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St. Louis River Quest sets sail May 12-15 in Duluth;
A record 1,433 sixth-graders prepare for land & sea adventure

Duluth, Minn. USA – Boatloads of area sixth-graders carrying River Quest “passports” to document their adventures, will explore the Duluth-Superior Harbor May 12-15 aboard the Vista Star excursion boat, learning all they can about the St. Louis River estuary.

The 22nd annual St. Louis River Quest will draw a record 1,433 students over the course of four days to the waterfront this year. Divided into small groups, they will participate in a total of 12 unique, hands-on learning stations covering topics that range from pollution prevention and stopping aquatic invaders to personal water safety and commercial shipping. In addition to six stations on the boat, an additional six are set up landside in Pioneer Hall at the DECC. Students will “switch” venues halfway through their respective morning or afternoon session.

St. Louis River Quest is a community-based, volunteer organization founded in 1993 to provide area sixth-grade students with hands-on learning experiences that enhance their awareness and understanding of the interrelated commercial, industrial, recreational and environmental values of the Duluth-Superior Harbor – the estuary of the St. Louis River.

Since its inception, and including this year’s participants, this outreach education program has served over 19,000 students in the Duluth-Superior area. This year, with the support of 40-plus companies and agencies, River Quest will involve over 55 teachers, students from 14 area schools, plus homeschoolers and as many as 100 volunteers.

Students are encouraged afterward to submit essays or poems about their experiences as part of the event’s ‘Captain Ray Skelton River Quest Writing Contest,’ named in honor of one of the program’s founders. Winners’ names are added to traveling plaques to recognize both the student’s writing abilities and the school’s participation in River Quest. Contest winners in 2013 were: Anna Chelseth (essay) from Ordean-East and Milly Timm (poetry) from Marshall School.

Participating teachers have seen what a huge impact River Quest has had on their students. Their feedback after last year’s program included these remarks: “The kids love it! Stations are well organized, hands-on, interesting and fun.” Another teacher said, “This is one of the richest experiences our students receive throughout the academic year. It is relevant to their lives, and they are loaded with personal connections to many of the stations.”

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River Quest organizers concur. “This is truly a collaborative community outreach education program,” noted Leslee LeRoux, River Quest Board President. “It continues to grow and evolve each year. Most recently, learning station sponsors have been working directly with educators to align their resource materials with specific State Science and Social Studies Standards, which makes the entire experience a very effective teaching tool.”

The list of 2014 River Quest Learning Station Topics/Sponsors and Donors include:

**Learning Stations on the Vista Star**

- **Cold Hand Luke (Hypothermia & Water Safety)**
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- **It floats, you don’t. Wear your life jacket!**
  - Duluth Sail & Power Squadron
- **Bringing back the Piping Plover**
  - St. Louis River Alliance (M/T)
- **Fishy Physics**
  - Great Lakes Aquarium/ (W/Th)
- **Get Habitattitude!**
  - Minnesota Sea Grant Program
- **Break the Grip of the Rip**
  - Twin Ports Rip Currents
- **What is the Es-chew-air-ee?**
  - Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve

**Learning Stations at the DECC (Pioneer Hall)**

- **What’s the difference between Storm & Sanitary Sewers?**
  - City of Duluth Utilities (M/T)
- **Sustainable Forestry**
  - NewPage (W/Th)
- **Bacteria: The Real Workers at WLSSD**
  - Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
- **We Catch all Fugitives**
  - Midwest Energy Resources Co. (M/T)
- **Great Lakes Cargo Capital**
  - Duluth Seaway Port Authority (W/Th)
- **Industrial Water Use: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**
  - Sappi Fine Paper
- **Oil in the Environment**
  - U.S. Coast Guard & USCG Auxiliary
- **Stream Table**
  - USDA Forest Service–Superior National Forest

**2014 River Quest Donors**

- **(Platinum $1,000)”**
  - Duluth Public Schools, Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation, Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program, Rotary Club of Duluth No. 25, Sappi Fine Paper, US Army Corps of Engineers, Vista Fleet

- **(Gold $500)”**

- **(Silver $250)”**

- **(Bronze $100)”**
  - A.W. Kuettel & Sons, Allouez Marine Supply, Grandma’s Restaurant Co., Great Lakes Aquarium, Marine Tech, South Pier Inn

For more information about River Quest, to view teacher resource materials and/or read writing samples, visit [www.seagrant.umn.edu/riverquest](http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/riverquest).

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