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Illinois Environmental Educators Explore Diversity

(Chicago, IL) - Illinois environmental educators will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of diversity issues at two upcoming workshops. The diversity workshops will be held on February 3 in Chicago, and February 5 in Springfield.

Coordinators and participants from Illinois' five environmental education regions will participate, with a total of 50 workshop participants coming from throughout the state.

The diversity workshops are sponsored by the Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP), as a way to explore multicultural issues as they occur in the real world of environmental education. Through discussion of one or more cases participants will explore the intersection of EE and cultural diversity and identify steps that can be taken to make one's own organization and program more inclusive and culturally diverse.

Mary Rice, Illinois Project Manager for their EETAP grant, hopes that, "These workshops will help us gain an improved understanding of how to effectively include diverse audiences in our organizations and programs."

(MORE)

“We need to work to increase our economic diversity, urban and rural diversity, and race and gender diversity in our state’s environmental education efforts,” said Rice.

Gus Medina, EETAP National Project Manager, will be joined by the Co-Directors of Project del Rio, from Las Cruces, New Mexico and Juárez, Mexico, Lisa LaRocque and Alma Galván, to facilitate the diversity workshops in Illinois. Medina said that, "Through the discussion of two cases the workshop participants will explore the intersection of EE and cultural diversity and identify steps to make their organizations and programs more inclusive and culturally diverse."

The February 3 diversity workshop will be held at the US EPA offices at 77 W. Jackson Blvd, Chicago. The February 5 workshop will take place at Lincoln Memorial Gardens, Springfield. Both workshops run from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. For more information, contact Project Manager Mary Rice at (847) 985-2100.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided financial support to Illinois and seven additional states to advance environmental education. These eight states receive U.S. EPA funds through the Environmental Education and Training Partnership based at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Illinois is using its funds to create a regional network to advance environmental education throughout the state. “The regional network has increased our communication with school teachers, as well as educators in museums, nature centers and other facilities,” said Rice.

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