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Kids in Jackson County can become citizens scientists thanks to OU program

Submitted Report

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Oct 16, 2023

PORTSFUTURE

IMAGINING THE OPPORTUNITIES, GATHERING YOUR IDEAS THE FACILITY AT PIKETON, OHIO



JACKSON — Kids in Jackson County — and surrounding counties — can become citizen scientists thanks to Ohio University’s Voinovich School PORTSfuture ’Program’s support to expand the School’s My Backyard Stream project in the region. The PORTSfuture Program is funded by a grant from the US Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office which is focused on Pike, Scioto, Ross, and Jackson counties. PORTSfuture works with partners to inform the cleanup and future use of the US DOE former gaseous diffusion plant in

Pike County, Ohio and provides STEM engagement opportunities to regional youth who are the future workforce. My Backyard Stream is a grant-funded project that provides water quality tools and education to citizens (more information on the partnership and funding that makes this possible below). The objectives are to promote citizen science and volunteer monitoring of water bodies in the Ohio River Basin, and to foster and encourage interest in environmental science and experiential learning. Their tagline summarizes it nicely as well: Become a citizen scientist and investigate your local stream! Record and upload your observations to help Ohio scientists and community members better understand the health of our local rivers and streams. Citizens participating in the process submit their findings using the “Citizen Scientist Data Submission” button. Kits are available through one of the many of the My Backyard Stream partners, which are listed at the bottom of this note. Jen Bowman, the director of environmental programs at Ohio University’s Voinovich School, recently led a 4-county series of events funded by the PORTSfuture Program featuring the My Backyard Stream kit and program in partnership with public libraries in Pike, Scioto, Ross, and Jackson counties. Stephanie Howe, Director of Energy Programs & Director of Human Capital at Ohio University’s Voinovich School, leads the PORTSfuture Program. “The Ohio University PORTSfuture Program is thrilled to sponsor these events in partnership with public libraries in Pike, Scioto, Ross, and Jackson counties. Through PORTSfuture,

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"The Ohio University PORTSfuture Program is thrilled to sponsor these events in partnership with public libraries in Pike, Scioto, Ross, and Jackson counties. Through PORTSfuture, we offer a variety of STEM engagement activities throughout the year with other partners to local youth to spark their imaginations and encourage them to explore future STEM careers."

My Backyard Stream has become widespread thanks to the outreach efforts of Ohio University and the funding partnership, which includes state and federal government, higher education, and private industry. It is co-funded by the PORTSfuture Program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service, Ohio STEM Learning Network, the American Electric Power Foundation, along with support from the Ohio University Museum Complex.

My Backyard Stream Partners involved with these kits include: Racoon Creek Partnership, Rural Action, ODNR Shawnee State Park, Ohio Museum Complex, Unioto Elementary, The Nature Conservatory Ohio, Jackson City Library, Meigs SWCD, Belmont SWCD, Groundwork Ohio River Valley, Jackson High School, Garnet A. Wilson Library, Scioto County Library, Chillicothe and Ross County Library, Vinton High School, Perry SWCD, Hocking SWCD, Athens Middle School, Athens SWCD, Gallia SWCD.

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