Ranger Teri Luchini speaks to K.I. Jones third-graders about watersheds at Rockville Hills Regional Park, on May 1, 2015. The Watershed Explorers program is put together by the Solano Resource Conservation District. (Robinson Kuntz/Daily Republic file)

FAIRFIELD — Solano Resource Conservation District's Watershed Explorers program plans to take 2,200 third-graders from every city in Solano County on an all-day field trip to a local open space within the next couple of months.

The program is adding sites at Glen Cove Marina/Benicia State Park, Valley Glen Pond in Dixon and Sandy Beach Park in Rio Vista to existing sites at Rockville Park in Fairfield and Lagoon Lake/Peña Adobe in Vacaville, according to a district press release.

Children who participate in the program will have the opportunity to visit their local parks to explore and learn about the natural systems at work there, the release said. A series of learning stations will guide the children through their program park, providing

hands-on education about the ecosystem and natural resources they encounter.

The Watershed Explorers program introduces participants to the concepts of ecology and stewardship, according to the release. It exposes them to the natural world all around them, and helps them to see it with new perspective, the release said.

Participants work through an in-classroom curriculum with their teacher prior to the field trip. The School Water Education Program provides a pre-field trip class focused on Solano County water and conservation.

The field trip is aimed at teaching children about their park and the challenges faced by all wild spaces, and the actions they and their families can take to protect and preserve their natural heritage, the release said.

Solano Resource Conservation District program educators deliver California standards-based lessons that draw children in and make environmental science both tangible and relevant, according to the district release.

Participants will receive a copy of the Solano County Outdoor! Guide to local parks and opens spaces after completing the field trip. The passport-like booklet was developed by the Solano Resource Conservation District to encourage children to explore county natural areas with friends and family, the release said.

It was funded by a California State Parks Habitat Conservation Fund grant, which also matches local support to fund this program. Annual funding of $50,000 for this program ends at the end of June, the release said. The district is looking for local funding and new opportunities to replace this grant money, according to the release.

Petrolia, the Used Oil Avenger, will be visiting every Watershed Explorers classroom after the field trips, the release said. Petrolia is a live-action superhero dedicated to keeping used oil out of Solano County waterways.

Children in last year's Watershed Explorers and Suisun Marsh Watershed Program classes helped to design Petrolia's costume and create a comic book about her exploits. The project was supported by a Cal Recycle Used Oil Grant.

To learn more about the Watershed Explorers program and see videos of previous programming, check out the Solano Resource Conservation District website at solanorcd.org. For more information, including availability for additional class participation, call Marianne Butler at 574-674-5611.

Reach the Daily Republic newsroom at 425-4646.

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