



Wash U. Professor Speaks on Unintended Impacts of River Structures

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GODFREY – Lewis and Clark Community College and the Sierra Club’s Piasa Palisades Group will welcome Robert Criss, a professor at Washington University, who will be speaking on “The Unintended Impacts of River Structures” on Monday, April 9.

The event will be open to the public, and will include a tour of the uniquely designed, sustainable Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station, home of the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, in East Alton. The tour will begin at 7 p.m., with the meeting following at 7:30 p.m.

“Almost all reaches of the giant Mississippi-Missouri river system have undergone massive engineering projects, but the types of structures vary regionally,” said Criss, a professor of earth and planetary sciences. “All structures have profoundly degraded ecosystems, most have amplified flooding, and most have unforeseen, negative economic consequences. Realistic risk assessment and cost-benefit models can improve the environmental and economic outcomes for redesigned river systems.”

After his dissertation studies, Criss worked as a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey and was a geology professor at University of California, Davis. He is the author of “Principles of Stable Isotope Distribution” and co-editor of several books, including “At the Confluence: Rivers, Floods and Water Quality in the St. Louis Region.”

“At the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, we strive to be a leader in research of big rivers and the effects these dynamic ecosystems have on the natural and human communities that depend on them,” said Bill Kruidenier, associate director

of NGRREC. “An important component of our mission, which is also grounded in our commitment to sustainability, is educating the public on what the research is discovering and bringing multiple stakeholders into the conversation to work through what can often be controversial issues. The impact of human-made structures on our rivers is one such lightning rod topic. In light of the research into recent floods that have wreaked havoc on regional communities, Mr. Criss provides an important perspective on the interplay of humankind and the rivers.”

Lewis and Clark’s Office of Sustainability joins with organizations across the district to bring documentaries and speakers to campus on a variety of environmental topics related to the health of our natural ecosystems to the community, said Marcia Lochmann, director of Sustainability and Public Engagement at Lewis and Clark.

For more information, please contact Lochmann at (618) 468-4827 or mlochmann@lc.edu.