

NGRREC Receives 2011 U.S. Water Prize from Clean Water America Alliance

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Washington, D.C. – The Clean Water American Alliance announced today that the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) is one of five national recipients for the 2011 U.S. Water Prize.

The U.S. Water Prize, created and administered by the Clean Water American Alliance, honors individuals, institutions and/or organizations that have made an outstanding achievement in the advancement of sustainable solutions to our nation's water challenges. It is the first of its kind to recognize successful efforts in protecting and improving the health of watersheds in the country. The four other recipients of this year's award include the City of Los Angeles, Milwaukee Water Council, New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the Pacific Institute.

“Our five water champions reflect the diversity of America and set a shining example for innovating, integrating and collaborating from coast to coast to sustain America's most precious liquid asset,” Alliance President Ben Grumbles said.

NGRREC is the result of a unique partnership formed by Lewis and Clark Community College, the University of Illinois and the Illinois Natural History Survey. The Center's mission is to advance the nation's understanding of great rivers, their floodplains and watersheds for the purpose of sustaining the plant, animal and human communities that depend upon them. Since 2002, NGRREC has developed programs involving a myriad of partner institutions, engaged hundreds of volunteers, thousands of middle and high school students and more than 150 college students through its annual intern program.

“We are extremely honored by this national award,” Lewis and Clark President and Chairman of NGRREC Dale Chapman said. “Through research and public engagement, NGRREC is striving to become a well-known leader in protecting and sustaining the

quality of great rivers and their environments. This award will surely enhance the Center's ability to engage others in this mission on a national and international level.”

NGRREC is located in the newly constructed Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land, adjacent to the Melvin Price Locks and Dam in Alton, Ill. The 30,000-square-foot facility was opened in October and provides NGRREC with increased capacity to build upon its current efforts and address water issues on a national and international scale, Chapman said.

The field station is one of the most environmentally advanced facilities in the state, and provides a platform for NGRREC to educate others about sustainability initiatives. Through the Center's education and outreach efforts, the facility's numerous sustainable design features (onsite water treatment, wind/hydrokinetic power, solar lighting/heat, green roof, permeable pavement, etc.) are promoted on a regional and national level as a model for how resource compatible development and community awareness and empowerment can go hand-in-hand. NGRREC supports the use of green infrastructure as a critical element of comprehensive wastewater planning and conservation reuse.

Grumbles said all of the recipients are being honored for their unique approaches toward water sustainability. The city of Los Angeles, particularly the Bureau of Sanitation, and New York City Department of Environmental Protection are planning, integrating and incorporating innovative green infrastructure approaches and increasing resource recovery through water reuse and other cutting edge technologies. Both cities are maximizing their resources through community partnership and involvement. The Milwaukee Water council is establishing public-private collaborations that advance water technology and promote economic development. As a result, the Milwaukee area is becoming known as a “World Water Hub.” A state-of-the-art facility, NGRREC is mobilizing volunteer communities around the confluence of the great rivers and is creating a national and international center for science, education and public outreach. The Pacific Institute is consistently in the vanguard of water issues from water use efficiency to climate change, informing political debate and elevating public awareness.

U.S. Water Prize winners will be honored in a special ceremony on May 9 at 5:30 p.m. in the Hotel Monaco of Washington, D.C. National water and environmental leaders will attend the celebration. Each recipient will receive a handcrafted ceramic art work commissioned from internationally acclaimed potter Miranda Thomas.

For more information on NGRREC visit www.ngrrrec.org or www.lc.edu/ngrrrec. For more information about the U.S. Water Prize visit www.CWAA.us.

The Clean Water America Alliance is a nonprofit 501c3 educational organization whose goal is to unite people and policies for water sustainability. A broad cross-section of interests is coming together through the Alliance to advance holistic, watershed-based approaches to water quality and quantity challenges