



# NGRREC interns begin 2016 summer internship program

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**EAST ALTON** – Thirty-one interns representing 19 schools and 10 states across the country visited the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center's Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station May 24-27 to begin the 2016 summer internship program.

The internship launched with a short course, which was a combination of lectures, field experiences and hands-on lessons that provided the interns with an introduction to NGRREC's goals and priorities.

“This sampling of experiences, which were conducted with NGRREC<sup>sm</sup> and our partner organizations, demonstrated that while all of the intern projects are diverse in the scope of work and advising organization, each intern is united by NGRREC’s overall mission,” said Natalie Marioni, NGRREC director of environmental education and citizen science.

This year, 151 students from 96 schools in 34 states and two countries, the U.S. and Guatemala, applied for the experience. This was an increase of 33 applicants, 22 schools and 8 states from 2015.

“Not only did we receive an impressive 151 student applications, but these were high quality applicants, making it difficult for our selection committee to narrow it down to only the 31 students needed to fill this year’s available projects,” Marioni said.

Lewis and Clark Community College graduate and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville student Guisel Marmolejo is grateful to be included in this summer’s group of interns.



“I am excited for my opportunity to intern at NGRREC,” Marmolejo said. “I believe my experience will help me meet my educational and professional goals by making me a well-rounded individual, while fueling my excitement for continual learning.”

During her internship, Marmolejo will be working with the Illinois RiverWatch program, which is a statewide effort to protect Illinois streams and waterways by training volunteers across the state to become “citizen scientists,” who monitor water quality in wadeable streams.

RiverWatch citizen scientists examine indicators like stream habitats and diversity of macroinvertebrate species to provide reliable water quality data that can be used by scientists to determine how the conditions of streams are changing over time.

Marmolejo will be responsible for learning the macroinvertebrate sorting and identification procedures; collecting RiverWatch field-processed samples as they arrive at the field station to be laboratory-sorted and identified; and completing statistical analysis for macroinvertebrate sorting efficiency compared between field and laboratory-sorted samples.

“As a geography major, I continue to see the connection between the social and biological sciences,” Marmolejo said. “Interning with RiverWatch is a good fit for me.”

Marmolejo is one of 11 interns whose projects are fiscally supported through sponsoring organizations. Funding from The Monticello College Foundation supports Marmolejo and two other interns. Principia College is supporting four internships, while Illinois American Water and Missouri American Water are funding one each. The Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation is supporting two internships.

“Through this program, students gain valuable research experience, but they are also exposed to and gain an understanding of the importance of the collaborative nature of institutions like NGRREC at L&C and its various partner organizations,” Marioni said.

The interns are now working with their advisors in the field on the site-specific projects located in Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas and Iceland. Interns will present their research findings via oral and poster presentations during the Intern Symposium Aug. 1-2.

Learn more about the NGRREC interns at [www.ngrrrec.org/internship](http://www.ngrrrec.org/internship), and find more photos from the short course at [www.flickr.com/ngrrrec](http://www.flickr.com/ngrrrec).