



Signage and Interactive Exhibits Added to NGRREC Field Station

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The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center has unveiled new interactive exhibits for visitors at its Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station.

The exhibits aid visitors on self-guided tours, inform them about NGRREC's ongoing research and education projects, show them what makes the Field Station "green," and help put the Mississippi River into perspective as not only of importance locally, but as a Great River of the world.

Located near the Melvin Price Locks and Dam and National Great Rivers Museum in Alton, the Field Station already attracts many visitors and passersby with its unique appearance. Now, the newly added exhibits are a way for those visitors to become engaged with NGRREC.

In the lobby, a display called "What Makes a River Great?" incorporates a model of the river with an educational video, funded by a major gift from Brookfield.

"This video display is aimed at getting people oriented as to where we are in the region and then educating people as to what a flood plain river is," aquatic ecologist John Chick said.

Nearby, multiple touchscreen displays offer an interactive look at the work that is happening at NGRREC, as well as a detailed tour of all the sustainable principles and technologies incorporated into the building itself.

"Visitors can take a virtual tour of the field station, look at custom-built animations that can help them understand how our in-house water systems work, view live data regarding the building's energy and water usage, and look at a checklist that details all of the building's sustainable features," said Ted Kratschmer, water resources and sustainability coordinator with L&C and NGRREC. "The touchscreens also feature a carbon footprint calculator so the visitors can educate themselves about their own environmental impact."

Exterior signage has also been added to allow visitors a path for a self-guided tour of the facility. NGRREC does offer guided tours at 11:30 a.m. each Friday.

"The signs are located specifically," terrestrial ecologist Lyle Guyon said. "For example, some (located at the front of the building) will talk about back water systems; some will talk about different types of terraced forests or a natural water filtration system, while the ones facing the river talk about flood plain forest or the lock and dam system."

NGRREC aspires to be a leader in scholarly research, education and outreach related to the interconnectedness of big rivers, their floodplains and watersheds, and the people who use them.

The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center is a partnership of Lewis and Clark Community College, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the Prairie Research Institute's Illinois Natural History Survey.

For more information about NGRREC visit www.ngrrec.org