



Verde River Monitoring and Education Program

Our Spring/Summer Monitoring and Education course is still open for new students! The Wednesday slots have all been filled, but we still have space on the Saturday lessons!

Classes will be held weekly for 10 weeks from April 29th until July 1st for Saturday students. Classes meet at Tuzigoot River Access Point (TuziRAP) in Clarkdale, where we'll have a 1-hour discussion of that day's topics, followed by a 4-hour (or so) kayak trip from Lower Tapco River Access Point (TapcoRAP) to TuziRAP. Along the way, we'll discuss experiential things about the day's lesson topics, and we'll stop halfway down to eat lunch and talk. The kayak trips always present unexpected opportunities to discuss something about the river along the way. Summer/Fall classes will start in mid-July (probably July 19th for Wednesday students and July 22nd for Saturday students) and run through mid- to late-September.

If you might be interested in becoming a "Verde River Nerd," we suggest you download and browse the class textbook. This will give you a good idea of the course curriculum. You might also like to read a few of the ChatGPT discussions. The textbook can be downloaded at: <http://www.verderiverinstitute.org/Verde%20Monitoring...> and the ChatGPT discussion are at: <http://www.verderiverinstitute.org/chatgpt.html>.

There is no charge for taking the classes, and kayaks, PFDs and some other equipment is supplied. We do, of course, accept donations!

If you're interested in signing up, just email Doug at doug@verderiverinstitute.org and tell us whether you'd like the Spring/Summer or the Summer/Fall sessions, and whether you prefer Wednesday or Saturday classes for the summer/fall classes. We have limited openings, so the sooner you let us know your preferences, the better! Please include your name, email address and phone number in your message.

We hope to see you on the Verde!



Verde River Monitoring and Education Program

Purpose of this program

The Verde River Monitoring and Education Program was developed to fill a gap in the conservation efforts that are working to conserve the Verde River. It evolved following discussion between the Verde River Institute and the U.S. Forest Service about the need for long-term monitoring of the Verde's riparian zone – the “green belt” that lines the river with trees and other plants, and which supports one of the most diverse ecosystems in Arizona.

Monitoring allows agencies and organizations to detect changes in the system that can alert them to the need to take actions to address problems. Without monitoring and the baseline data it generates, potential threats to an ecosystem may go undetected until it's too late.

After designing a monitoring program, we quickly realized that we needed a trained group of volunteers, scientists and conservationists who could conduct the testing, surveying, and cataloging needed for the success of a riparian monitoring plan. While there are great people available for hire and to consult, there are very few with actual in-depth knowledge of our ecosystem, our flow regimes, and our climate. The Verde is a unique river in a unique location, and its values, challenges and effective conservation strategies are also unique.

This program was created to address this gap. Graduates from this program will have a deep understanding of the Verde River's ecosystems, its hydrology, the water laws that affect it, its history and its challenges. Students will spend more than 40 hours on the river in kayaks and along the banks taking measurements of significant aspects of the river, logging those data, learning to identify the plants and animals, and to recognize potential problems when they see them.

We expect our graduates to become lifelong Verde River advocates, and to form a cohort of experienced, well-trained citizen scientists who will recruit new advocates and be effective and efficient volunteers or employees for the organizations working to conserve the river.