

# For high school age and older. Ecological Restoration Certificate Program



McHenry County Conservation District and McHenry County College welcome you to the first-ever educational program of workshops designed around the practice and philosophy of ecological restoration. Whether you are a member of the general public or you are already working or volunteering in ecological restoration, you will find a workshop for you!

Choose one or two that interest you or complete the whole program. Certification requires attending 15, one-day workshops. The ten core workshops are denoted by an asterisk. In addition, a participant must take one plant identification workshop, two wildlife ecology workshops, and two electives (which may include additional plant identification or wildlife ecology workshops).

For more information, contact Tom Simpson, Research Field Station Ecologist, (815) 678-4532, [tsimpson@mccd.org](mailto:tsimpson@mccd.org). Register through McHenry County College, online at [www.mchenry.edu/coneducation](http://www.mchenry.edu/coneducation) or call (815) 455-8588.

Programs are held Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Cost: \$50. Much of the day is spent outdoors, come prepared for the weather. Bring a lunch and something to drink.



Invasive Garlic Mustard

## Weeds and What We Do About Them: Invasive Plant Management\* October 1

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: John Peters, Restoration Ecologist*

Like landscapes all over the Midwest, Glacial Park is threatened by the invasion of exotic and invasive species we inherited when European-American settlement began in the early 19th century. These populations endanger native plants and animals. We will focus on the latest techniques the District uses to manage invasive plants. Participants will learn how to use and maintain a chainsaw; how to safely and efficiently clear invasive trees; when, where and how to apply herbicides for best effect; plus the applicability of seppi mowers, rotary mowers, and other large-scale equipment.

## Changes in Native Landscapes\* Focus on Wetlands October 8

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Tom Simpson, Research Field Station Ecologist*

Nature is always changing—we are accustomed to hearing this old saying and believing it. Yet the ways in which nature changed two-hundred years ago are radically different than the way it is changing today. One hundred years of farming produced huge changes in the natural landscape—streams were straightened, wetlands drained, and prairies plowed, but a more insidious and equally important kind of change is happening all around us today. How should we respond as the custodians of these natural landscapes?

## Getting to Know Your Land: Soil and Hydrology November 12

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Tom Simpson, Research Field Station Ecologist*

Planning for conservation and ecological restoration requires understanding the natural resources on which plants and

animals depend. This workshop will allow you to learn about the soil and water resources of your own land. By the end of the day, each participant will prepare a summary of the soil and hydrology of their property with the help of expert instructors. For us to have the materials for your land ready by the time of the workshop, you will need to contact us by email by November 4 and provide a description and address of the tract of land on which you wish to work. Send the information to [tsimpson@mccd.org](mailto:tsimpson@mccd.org). Part of the class will be outdoors, so dress for the weather.

## Woody Plants II: Tree and Shrub Identification in Winter December 10

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Tom Simpson, Research Field Station Ecologist*

Most of the trees, shrubs, and woody vines growing in Northeastern Illinois can be identified as easily in winter as in summer, it just requires refocusing our eyes on different features. Identifying woody plants in the leaf-off condition is important because brush removal and other ecological restoration efforts continue through the winter months. We will learn to use simple keys for twig identification, and spend much of the day outdoor studying growth forms and bark characteristics—all key to the winter ID of trees and shrubs. Come prepared for the cold winter weather!



## Native Landscapes Prior to European Contact: Focus on Prairies and Savannas\* September 10

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Tom Simpson, Research Field Station Ecologist*

What was McHenry County like prior to the settlement of European peoples in the early 19th century? Did an uninterrupted prairie really stretch from Kane County to the Wisconsin border? What happened to the mastodons, giant beaver, and American lions that lived here for thousands of years after the glaciers left? Why were there so many fires 500 years ago and so few now? How could prairies and oak savannas have been as common as ecologists think they were, yet so few survive today? The evidence to answer these questions resides in the landscape of Glacial Park.

## Restoring Vegetation\* September 17

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Laurie Boldt, Plant Ecologist*

Ecological restoration often begins with landscapes that have lost much of their native flora and fauna, and for this reason reintroduction of natives is a necessary part of the restoration process. This workshop will include the selection of plant species appropriate for each ecosystem type, the relative benefits of seeding versus planting, site preparation methods, and seed collection and processing techniques.

### WANT MORE HANDS ON?

See page 28 and immerse yourself in a full weekend of restoration!