

# People and Nature Certificate Programs — 2012

*for Homeowners, Natural Areas Stewards, and Nature Interpreters*



**New and Updated!**

## What are the People and Nature Certificate Programs?

Natural areas are under constant threat from exotic weeds, pollution, and development. Learning about the problems, talking to others about them, and making our home and business landscapes more nature-friendly is the best way to protect and enjoy nature.

McHenry County Conservation District and McHenry County College invite you to a new and expanded series of workshops designed for people who enjoy living in, working with, and talking about nature.

Three separate tracks are offered: Landscaping with Nature; Ecological Restoration; and Natural Interpretation. Courses can be taken by themselves in your area of interest or taken as a series to earn a certificate.

To learn more about the People and Nature Certificate Program, contact Tom Simpson, Research Field Station Ecologist at [tsimpson@mccd.org](mailto:tsimpson@mccd.org) or call (815) 678-4532 x 8218.

**Register for courses through McHenry County College at [www.mchenry.edu/coneducation](http://www.mchenry.edu/coneducation) or call (815) 455-8588.**

**Certificate Requirements:** In the Landscaping with Nature track (L) six workshops and two electives are required; in the Ecological Restoration track (R) ten workshops are required; in the Nature Interpretation track (I) six workshops and two electives are required. (Electives are marked with an “E”.)

- ◊ **Landscaping with Nature** is geared toward homeowners and workshops will focus on recognizing native plants, observing how they are used in the residential landscape, and learning how to put together a design for their garden.
- ◊ **Ecological Restoration** courses are designed for those interested in natural areas stewardship. Workshops will focus on prescribed burning, controlling weeds, and the ecology of Illinois landscapes.
- ◊ **Nature Interpretation** is geared for those who want a deeper connection with their surrounding world and are interested in nature interpretation. Workshops will focus on the basic techniques of interpretation, developing a historical character for first-person interpretation, and more.

## Program Tracks & Requirements (Programs can be taken by themselves or as a series to earn a certificate.)

| Ecological Restoration [R]                          | Landscaping with Nature [L]                          | Nature Interpretation [I]                            |
|---|--|--|
| 1 Weeds and What We Do About Them                   | 1 Designing a Home Garden Using Native Plants        | 1 Plants (Forests, Prairies, Wetlands)               |
| 2 Field Botany Plants (Forests, Prairies, Wetlands) | 2 Plants (Forests, Prairies, Wetlands, Woody Plants) | 1 Wildlife Ecology (Birds, Herps, Backyard)          |
| 1 Restoring Vegetation                              | 1 Bringing Conservation to the Home Landscape        | 1 Communicating Ecological Restoration to the Public |
| 1 Geology and Soil                                  | 1 Illinois Landscapes                                | 1 Illinois Landscapes                                |
| 1 Illinois Landscapes                               | 1 Restoring Vegetation                               | 1 Character Development                              |
| 1 Forensic Ecology                                  |  | 1 Time Travelers                                     |
| 1 Prescribed Fire                                   |  |  |
| 1 Wildlife Ecology                                  |  |  |
| 1 Woody Plants I                                    |  |  |
| 10 Required plus 0 Electives                        | 6 Required plus 2 Electives                          | 6 Required plus 2 Electives                          |
| 10 TOTAL  | 8 TOTAL  | 8 TOTAL  |

**Forensic Ecology (R)**

**March 10, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Cost: \$40**  
 Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Ed Collins, Natural Resources Manager*

This intensive, wide-ranging seminar is designed to enable homeowners, agency staff, land managers and others interested in discovering a site's past and use history. The program will introduce students to many of the varied resources available for discovering lands hidden past. Resources covered will include: the public land survey notes, early plat books and maps, diaries, journals and early publications, sequential aerial photography, soils, census records, county history books and directories, newspapers, farm drainage information, cemetery records, post cards, and probate and tax records. Students use these resources in a series of practical exercises that utilize McHenry County sites to track land use changes from 1837 to the present. Special emphasis will be placed on newly emerging methods and databases now available in a digital format for these types of records.



Jennifer Holcombe

**Prescribed Fire in Ecological Restoration (R)**

**April 7, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Cost: \$40**  
 Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Jeff Murray, Restoration Ecologist & Ben Habertur, Restoration Ecologist, Forest Preserve District of Kane County*

Prescribed burning refers to the use of fire as a management tool, in which managers control the timing and extent of fires to have the maximum ecological benefit at a minimum cost, while ensuring the safety of the fire crew and the public. Because most native ecosystems of the Midwest formed under the influence of recurrent fires, prescribed burning is the single most important management tool that the District uses in ecological restoration. This workshop will provide Chicago Wilderness crew member burn training certification. We will spend part of the day outdoors, so come prepared for the weather. Please bring a lunch and something to drink.



**Developing a Historical Character (I)**

**April 14, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Cost: \$40**  
 Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Kim Compton, Education Program Coordinator*

Portraying a historical character is a very powerful way to teach about any topic. Aldo Leopold reading his own words, Albert Einstein discussing his work, Harriet Tubman describing her struggles—these presentations allow an audience to experience a moment in time, rather than just read about it. First person narration can be a challenging yet rewarding experience for the presenter and their listeners. In this class we will explore some examples of first person interpretation and learn how to begin developing our own characters. Please bring a lunch and something to drink.

**Illinois Landscapes (R, L, I)**

**April 21, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Cost: \$40**  
 Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructor: Tom Simpson, Research Field Station Ecologist*

What sort of world did the native plants and animals of McHenry County come from? Terms like “prairie” and “oak savanna” are often used, but what did these places actually look like, how did they function, and what ways are they different from the woodlands and grasslands we commonly see today? If we wish to restore natural land, interpret its ecology, or use native plants around our homes and businesses, we need to answers to these questions. This workshop will take a look at the strange and beautiful world that existed before European-American settlement and find its relevance today. We will spend much of the day outdoors, so come prepared for the weather. Please bring a lunch and something to drink.

Register for ERCP workshops through McHenry County College, [www.mchenry.edu/coneducation](http://www.mchenry.edu/coneducation) or call (815)455-8588.

**Plants of Forests and Woodlands (E)**

**May 5, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Cost: \$40**  
 Coral Wood Conservation Area

*Instructor: Greg Rajsky, Director of Small Waters Education*

Woodlands and forests were less common than prairies and oak savannas in McHenry County prior to European contact, but they were rich in plant species that occurred nowhere else. Learning to identify these plants will help you restore these ecosystems and appreciate their beauty and diversity. This workshop will introduce participants to many of the species of forests and woodlands. We will spend much of the day outdoors, so come prepared for the weather. Please bring a lunch and something to drink.

**Wildlife Neighbors (E)**

**May 19, Cost: \$40, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.**

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

*Instructors: Sara Denham, Wildlife Resource Center Manager & Beth Gunderson, Wildlife Resource Center Specialist*

As the amount of developed land increases, interactions between people and wildlife increase as well. While many people welcome the sight of a songbird or butterfly in their yard, few people enjoy a raccoon in their attic or a skunk living under the deck. This workshop will introduce participants to many of the animal species found in neighborhoods. We will also discuss the good and bad of having wildlife neighbors, and learn what to do to prevent conflicts. This is a classroom-based workshop, but we will spend some time outdoors so come prepared for the weather. Please bring a lunch and something to drink.



**SUMMER & FALL SCHEDULE PREVIEW**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Communicating Ecological Restoration to the Public [I]       | June      |
| Plants of Wetlands [R, L, I]                                 | July      |
| Bringing Conservation to the Home Landscape [L]              | September |
| Plants of Prairies and Savannas [R, L, I]                    | September |
| Geology and Soil [R]   | September |
| Restoring Vegetation [R, L]                                  | September |
| Woody Plants I [R]   | October   |
| Weeds and What We Do About Them [R]                          | October   |
| Getting to Know Your Land: Soil and Hydrology [E]            | November  |
| Designing a Home Garden Using Native Plants [L]              | November  |
| Woody Plants II: Tree and Shrub Identification in Winter [E] | December  |