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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Citizen Science Association Conference Gathers Notable Scientists to Expand the Movement that Draws Everyday People into Legitimate Research**

*Researchers to share knowledge and best practices in establishing high standards while engaging volunteer support*

St. Paul, MN – (May 11, 2017) – Scientists, community members, and educators from around the world will gather at the [Citizen Science Association \(CSA\)](#) “CitSci2017” Conference to share innovations and best practices for significant research collaborations between scientists and everyday citizens. [CitSci2017](#) will be held in St. Paul, MN, May 17 - 20.

Even as the discipline of citizen science is gaining high-profile attention, practitioners are rapidly advancing research collaborations in new directions and new disciplines. It takes dedication and ingenuity to ensure that citizen science results in relevant and useful science, as well as meaningful collaboration experiences. Leading educators, researchers, community organizations, and others will come together at this event to explore how citizen science is being used across disciplines, geographic boundaries, and scientific fields. They will discuss the latest research, projects, trends, and experiments in citizen science.

"University of Minnesota researchers have long been finding innovative ways to harness the power of citizen science," said Karen Hanson, executive vice president and provost at the [U of M](#), which partnered with CSA as a sponsor for the event. "I am delighted that this conference will provide our researchers an opportunity to join peers from across the nation to shape the promising field of citizen science, expanding its capabilities and driving forward our understanding of the world."

The power of citizen science will be demonstrated during two Conference Keynotes. Dr. Marc Edwards, professor of environmental and water resources engineering at Virginia Tech, was instrumental in demonstrating that [Flint, MI dangerously contaminated water](#). He and [LeeAnne Walters](#), a Flint, MI citizen and mother of four, will discuss how they worked together to bring Flint's water crisis to national, and international, attention. A second keynote by Dr. Ellen Jorgensen of [Genspace](#), a community biolab, will explore how open spaces for biotechnology research can promote both scientific literacy and new discoveries in molecular and synthetic biology.

"Citizen science allows research to expand beyond traditional limitations, not only in terms of a project's scope but also in its connection to the public," said [Lucy Fortson](#), Ph.D., associate head of physics and astronomy in the College of Science and Engineering and head

of U of M's Zooniverse@UMN citizen science initiative. "This conference will help experts from across academic disciplines embrace the best citizen science practices, cultivate new ideas for research projects, and better engage their communities in conducting scientific research."

Session leaders include:

- Scholars, researchers, scientists, and community organizers
- Multiple universities, including University of New Hampshire, University of Virginia, Georgetown, University of Massachusetts, Arizona State University, Cornell University
- Federal government representatives from NIH, NOAA, USDA, U.S. Geological Survey, EPA, NSF, and more
- International organizations including German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research, University of Quebec, Queensland University of Technology, University College London, and both the European and Australian Citizen Science Associations
- Relevant establishments such as the National History Museum of LA County, California Academy of Sciences, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, The Nature Conservancy, PBS Television

A sampling of topics:

- [Advancing Biomedical Research with Academic Research and Public Creativity](#)
- [One Billion Wildlife Observations: Crowdsourcing Digital Collections](#)
- [Data Collection: Reflecting on What Makes a Dataset Robust](#)
- [A Global Movement: CS Around the World from a Scientific-Social-Cultural-Political Context](#)
- [Which Citizens Have a Moral Responsibility to Participate in Science?](#)
- [Keeping Tabs on Ethics](#)
- [How Do We Figure out What Works for Youth in Citizen Science?](#)
- Several sessions will include training on how projects can adopt [SciStarter 2.0](#) web tools to support their research and their participants
- See the [press page](#) for timely announcements from participants

This event also emphasizes local engagement. On Wednesday, technology enthusiasts are invited to help create new tools and platforms for citizen science in a hackathon event called [Create Together Day](#) hosted by the University of Minnesota. A Friday evening "Café Scientifique" event, [A Night in the Cloud](#), will feature a screening of the new PBS series, [The](#)

[Crowd & The Cloud](#), with a chance to meet stars from the show. Before the screening, visitors can mingle with leaders from over 75 different projects to see the impact of participation and learn how to get involved. On Saturday, May 20, families can participate in the Science Museum of Minnesota's [Citizen Science Festival](#). 25 leaders will share their current projects so the public can engage in fun and practical hands-on activities, such as monitoring monarchs, exploring the impacts of light pollution, mapping precipitation, and recording water quality.

The Citizen Science Association unites expertise from educators, scientists, data managers, and others to power citizen science, which is the involvement of the public in scientific research – whether community-driven research or global investigations. Find out more at <http://citizenscience.org/>. See a sampling of research projects (or join one yourself) at <https://scistarter.com/>.

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