DAILY REPUBLIC

Sixth-graders go to marsh to learn about water ecosystem

Daily Republic Staff

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FAIRFIELD — More than 1,200 sixth-graders around Solano County will soon be out at the Suisun Marsh learning about local watersheds through hands-on science activities.

The Solano Resource Conservation District staff guides the students through in-class lessons and a field trip to Rush Ranch Open Space outside Suisun City.

"The program begins with two classroom lessons ... Students learn about their watershed and the importance of keeping pollution out of stormwater using a 3-D Enviroscape model. They also learn more about the vital role the Suisun

Marsh plays in the region’s ecosystem and preview what they will experience on the field trip," organizers said in a statement.

"At Rush Ranch Open Space, a property owned by Solano Land Trust, lessons about the importance of our region’s water resources come to life through three science stations," the statement said.

"Students practice collecting data to serve as evidence for scientific questions regarding how human activities affect watershed health. The sixth-graders learn about how pollution can affect water quality, then test the water in the marsh slough themselves. They learn about the two distinct environments at the marsh, then identify plants that live in the grasslands and the wetlands, as well as make observations about the soil in the two habitats and consider how drought might affect the landscape."

The first of 17 field trip dates is Oct. 11.

“We provide students with the opportunity to see up close the open spaces and water resources they’ve been studying. This helps them see the importance of these places as they learn to be stewards of the environment," conservation district Education Manager Shea Kinser said in the statement.

The curriculum for the classroom lessons and field trip meets California’s Next Generation Science Standards and engage students in inquiry-based learning.

This fall, the students will come from Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Vacaville and Vallejo.