

Stream Team Notebook

Kayak Swarm Wins Ambassador Award

Jim and Dianne Darlington were recently honored as the 2009 recipients of the Stream Team Ambassador Award for Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring. Over a period of several months, a group called the Kayak Swarm photographed the banks of the Meramec River and collected readings on turbidity, pH, water temperature, conductivity and phosphate every mile – from mile one to mile 201.



DNR photo by Susan Higgins

Dianne and Jim Darlington record environmental data on the Meramec River as they lead the Kayak Swarm Stream Team volunteer water quality monitoring project.

Along with the Darlingtons, trained monitors included Bernie Arnold, Brian Waldrop and Darlene Haun. At each monitoring point, a GPS reading was taken so tests could be repeated at the same locations in the future.

This modern day Corps of Discovery established an incredible amount of scientific information on one of Missouri's most popular rivers. It also drew the attention of local media to the need for preserving the beauty and value of the Meramec. It took months to accomplish, but the results will leave a legacy for others to follow. Other Stream Team volunteer water quality monitors may think that Jim Darlington and his Kayak Swarm are a hard act to follow. But Stream Team sponsors hope they will prove to be an inspiration to those who love science, have an appreciation for the outdoors and a sense of adventure.

Priscilla Stotts, a Stream Team coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources, said of the Kayak Swarm: "The Darlingtons have come up with a unique way to involve other citizens in protecting the Meramec River by creating a 'scientific adventure' in which everyone can participate. The best part of this project is that someone else will be able to come along in the future and use the GPS points to collect data at the very same locations. We will be able to compare changes in the Meramec River over time."

