
<i>Sustainable Forestry</i>	Verso Corporation (W/Th)
<i>Water Power (Hydroelectric)</i>	Minnesota Power/Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center (M/T)
<i>Great Lakes Cargo Capital</i>	Duluth Seaway Port Authority (W/Th)
<i>The Disappearing Beach</i>	MN DNR Scientific and Natural Areas Program (M/T)
<i>Stream Table</i>	USDA Forest Service/Superior National Forest (W/Th)
<i>Bacteria: The Real Workers at WLSSD</i>	Western Lake Superior Sanitary District

2019 River Quest Sponsors

Diamond (\$2,500+)

Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Hallett Dock Company

Platinum (\$1,000+)

Enbridge, Donald Weesner Foundation, ISD 709 Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota Sea Grant Program, Rotary Club of Duluth-Club 25, sappi, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vista Fleet, Western Lake Superior Sanitary District

Gold (\$500+)

Altec Industries, Inc., City of Duluth Utility Operations, CRH US, Fraser Shipyards, Genesis Attachments, Graymont (WI) LLC, Krech Ojard & Associates, Inc., Kwik Trip, Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve, Lakehead Constructors, Marine Tech LLC, Minnesota Power, Pier B Resort Hotel, PolyMet Mining, TKDA, USDA Forest Service-Superior National Forest, Verso Corporation, Adele and Steve Yorde

Silver (\$250+)

AMI Consulting Engineers P.A., A.W. Kuettel & Sons, Great Lakes Aquarium, Hunt Electric, Husky Energy Superior Refining, Key Lakes/Great Lakes Fleet, Marine General, Midwest Energy Resources Co., Bryce Nixon & David Moeller, Northland Constructors

Bronze (\$100+)

Barr Engineering Co., Cassandra & Kevin Beardsley, Bent Paddle Brewing Co., Deb DeLuca & Eric Dott, Grandma's Restaurant Co., Amy Herstad-Einbu & Jim Einbu, Iron Mining Association of Minnesota, Jamar Company, Kathy & Doug Jensen, Erin & Damian Makela, Kathy Peterson, Melissa & Brian Resch, Shelby & Aaron Salmela, South Pier Inn, Lisa Sturm, Amy & Mark Wolcott, Jane & David Worley

Other

Jayson & Jennifer Hron, Kathy & Jim Sharrow