



Environmental Education Expert Joins NGRREC's Staff

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GODFREY – A passion for rivers and a desire to promote place-based environmental education inspired the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center’s new Director of Environmental Education Sarah Fisher to join the team at the Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station in East Alton, Illinois.

Even better, the opportunity has allowed Fisher to return to her home state of Illinois to help foster connections between individuals and their local environments.

“Watching the wonder in a student’s eyes as they develop connections with their local environment is very rewarding, because environmental education is relevant to us all,” Fisher said. “Between changing climates and increased demand for natural resources, our society needs to be well versed in what challenges and opportunities face our local and global ecosystem.”

In her new role, Fisher is responsible for designing and implementing environmental education programming while incorporating current research being done by NGRREC? scientists.

“At the moment, we are working toward adapting our education programming for virtual and socially distanced audiences,” Fisher said.

Certified by the National Outdoor Leadership School, Fisher is a certified Wilderness First Responder. She has worked as an education coordinator at the Canyon Country Discovery Center in Monticello, Utah; education technician at Arches National Park in Moab, Utah; biological science technician at the Southwest Biological Science Center in Moab, Utah; and whitewater stand-up paddleboard guide for the Paddle Moab on the Colorado and Green Rivers, in Moab Utah.

She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Geology in 2009 from Oberlin College in Ohio and her Master of Natural Resources in Environmental Education and Science Communication in 2019 from University of Idaho’s McCall Outdoor Science School.

Right out of college, she did a one-year volunteer internship with Americorps. Her position included leading an Ecology Club at a local high school as well as acting as a lead counselor within the parks and recreation department nature based summer camp.

“My interest in teaching came from my Americorps intern position,” Fisher said. “That led me to work as a Student Conservation Association (SCA) Intern in the education department at Kenai Fjords National Park for six months, which is where I really learned to combine place-based education and outdoor education/recreation.”

NGRREC’s Environmental Education efforts include the CINet project with the University of Illinois, Swarovski Waterschool program, Stream Discovery program, and Mississippi River Exchange program.

To learn more about these educational offerings and more at NGRREC, visit www.ngrrec.org/Education.

National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC?)

Founded in 2002 as a collaborative partnership between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Lewis and Clark Community College, NGRREC is dedicated to the study of great river systems and the communities that use them. The center aspires to be a leader in scholarly research, education, and outreach related to the interconnectedness of large rivers, their floodplains, watersheds, and their associated communities. To learn more about NGRREC, visit www.ngrrec.org.