

# NGRREC Interns Explore Local Ecosystems during Orientation Week

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The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center has launched its 2013 summer internship with an orientation week for the 27 interns selected to participate in the 10-week program.

Since the beginning of NGRREC's Internship Program in 2003, 255 interns have participated and 31 organizations have provided advisors. Fifty-eight applications were received for NGRREC's 2013 internship program, which includes interns from 11 states and 27 schools.

"The NGRREC Internship Orientation week provides the college interns with an opportunity to engage with regional scientists and educators on topics such as agriculture and water, stakeholder relationships, the social side of water sustainability, and urban storm water runoff, in addition to learning about the research, field survey techniques and education efforts of NGRREC staff and their collaborators," said NGRREC Environmental Education Manager Natalie Marioni.

Interns enjoyed environmental learning experiences during orientation week, including a hiking tour of the Palisades Nature Preserves, river sampling at China Creek and boating on the Mississippi River, where interns and scientists collected fish in nets and tested water quality.

"Orientation week at NGRREC provided me with many unforgettable opportunities that I would not normally have experienced," NGRREC intern Caroline Robertson said. "I was fortunate to be able to spend time with other interns who helped to broaden my own education of the ecology of the Mississippi River Basin. I will never forget my orientation week at NGRREC."



After orientation week, each intern traveled to meet with his or her research advisor, where each will conduct his or her specific research project throughout the summer. At the end of the internship, the interns and advisors will gather for a two-day symposium at Lewis and Clark Community College, where each intern will give a formal presentation outlining their project outcomes.

“The NGRREC Internship Program has developed a national and international reach with the students, faculty, and organizations that have been involved,” said NGRREC Senior Scientist Dick Warner. “Far more students apply to the program each year than we are able to accommodate. We have observed that many of the connections and experiences offered to interns have directly contributed to their employment and career paths. The interns consistently report their time at NGRREC to be very enjoyable and valuable; and they appreciate the warm reception they receive in the community.”

NGRREC’s scholars and scientists study the ecology of the big rivers, the workings of the watersheds that feed them, and ties to the river communities that use them. NGRREC aspires to be a leader in scholarly research, education and outreach related to the interconnectedness of big rivers, their floodplains and watersheds and their associated communities.

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](http://www.ngrrec.org). To view more photos of orientation week visit the Intern Week 2013 photo set on Flickr at <http://goo.gl/xH06Z>.