

Chapter 1: Introduction to St. Louis River - River Watch

As the largest U.S. tributary to Lake Superior, the St. Louis River in northeastern Minnesota is a significant region-wide water resource. Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) has played an important role in monitoring this resource since 1997 by coordinating the St. Louis River – River Watch Program. The current River Watch Program engages students from area secondary schools which gather biological, chemical, and physical data throughout the St. Louis River watershed and western Lake Superior basin. As a result of their participation, students have a practical opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge in an important scientific data collection effort. They develop valuable scientific and social skills while following detailed protocols, solving scientific problems, and cooperating with their peers. The data that they gather provides the basis for evaluating the water quality and ecological health of the St. Louis River system.

River Watch program responsibilities have been integrated into each participating school's biology and/or environmental science curriculum. Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College's Environmental Institute provides the research resources and the logistical support necessary to assist the schools in this effort. FDLTCC also sponsors the annual River Watch Congress each spring. At this event participating schools are invited to the college for an educational experience centered on the St. Louis River watershed and the



western Lake Superior basin region. Area natural resource professionals and educators share information with students ranging from current environmental threats to the integrity of the system to the natural history of the watershed. At the Congress, students also share the data collected at their sampling stations and discuss the overall health of the watershed ecosystem.

