



# **NGRREC to Host Mississippi River Watershed Education Symposium November 14 and 15 at Lewis and Clark**

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## **Keynote Presentations to be given by Sean O'Connor of National Geographic and CNN Hero of the Year Chad Pregracke**

GODFREY – The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC?) invites educators and other watershed professionals to attend the Mississippi River Watershed Education Symposium (MRWES) Nov. 14 and 15 on the Lewis and Clark Community College campus in Godfrey, Illinois.

This two-day symposium will combine professional development workshops with speaker presentations and area field trips.

“This symposium will mark NGRREC’s eighth in a series of conferences and public symposia since its formation in 2002 and the first with an education focus,” said Environmental Education Manager Natalie Marioni. “The Mississippi River Watershed Education Symposium will bring together educators who have an interest in infusing watershed topics into their programming with other professionals to provide an opportunity to learn and develop unique collaborations on important topics around watersheds. With a modest registration fee of only \$55, covering both days of the conference, we feel that this event will be accessible to formal and non-formal educators, watershed professionals and even college students wishing to pursue careers in watershed science or education.”

Through keynote talks and presentations from speakers throughout the Mississippi River Watershed, attendees will be encouraged to utilize networking opportunities for

partnering on unique, science-based watershed education programs. This event will highlight two keynote presentations, one by Sean O'Connor of National Geographic and the other by Chad Pregracke of Living Lands & Waters.

Sean O'Connor is the program manager of educational mapping for National Geographic Education. His experience with educational mapping includes designing maps and interactive map technologies for a range of audiences. His work also involves a strong outdoor education component, helping educators understand best practices in using technology inside and outside of the classroom to enhance field learning experiences.

Chad Pregracke is the president and founder of Living Lands & Waters (LL&W), the world's only "industrial strength" not-for-profit river cleanup organization. Chad formed LL&W at the youthful age of 23, after spending his life growing up and working on the Mississippi River. Over the last 16 years, he, his crew and approximately 70,000 volunteers have removed more than 7 million pounds of garbage out of our nation's rivers. Most recently, Chad was named the 2013 CNN Hero of the Year.

"I look forward to the 2014 Mississippi River Watershed Education Symposium and have enjoyed playing a role in its planning," said Amanda Patrick, Public Affairs Officer for the U.S Forest Service, Shawnee National Forest, in Harrisburg, Illinois. "It is a wonderful opportunity to bring together individuals from various backgrounds to network and share inspiring ideas and tools on ways to enhance our understanding of this amazing waterway. The topic strands are varied, providing something for everyone, and the keynotes are going to leave attendees feeling renewed and inspired in the work they do. I hope people and communities will be widely represented and able to participate in what will be a fantastic learning opportunity."

The registration fee of \$55 includes keynote presentations, concurrent sessions and lunch both days, as well as a reception and dinner Friday, Nov. 14. Some workshops may require an additional fee. Those interested can register online at [www.ngrrc.org/MRWESregistration](http://www.ngrrc.org/MRWESregistration).

MRWES co-sponsors include the Little River Research & Design, Madison County Planning and Development, Missouri Botanical Garden, National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, Lewis and Clark Community College, Office of Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon, Southwestern Illinois College and the University of Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences.

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