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The state Water Commission is holding workshops this month on adapting to extreme weather, and specifically preparing for droughts in non-drought years. (Courtesy photo)

Limited number of slots open for popular Water Institute teacher event

By Daily Republic Staff

FAIRfiELD — The Solano Resource Conservation District is again hosting its popular Water Institute for Teachers starting Aug. 2.

“This four-day professional development experience will enhance teachers’ understanding of Solano County’s water resources and guide them on field trip-based workshops in our county’s open spaces,” the district said in a statement.

However, organizers said there are a limited number of slots open to K-12 teachers from schools in Solano. The program is offered Aug. 2-4, with the final piece on Oct. 14.

“Participants will spend the first day of the training at Rush Ranch Open Space hiking and learning about climate change’s effects on the Suisun Marsh. Brian Brown, California’s Project WET coordinator, will lead teachers through activities focused on water resources that can be adapted for all ages in the classroom,” the district stated.

“The next day, teachers will take a boat tour of Lake Berryessa and hear from an expert panel on Solano County’s water resources. The third day of the training will focus on walking through more hands-on lessons from Project WET that teachers can implement in their classrooms to give local relevance to their lessons about water. Local agency partners will also discuss the connections between education and open spaces throughout the county. “

Chris Drake, Parks Services manager with Solano County Parks, said, “… teachers experience environmental education as a hands-on experience that connects students to the world around them. Solano Institute takes participants out on Lake Berryessa and shows them where the water comes from.

“Local resource experts explain the conservation challenges the reservoir faces and why water conservation is important to us as Solano County residents. The Solano Institute takes the same hands-on approach to the Suisun Marsh and other regionally important environmental challenges,” Drake said. “In the three years I’ve been part of the Solano Institute, I’ve never known anyone to take this course and not return to their classroom excited, invigorated, and full of fresh energy and great ideas about how to share their experiences and the strategies they learn with their students. I feel like this unique program is definitely something we should all be proud of.”

Participants receive a $300 stipend upon completion of the program, and teachers can claim 21 hours of continuing education credit.

“Teachers will come back together in October for a workshop day when they will share how they’ve applied the training’s content in their classrooms,” the district said.

The Solano Water Institute for Teachers is funded by the Solano County Orderly Growth Committee; the California Department of Water Resources; and the School Water Education Program, including the cities of Vacaville, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vallejo, Dixon and Benicia.

Interested participants should visit www.solanorcd.org/events to register by July 13. For more information, send an email to Shea Kinser, Education Program manager for the conservation district, at shea.kinser@solanorcd.org.

For more information on the conservation district programs, go to www.solanorcd.org/projects-and-programs/education/educator-workshops.html or email education@solanorcd.org.

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