

Restoration Ecology

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Restoration ecology is the art and science of restoring and repairing damaged or destroyed ecosystems. With the worldwide destruction of rain forests, wetlands, old growth forests, prairies, streams, lakes, rivers, and oceans, restoration ecologists make a real difference in the world.

Training in restoration ecology gives students an opportunity to prove themselves, and in the process, become accustomed to working in a career situation that demands application of special academic skills. Students graduate with a global perspective on ecological restoration and are well-prepared for a wide variety of career options in the field.

The restoration ecology program at Defiance College is unique among undergraduate programs in the United States. This program began in the 1990's, and is one of less than 50 restoration ecology degree programs offered in the United States and Canada and the only one at a small, liberal arts college.

The [Society for Ecological Restoration](http://www.societyforrestoration.org) recognizes Defiance College's restoration ecology program on its website.

200 internship hours are required in the restoration ecology degree to gain practical field experience. Normally, an internship is completed between the junior and senior year. Students have done internships with Industrial Fluid Management, Nature's Nursery, Naturally Native Nursery, and the Upper Maumee Watershed Partnership. Additionally, there is one internship each year at the Thoreau Wildlife Sanctuary supported by the Diehl Family Foundation.

Benefits of the Program

Through the restoration ecology program, students have had opportunities to travel to places such as Yellowstone National Park, the Tetons in Wyoming, as well as the rain forests of Belize and Australia.

For students interested in extracurricular involvement in their field, the **Ecology Club** was established to promote ecological restoration, develop and restore small ecosystems, and increase environmental awareness. By connecting with nature through positive learning experiences, the club goal is to benefit humankind, the local environment, and wildlife in the Defiance community. The organization is open to any student with an interest in environmental issues and the outdoors.

Thoreau Wildlife Sanctuary

Defiance College, in partnership with the Diehl Family Foundation, established the Thoreau Wildlife Sanctuary in 1989. More than 200 acres of farmland were converted to prairie, meadow, deciduous forest, wetland, and white pine forest habitats. Management of these habitats is ongoing and has been integral to the development of the restoration ecology major at Defiance College.

Students gain critical fieldwork experience at the Thoreau Wildlife Sanctuary where they have planted more than 40,000 trees in addition to herbaceous terrestrial and wetland plants. Students have also conducted research involving prairie burns, the reintroduction of bobwhite quail and ring-necked pheasants, and distributions of amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Current projects range from control of invasive terrestrial plants to effects of cropland on water quality.

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