

# Retirees In Service to the Environment RISE

## What is the RISE Program?

The Retirees in Service to the Environment (RISE) Program responds to the intersection of two critical trends – mounting concern about environmental sustainability and the growing aging population. America's retirees have the time, talent, and skills to help address issues like climate change, air and water pollution, and protection of natural areas.

The RISE Program is an environmental education and leadership training program for retirees and other adults over 60. The RISE Program includes 30 hours of training over an eight-week period, culminating in a capstone volunteer project.

*"A chance to learn. A chance to give back. A chance to help the future generations..."*

*- Participant*

*"This is a rare opportunity to get a concentrated overview of many environmental issues & some of the people involved in the solutions!"*

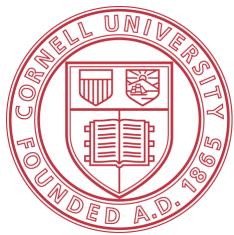
*- Participant*



Exploring water quality on the Floating Classroom

## Education and Volunteerism

- Sponsored by local organizations
- Leadership and communication skill training
- Workshops from experts on environmental issues
- Rewarding volunteer stewardship opportunities



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Learning about solar energy and touring a solar-powered home

## Components of RISE

**Full-day introductory workshop (seven hours)** to introduce participants to the program and develop leadership and communication skills that will help them be successful environmental volunteers.

**Six weekly environmental workshops (three hours each)** led by expert speakers. Varied format from traditional lectures to fieldtrips.

**Capstone stewardship project** to benefit the local community. RISE culminates in a group or individual environmental volunteer project.

## The Goal of RISE

The primary goal of RISE is to create environmental leaders (also known as environmental stewards) who will play an active role in addressing environmental issues in their communities. The program provides several different learning experiences to strengthen the leadership capabilities of participants. The RISE Program is based on the best available research evidence and practices in the field, including an extensive program evaluation conducted at Cornell University.

## Environmental Leadership

RISE provides leadership and communication skill training to improve participants' effectiveness as environmental volunteers.

## Expert Factual Knowledge

The program provides factual knowledge from expert speakers about pressing environmental issues such as climate change, water quality, soil contaminants, waste management, and energy use.

## Benefits to the Local Community

RISE is a hands-on learning experience, including field trips and a capstone stewardship project in the community related to environmental sustainability.



Participating in environmental workshops

# Sponsor Roles

Sponsoring organizations should have experience in conducting community-based educational programs, including participant and speaker recruitment. They should also have familiarity with older adult learning styles.

The role of the sponsoring organizations includes:

- ◆ Recruiting RISE participants
- ◆ Recruiting scientific experts for educational workshops
- ◆ Facilitating leadership and communication skill training
- ◆ Supporting participants' capstone stewardship projects



Engaging in stream cleanup as part of a capstone stewardship project

## Who Should Sponsor RISE?

We have learned that the program works best when sponsored by two collaborating organizations. Ideally, this partnership includes an organization involved in **environmental education** and an organization that **serves older adults**.

This partnership approach gives all the members of the implementation team greater opportunities to expand community involvement, recruit a larger and more diverse group of participants, and assume key roles and responsibilities in the workshop delivery processes.

Environmental education organizations could include conservation or sustainability organizations, nature centers, colleges or universities, or Cooperative Extensions.

Aging services organizations could include senior centers, senior housing organizations, Area Agencies on Aging, or Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs.

# How do I sponsor a RISE program in my community?

For those interested in sponsoring the RISE Program in their own community, a detailed training manual is available *for no cost* at:

**<https://blogs.cornell.edu/citra/rise/>**

The manual provides an overview of the goals and activities of the RISE Program and describes all the exercises in detail. It also includes handouts and other resources and materials designed to help with the delivery of the program.

After downloading the manual our staff are available to advise you and answer any questions you might have.

## About CITRA

The Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA) promotes translational research on aging, including the development, implementation, and dissemination of innovative, evidence-based intervention programs. CITRA was founded in 1993 as an Edward R. Roybal Center funded by the National Institute on Aging. CITRA is located in the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR) at Cornell University.

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