

# NGRREC Continues Work At Palisades Preserve, Hopes To Add Public Programming

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GODFREY – The National Great Rivers Research Education Center (NGRREC) and its collaborators continue efforts to restore and maintain the Palisades Nature Preserve near Grafton, with an eye on adding public programming at the site.

NGRREC plans to expand management efforts to include volunteer workdays, K-12 educational programs and scientific research opportunities.

“The Palisades is a beautiful property with its bluff views of the Mississippi River and rare hill-prairie habitats, but it has also been neglected in terms of management,” said NGRREC/L&C Conservation Program Manager Justin Shew. “Working with NGRREC’s Education Team we hope to organize and offer more volunteer workdays, open to the public, to help restore rare priority hill-prairie habitat, but also provide site-specific educational opportunities during such workdays.”

Shew said programs could include nature walks which also tie in the importance of upland restoration to watershed health and wildlife habitat improvement.

During a workday organized by NGRREC last month, a team of approximately 20 L&C /NGRREC staff and students set out to remove invasive bush honeysuckle, an aggressive invasive species that stifles the survival of native species and contributes to soil erosion.

“It’s great to have so much support for this piece of property, and it’s a great opportunity for the restoration ecology students to come out and work on such a unique piece of endangered land that’s currently not open to the public,” said NGRREC/L&C Director of Environmental Education Sarah Fisher. “Our workday is a perfect example of the unity that exists between NGRREC and Lewis and Clark.”

Additionally, the day’s activities helped support the management work of NGRREC’s Habitat Strike Team, which is externally funded by grants from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources’ (IDNR) Habitat Fund and the Division of Natural Heritage and provides L&C student training opportunities.

The 430-acre Palisades Nature Preserve rests atop the limestone bluffs just east of Grafton. Overlooking the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, it’s been described as one of the most important examples of undisturbed land in the state. The preserve is on a conservation easement owned by the L&C Foundation. Management partners include IDNR Division of Natural Heritage, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) and the Great Rivers Land Trust.

For more details on possible upcoming public event offerings, contact Shew at [jshew@lc.edu](mailto:jshew@lc.edu) or Fisher at [saafisher@lc.edu](mailto:saafisher@lc.edu) or visit <http://www.ngrrrec.org>. For more information regarding [Lewis and Clark's Restoration Ecology Program](#), contact Scott Moss at [jkmoss@lc.edu](mailto:jkmoss@lc.edu).

To learn more about the NGRREC Habitat Strike Team please join the virtual Neighbor Nights event scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [www.ngrrrec.org/neighbor\\_nights/](http://www.ngrrrec.org/neighbor_nights/).

## **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.ngrrrec.org](http://www.ngrrrec.org).*

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