Solano County teachers sought for field trip-based water institute

The Solano Water Institute for Teachers will be July 31 to Aug. 2

The second day of training during the Solano Water Institute for Teachers, July 31 to Aug. 2, includes a boat tour of Lake Berryessa. (Courtesy photo/Solano RCD)

By **RICHARD BAMMER** | rbammer@thereporter.com | Vacaville Reporter
PUBLISHED: July 26, 2024 at 3:08 p.m.

For some Solano County educators, the ABCs of water may be part of their preparation for the coming academic year.

If they wish during the Solano Water Institute for Teachers, they will participate in three days of field trip-based professional development, from July 31 to Aug. 2, learning about Solano County water resources. They will join the Solano Resource Conservation District and local experts in unique outdoor settings throughout the county.

The goal is to “enhance teachers’ knowledge of our local water resources and open spaces, while providing them with curriculum and activities they can take back into their classrooms,” Shea Kinser, education program manager for the Dixon-based RCD, wrote in a press statement.

Participants will spend the first day of the training at Rush Ranch Open Space and Grizzly Ranch, just south of Suisun City, hiking and learning about the ecology of the Suisun Marsh from experts from the Suisun Resource Conservation District and the National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Brian Brown, California’s Project WET coordinator, will lead teachers through activities about water resources that can be adapted for all ages in the classroom. And Jennifer Leonard, a spokeswoman for the Solano County Office of Education, will discuss SCOE initiatives on environmental literacy.

The next day, teachers will take a boat tour of Lake Berryessa, where they will hear from an expert panel on Solano’s water resources.

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The third day of training will take more time to walk teachers through aspects of the Project WET curriculum and allow for time to collaborate on lessons to take back into their classrooms.

The training’s place-based focus allows teachers to give local relevance to their lessons about conservation and perhaps where water comes from, where it goes when we flush our toilets, what happens to rain runoff, and who shares the local water supply.

Participants will receive a $400 stipend after completing the program, and teachers can claim up to 27 hours of continuing education credit, Kinser noted in the prepared statement.

Teachers will return in October for a workshop in which they will share how they’ve applied the training in their classrooms.

Teachers interested in joining the waitlist for the Solano Water Institute in 2025, should email Kinser at shea.kinser@solanorcd.org.

The Solano Water Institute for Teachers is funded by the Solano County Orderly Growth Committee, with support from the California Department of Water Resources and the School Water Education Program (Solano County Water Agency; Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District; Cities of Vacaville, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vallejo, Dixon, and Benicia).

For more information, visit https://www.solanorcd.org/projects-and-programs/education/educator-workshops.html or email education@solanorcd.org.