School’s not out for summer at the Loyola University Retreat and Ecology Campus.
By Kevin Craver
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The Chicago-based Catholic university has announced that it would hold its first classes at the 98-acre retreat east of Woodstock this summer. The courses – field anthropology, ecology, plant biology, sustainable agriculture, creative writing and drawing in nature – are tailored for the environment the retreat provides, Assistant Director of Academic Programming Maria Lettiere said.

Registration is open for the courses, which start as early as May and as late as July. They vary from two and a half to four weeks, and typically last from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the option of living at the retreat. Courses run between two and four credit hours – Loyola charges $630 a credit hour for summer classes, Lettiere said.

Loyola has held several student retreats in the year since it bought the 2710S. Country Club Road property, formerly the Resurrection Retreat Center, but this course offering is the first, spokes woman Annie Hughes said.

The university has sought a retreat suitable for its students and many of the college’s 200 clubs and organizations. But the college’s purchase of the property last May for $6.4 million gave it access to prairie, woodlands, oak savannah and wetlands to augment its ecology and biology curricula.

Loyola’s purchase of the property from Chicago-based Congregation of the Resurrection put an end to a controversial proposal by the congregation to convert the retreat into senior living. The congregation’s plan, which pitted the McHenry County Board against its own zoning board and riled longtime neighbors, fizzled as a consequence of the housing market collapse.