

Young Making Waves in NGRREC Education Programming

November 2 2020 4:47 PM



GODFREY – It's only been a couple months since Jen Young joined the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRRECsm) as an environmental educator, but she's already making waves of progress within the program, stationed at the Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station in East Alton.

Young, a native of Minnesota, has always enjoyed spending time on the water.

"This position seemed like a great opportunity to teach about the river that I loved so much growing up," she said.

Her role at NGRREC is to connect the community with information on local environmental issues and developments, while being a catalyst for conversation between researchers and the public. Events she coordinates include the annual Water Festival and monthly Neighbor Nights @ NGRREC, which are being conducted virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our education programming is very community-based and it is a great opportunity to learn more about the local area," she said. "We have amazing natural resources and unique habitats throughout the region and I would like to help bridge the gap between nature and the public. I also want to learn from the community about the history of the area and how the landscape shaped how the region functions today."

Director of Environmental Education Sarah Fisher says Young was selected out of an especially large pool of applicants, and she's excited about the potential she brings.

"She's really hit the ground running," Fisher said. "Jen has been a great addition to the Education Department. She's extremely dedicated and focused at what she does, and really cares about the quality of work that she's doing."

Young said she's also excited to highlight some of the "hidden gems" in the area, such as the Palisades Preserve, which is managed within a partnership of the Lewis and Clark Community College Foundation, NGRREC and the Great Rivers Land Trust.

"The best part about my job is working with students and the public and getting them interested in nature and the outdoors," she said. "I love helping people learn more about where they live and seeing their love for nature grow."

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.

“We are working with our partners to take their research on Critical Interfaces and create programming and education opportunities for the public,” Young said. “Our partners are still in the early stages of research, but NGRREC is excited to be the bridge between the researchers and the public with this project.”

To learn more about these educational offerings and more at NGRREC, visit www.ngrrec.org/Education or follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NGRREC.

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.