



# Mississippi River Project



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

## Welcome Back to the River

The staff along the Mississippi River Project are gearing up for the opening of many of our campgrounds and recreation areas this month. We look forward to this time each year when the parks get busy and people as well as wildlife return to enjoy our natural areas. In many cases however we also must prepare for the possibility of high water and the affects it may have on our recreation areas. You can always visit us on the web at [www.missriver.org](http://www.missriver.org) for up to date information on the status of a campground or recreation area. If you have questions or concerns about staying along the Mississippi River you can always give a call to the ranger station in charge of an area to get accurate information about your stay.



## 31<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT FORESTRY COORDINATION MEETINGS

This marks the 31st year that the Mississippi River Project has met with our managing agencies partners regarding forest management on project lands. Participants included the Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Conservation, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources and all three Upper Mississippi River Corps districts at our annual Forestry Coordination Meetings in February. Approximately 85 percent of the federal lands designated to the Corps of Engineers for the 9-foot Channel Project (the system of locks and dams) are part of and managed by several national wildlife refuges and state wildlife management areas through cooperative lease agreements. The Corps works cooperatively with the agencies to manage the forested resource with wildlife habitat and forest sustainability being the primary goals. Mississippi River Project lands, in the Rock Island District, total over 54,000 acres of mainly forested shoreline and islands that stretch over 314 river miles. This constitutes a significant portion of habitat along the Mississippi flyway which is used by eagles, waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, and many other migratory and resident species as well as many state and federally listed species.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Joe Daugherty - Maintenance Worker



Joe Daugherty comes to the Mississippi River Project from Morrisonville, Illinois where he worked as an equipment operator in a coal mine. He started working for the Corps in the fall of 2008 and has been enjoying his time along the Mississippi River. He is a versatile equipment operator and large truck driver. In his present position as maintenance worker he has proven to be an invaluable addition to our Project's daily operation. Joe is also a member of the Air National Guard and as a Staff Sergeant specializes in fuel and refueling procedures. He was deployed during Operation Enduring Freedom to Kuwait and Spain and has been stationed in many other U.S. locations. Joe loves the outdoors and is an avid hunter and fisherman. He can often be found fishing on the mighty Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

## Dubuque Ranger Station News

### EARTH DAY EVENT AT GRANT RIVER

The Park Rangers with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Dubuque, Iowa would like to invite you to a special Earth Day/Park Clean Up that will take place Saturday April 16, 2011 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and noon. Activities at the Grant River Recreation Area located 3 miles south of Potosi, Wisconsin, off of Highway 133 will include a park clean up, and small maintenance projects. Persons interested in participating should wear old clothes intended for spring weather and bring work gloves.

For more information please contact Dubuque Park Rangers by calling (563) 582-0881.

### PICNIC SHELTER RESERVATIONS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces that it is taking picnic shelter reservations for the 2011 recreation season. Grant River and Blanding Landing Recreation Areas have picnic shelters for use. If you do not make a reservation, shelters are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Cost for a reservation is \$25.00. For additional information please contact: Dubuque Park Rangers, 2595 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, Iowa 52001 or call (563) 582-0881.

### SEEKING INDIVIDUALS TO PRESENT CAMPGROUND PROGRAMS

Do you have a talent or interest that you like to share with others? Maybe you are knowledgeable about a subject that people are often asking you about. Then we might just have the perfect opportunity for you. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project is looking for volunteers interested in presenting Saturday evening programs at the Grant River campground near Potosi, Wisconsin. For additional information please contact: Dubuque Park Rangers, 2595 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, Iowa 52001 or call (563) 582-0881.

## Thomson Ranger Station News

### EARTH DAY EVENT AT THOMSON CAUSEWAY – APRIL 16

The Mississippi River Project Thomson Ranger Office will be hosting the Annual Earth Day Cleanup at Thomson Causeway Recreation Area on April 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This Earth Day event is an opportunity for local Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts to help the environment and prepare the recreation area for seasonal use. The day's work will include litter and debris cleanup and trail maintenance and clearing. A volunteer luncheon will be provided for those who participate in the event. If you or your group is interested in volunteering, please contact the Thomson Ranger Office at (815) 259-3628 for registration.

### THOMSON CAUSEWAY TO REMAIN CLOSED TO CAMPING UNTIL MAY 20, 2011

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces: the Thomson Causeway Recreation Area will not open for camping until May 20, 2011. This is due to a delay in the construction of improvements to the sanitary facilities leaving the area without sewer or water. The area will remain open for day use activities; such as boat launching, fishing, and picnicking.

When complete, the improvements will include: partial renovation of the two existing shower facilities, construction of a new shower building, Thomson city sewer and water brought into the recreation area to serve existing facilities, and a renovated multi-lane dump station along Lewis Avenue. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Thomson Ranger Office at (815) 259-3628.

## Mississippi River Visitor Center News

### VISITOR CENTER PRAIRIE AREA GETS CLEANED UP BY FIRE

You may have seen the fire and smoke coming from the Locks and Dam 15 area of Rock Island Arsenal this weekend. Rock Island Arsenal Fire Department provided a 'prairie burn' of the Mississippi River Visitor Center prairie garden areas. We have had many people calling and asking what the benefits of burning a prairie would be. The following information may answer some of your questions regarding the burn.

#### Why does the Visitor Center burn their prairie gardens?

While fire is often viewed as destructive the truth is that it is a necessary part of nature. Many habitats in Iowa & Illinois rely on fire to maintain them. Without occasional fire grasslands and wooded areas become overgrown. Many times the extra growth is non-native plants and shrubs that choke out the native vegetation. Occasional fire keeps things in check. It burns away the dead material which has accumulated from last year's growth allowing new growth to take over. Burns also kill the non-native plants which are intolerant to the fire. The deep-rooted native prairie plants are capable of withstanding the heat and are not affected.



**Does the benefit outweigh the blackness?**

The benefits of a natural fire (in our case a man made fire) far outweigh the temporary charred appearance. The black only lasts for a week or two but the benefits of the controlled burn last much longer. Among them are:

- Nutrient recycling
- Helps with seed germination by exposing soil to the sun earlier in the year.
- Controls non-native plants and invasion of woody plants
- Maintains natural habitats that some species rely on like birds and butterflies. We also have a family of rabbits that call our prairie garden home.

**How long have controlled burns been in practice?**

Fire has been used historically by Native Americans as well as early settlers. The Native Americans understood fire's importance in maintaining their hunting grounds and habitats. Early settlers used it to clear land. In the early 1900s fire suppression was adopted. This was an invitation to non-native and invasive plants to take over many prairies and forest areas. We have since learned that the 'once practiced' controlled burns are extremely beneficial to both plants and animals. So the next time you see a charred forest or prairie in the spring or fall be thankful that these natural areas are being cared for. The end result is a healthier, more natural area, even in our small prairie gardens at the Visitor Center. If you have any more questions please call the Visitor Center and talk to one of our Park Rangers.

**HISTORIC CLOCK TOWER TOUR – APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup> & 10<sup>TH</sup>**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces that the Visitor Center at Locks and Dam #15 is offering a historical tour of the Clock Tower Building on Saturday, April 9th and Sunday April 10th from 9:00-10:30 am. It has been a community landmark since it was built in the 1860's as the very first Rock Island Arsenal building. The Clock Tower has also been the subject of interest and curiosity for many visitors and residents of the Quad Cities area. Let an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers park ranger lead you back into history. Come learn the building's secrets and find out exactly what makes that clock tick.

The program will begin at the Mississippi River Visitor's Center, located on the west end of Arsenal Island at Locks and Dam #15. This program is free of charge. Advance registration is required.

For security reasons all persons over age 16 must carry a photo ID to enter the island. Vehicles are subject to search and participants should allow 15 minutes extra to ensure proper arrival time for the program.

For more information, or to sign up for the program, please contact the Visitor's Center at (309) 794-5338.

**BOATING SAFETY CLASSES OFFERED**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces they will be offering five different opportunities to attend a **free** boating safety education class. The classes will be held on the following dates: April 2<sup>nd</sup>, April 16<sup>th</sup>, April 30<sup>th</sup>, and May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Each class will run from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and only one class is required to complete your certification. This class is recommended for people who are new to boating on the Mississippi, families that enjoy weekend boating adventures, or seasoned boaters who would just like to brush up on their safe boating knowledge. Anyone over the age of 12 can be certified. This is a classroom based safety course and will not include an on-the-water experience. Upon successful completion of the class and exam, participants will be issued an Illinois DNR Boat Safety certification which is honored in both Iowa and Illinois. These classes will be held at the Mississippi River Project Office at Locks and Dam 14 in Pleasant Valley, Iowa.

**Pre-registration is required, space is limited, and the classes fill quickly.** To register, contact the park rangers at (309) 794-5338.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



### Mike McKean – Park Ranger

My name is Mike McKean and I work at the Mississippi River Visitor Center. I began my career in June 2010 through the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). In my short time here I have had many great experiences. Some of these include giving school programs, leading Lock and Dam tours, doing field rotations with both the Muscatine and Thomson field offices, and helping out with some survey work with our foresters. While growing up two things I really enjoyed were playing in the woods near my house and cooking. After high school I gained a degree in culinary arts and spent a majority of my time in a kitchen somewhere. After 11 years in the restaurant world I was ready for change and made the difficult decision to begin a new career. I enrolled at Western Illinois University-Quad Cities studying Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration. During this time I was able to work at Nahant Marsh Environmental

Education Center in Davenport, IA. Working there gave me my first real taste of interpretation and natural resource management. That experience I feel really helped me transition into my job at the Visitor Center. I remember coming to the Visitor Center on field trips and playing with the bathtub display during grade school. Little did I know that one day I would be working here. After graduating with my degree from Western Illinois University I was fortunate enough to be converted into a full time permanent ranger. I am looking forward to continuing my work with the great staff we have here in our project. Outside of work in my free time I can usually be found working around the house, playing disc golf, or on a volleyball court somewhere with my fiancée Katie.

## Muscatine Ranger Station News

### FERRY LANDING, KILPECK LANDING, & BLANCHARD ISLAND RECREATION AREAS CLOSED

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces the closure of Ferry Landing, Kilpeck Landing, and Blanchard Island Recreation Areas due to the impending high water.

The gates to the recreation areas will remain closed and locked during these high water events. They will be re-opened to the public when the areas have dried out sufficiently to allow safe access by vehicles and debris has been removed from the area. For more information on the status of our campgrounds and day use areas visit us at [www.missriver.org](http://www.missriver.org). For additional information please contact: Muscatine Park Rangers, 1611 2nd Avenue, Muscatine, IA 52761 or call 563-263-7913.

## EARTH DAY CLEANUP AT ANDALUSIA SLOUGH

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project invite you to celebrate Earth Day by participating in a cleanup at Andalusia Slough along the Mississippi River. Free lunch will be provided following the day's work. This event will be held, rain or shine, on **Saturday, April 23, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** at Andalusia Slough Recreation Area. The park is located two miles west of Andalusia, Illinois, along IL Hwy 92. Please meet at the park's picnic shelter the day of the event and bring gloves, shoes or boots and dress appropriately. In the event of flooding, this event will be held on Saturday, April 30, 2011. Work will include park and river bank cleanup, landscape work and other park maintenance. In addition to enjoying the outdoors, your help in cleaning the park and river of garbage helps improve the ecosystem of the river and the appearance of the area. To help make sure enough food is provided, individuals or groups interested in helping out with this worthwhile Earth Day event are encouraged to register by Monday, April 11, 2011. Please contact the Muscatine Park Rangers by calling (563) 263-7913, by email at [mvrodmn16@usace.army.mil](mailto:mvrodmn16@usace.army.mil) or mail to: 1611 Second Avenue, Muscatine, Iowa 52761.



## Quincy Ranger Station News

The Quincy rangers have moved back into their home office at Lock and Dam 21 after being displaced to the Army Reserve Center, in Quincy, IL, for nearly 3 months while the lock was undergoing electrical construction. They are glad to be back and getting into the swing of things as spring is finally here. With spring, typically the staff along the Mississippi River Project starts gearing up for high water. This is not surprising when you take into consideration the spring snowmelt from the north and normal springtime rain. In the mean time, the rangers have been busy anchoring tables and garbage cans and removing snag piles in their areas to prepare for the possible rising waters.

### FREE BOAT CLASSES OFFERED

The Quincy rangers will be offering boating safety classes for the spring and summer seasons. If you are interested in operating a boat in Illinois and are between the ages of 13-18, boating education is required. However, boating education is valuable knowledge to be had by all boat operators and passengers, especially on dynamic bodies of water, such as the Mississippi River. All classes will be held at the Quincy Boat Club in Quincy, IL and is an 8 hour class with course subjects including: Basic Boating Safety; Equipment requirements; motorboat registration and titling; Illinois boat laws (Missouri & Iowa laws can be applicable and discussed due to geographical location); Navigation; Personal watercraft; and Emergency Measures. For more information, contact the Quincy Rangers @ 217-228-0890 The dates are:

May 10 & 11: 6:00-10:00 PM (Must be present on both dates to receive certification)

June 11: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

July 09: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

**If you would like to be removed from our e-mail list please print "unsubscribe" in the subject line in a reply to us.**

**Thank you,  
Park Ranger Staff**

P.O. Box 2004 Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004

(309) 794-5338 E-mail - [mvrodmn15@usace.army.mil](mailto:mvrodmn15@usace.army.mil) Website - <http://www.missriver.org>