



# Mississippi River Project



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

## Be Safe this Summer

This week the nation celebrates Independence Day and this means many people will be out recreating along the Mississippi River. On this 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday we at the Mississippi River Project would like to see everyone keeping safety at the top of their priority list. Whether you are camping, fishing, boating, or just hanging out enjoying the river there are several things you can do to keep you and your friends and family safe.



**Be weather wise – watch for storms that could pop up unexpectedly and stay hydrated on hot days**

**Wear your life jacket! – anytime you will be on or near the water a life jacket should be worn**

**Learn basic first aid – carry a basic first aid kit in boats, campers, and other vehicles**

**Think before you drink – alcohol decreases your reaction time which may be crucial in an emergency**

## A BIG THANKS AND A SAFE RETURN FOR OUR PROJECT STAFF



This last winter Bryan Schroeder, one of Mississippi River Project – Natural Resources Management Section Maintenance Workers, was called up to active duty as his unit with Iowa Air Guard was deployed to Afghanistan for three months. While a three month deployment may not sound like a long time – it certainly was long enough for our staff to keep Bryan in our thoughts and prayers. And we are very pleased that Bryan – and his entire unit – returned safe and sound. During his deployment we were able to send a couple of care packages to him, and Bryan has let us know he appreciated the efforts. When Staff Sergeant Schroeder returned he

presented Natural Resources Section Chief Gary Swenson with an American flag that had flown in the skies of Afghanistan on a combat sortie aboard an F-16C VIPER assigned to the 124th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan. Our thanks go out to Bryan for remembering us and especially for his service to our country.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT STAFF RECEIVE AWARDS



Recently two of the staff with the Mississippi River Project were awarded Employee of the Year awards at the Rock Island District, US Army Corps of Engineers annual Corps Day event. Supervisory Ranger John Knoble received his award for Supervisor of the Year. Mr. Knoble works at the Project office in LeClaire, Iowa and oversees the management of the recreation field staff at 5 offices from Dubuque, Iowa all the way to Quincy, Illinois. His hard work and dedication to his staff has resulted in great improvements to the Mississippi River Project and we thank him for being a great example for us all to follow.

The other staff member to receive an Employee of the Year award was Ranger Samantha Heilig. For those of you who are reading this and thinking that you may have heard that name before, you are probably correct because I, Ranger Heilig am in charge of writing this newsletter that you receive each month. It was a great honor and a huge surprise to learn that I would be receiving this award for my work in public communications. It is thanks to people like you that read this e-newsletter each month that I was able to receive this award.



## MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Kim Strunk – Summer Water Safety Patrol Ranger



Ranger Strunk with his son and volunteer Andy working water safety patrol

I am Kim Strunk the Summer Ranger at the Mississippi River Project Office at Locks and Dam 14, near Pleasant Valley, Iowa. This is my third summer working for the U.S.A.C.E. My primary job with the Corps is boat patrol on the Mississippi river in pools 14, 15, and 16. I really enjoy working with everyone employed with the Corps. We all do our best to promote a safe boating season for all the recreational boaters, and everyone that uses the Mississippi River.

I grew up in Clinton, Iowa and spent a lot of time on the Mississippi. I was on the swim team at Clinton High School and later set two college records at the University of Northern

Iowa. I received my undergraduate degree from U.N.I., and my Master of Science degree with a Biology emphasis from Western Illinois University. I also lived two years in Ketchikan, Alaska and I was a fireman while I was there.

I was a Water Patrol Officer for 10 seasons with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources on the Mississippi River and at Lake Delhi. I work full-time as a science teacher at Davenport West High School and I teach as an Adjunct Professor at Eastern Iowa Community College. I also taught Biology as an Adjunct at St. Ambrose University for about 10 years.

I enjoy Iowa's natural resources and I enjoy my farm in Scott County near Plainview. My sons and I have planted over 11,000 trees on my farm and enjoy all the wildlife that lives there. It is truly a pleasure to work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and I hope you all have a safe and fun summer!

## Dubuque Ranger Station News

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project invites campers and the visiting public to attend campground programs held at the Grant River Recreation Area. Throughout the summer, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, presenters will cover a host of topics for all to enjoy. As a reminder, all campground programs are FREE to the public and are subject to cancellation or rescheduling in the event of rain or severe weather. Programs for the month of July include:

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT GRANT RIVER CAMPGROUND:

- Saturday July 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 PM - Potosi Brewery presentation
- Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 PM - Organic Farming
- Saturday July 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 PM - World of Wood Whittling
- Saturday July 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM - Dutch Oven Cooking



Grant River Campground is located 2 miles south of Potosi, WI off Hwy 133. The campground offers 73 campsites, electrical hookups, shower and restroom facilities, drinking water, a dump station, and playground.

To reserve a campsite contact the National Recreation Reservation Service toll free at (877) 444-6777. Campsites may also be available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please contact the Dubuque Park Rangers by e-mail at [mvrodmn11@usace.army.mil](mailto:mvrodmn11@usace.army.mil) or by phone at (563) 582-0881.

## Thomson Ranger Station News

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project invites campers and the visiting public to attend campground programs held at Thomson Causeway and Fisherman's Corner Recreation Areas. Throughout the summer, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, presenters will cover a host of topics for all to enjoy. As a reminder, all campground programs are FREE to the public and are subject to cancellation or rescheduling in the event of rain or severe weather. Programs for the month of July include:

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT THOMSON CAUSEWAY CAMPGROUND:

- Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM – Join Brian Bielema, snake researcher of 43 years, as he shares “A Year in the Life of the Illinois Timber Rattlesnake,” which includes interesting topics such as life history, habitat, and eating habits.
- Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM – Join Berry Williams for a presentation on wood whittling.
- Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM – Join Mary Ann Knoll as she demonstrates how to cook over an open campfire. Mary Ann will be sharing tricks and secrets to creating a delicious meal the “old fashion” way.

Thomson Causeway Campground is located on Lewis Ave and Main St. in Thomson, IL. The campground offers 131 campsites, electrical hookups, shower and restroom facilities, drinking water, a dump station, boat ramp, and playground.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT FISHERMAN’S CORNER CAMPGROUND:

- Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM – Join Dave Searl for a presentation on Native American History
- Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM – TBA
- Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM – Come and enjoy folk music with Joe Nobiling
- Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM – Join Brian Ritter to learn about native plants from the Nahant Marsh



Photo of Nahant Marsh located in Davenport, IA

Fisherman’s Corner Campground is located just on Highway 84 just north of Hampton, IL. The campground offers 56 campsites, electrical hookups, shower and restroom facilities, drinking water, a dump station, and playground.

To reserve a campsite contact the National Recreation Reservation Service toll free at (877) 444-6777. Campsites may also be available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please contact the Thomson Park Rangers by e-mail at [mvrodmn13@usace.army.mil](mailto:mvrodmn13@usace.army.mil) or by phone at (815) 259-3628.

## Natural Resources News

### MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

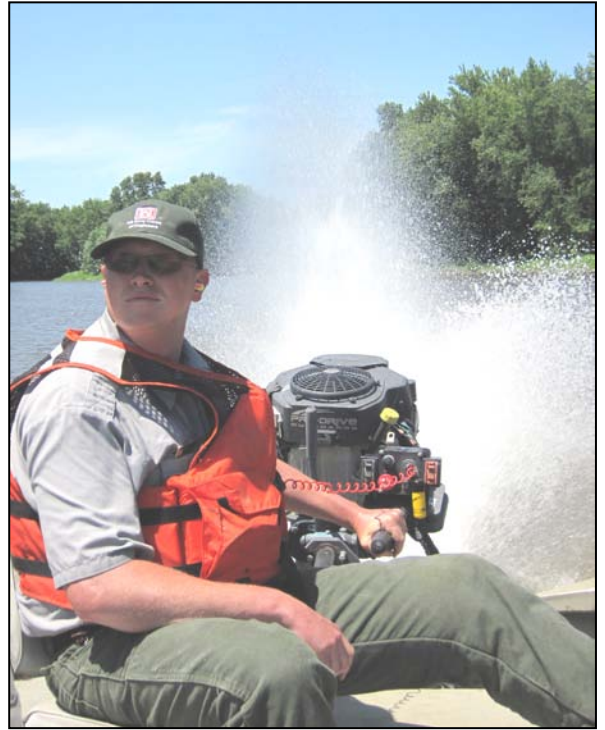
#### Jon Shultz – Natural Resource Specialist

I grew up in rural southwest Wisconsin on a dairy farm located south of La Crosse near the town of Chaseburg. Residents consider this "Coulee" country in the Driftless Area which is associated with the Algific Talus Slopes. Unique ecosystem is comprised of rare plant and animal communities within vents and sinkholes located on steep slope and cliffs. Air is drawn down through (upper) sinkhole in summer months and released through (lower) vent. Process reverses in winter as air is drawn into vent and released through sinkhole as steam. I witnessed this process as a kid and was intrigued by this. Experiences like this led me to pursue a career in the Natural Resource field.

I graduated from University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point with a Natural Resource Management degree. I worked as a SCEP (Student Career Employment Program) student for USACE - St Paul District as a Forestry Technician as well during the summer months of college. After commencement, I married my wife

Melissa and then deployed for Hurricane Katrina as a Debris Quality Assurance Supervisor for six months. We moved to Kentucky as I worked for USACE - Huntington (WV) District as a Ranger. I am very proud to say that I am part of the Environmental Stewardship team here in Rock Island District now as a Natural Resource Specialist. I have the privilege to work within the Mississippi River Bottomland Forest on a daily basis.

Melissa and I have a daughter (Mikayla) who will be three years old in a couple months. As a family, we love to pursue outdoor activities to include: hunting, fishing, camping, and wildlife viewing. We also engage in lots of tea parties with various dolls!



## Mississippi River Visitor Center News

### PRAIRIE FLOWERS OF THE MIDWEST

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces that the Visitor Center at Locks and Dam #15 is inviting guests to a program on prairie flowers. Prairie once dominated much of the Midwestern landscape. Although much of that original prairie is gone restoration efforts have seen many new native prairies popping up in the area. One of which is at the Visitor Center. Guests will have the opportunity to view our blossoming prairie, learn why these areas are so important and maybe even be inspired to create a backyard prairie of their own. Visitors are invited to attend this program on Saturday July 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. The program will be approximately 90 minutes and be guided by a Visitor Center Park Ranger. The tour will begin at the Mississippi River Visitor Center,

located on the western end of Arsenal Island at Locks and Dam #15. This program is free of charge and everyone is invited to attend. Advanced registration is required. An adult must accompany children under 12 years of age. 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 tour. For more information, or to sign up for the program, please contact the Visitor Center at (309) 794-5338.

### NEW MISSISSIPPI RIVER VISITOR CENTER FISH DISPLAY

The US Army Corps of Engineers values the many partnerships that provide a benefit not only to the Corps but also the partners with which they work. A good example of an excellent partnership was showcased this past month at the Mississippi River Visitor Center at Locks and Dam #15. This partnership with the Benton, Pennsylvania Future Farmers of America Chapter was under the direction of advisor Mr. Douglas McCracken. Through the partnership the students of the Benton FFA created handmade rustic carvings that were then donated to the facility for a new “Fish of the Mississippi River” display for everyone to enjoy. Mr. McCracken and his Benton FFA Chapter’s



The “Fish of the Mississippi River” display was unveiled on June 21<sup>st</sup> where an appreciation award was presented to Mr. McCracken and his FFA team for their time and hard work.

generous actions and quality work define the term “partnership”, and are in keeping with the highest standards set by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Mississippi River Project Staff would like to thank Benton FFA for their valued contribution in enhancing the enjoyment and understanding of all who visit our Mississippi River Project Visitor Center!



## Muscatine Ranger Station News

### **UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT SHADY CREEK AND CLARKS FERRY CAMPGROUNDS:**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project invites campers and the visiting public to attend campground programs held at Clark's Ferry and Shady Creek Recreation Areas. Throughout the summer, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, presenters will cover a host of topics for all to enjoy. As a reminder, all campground programs are subject to cancellation or rescheduling in the event of rain or severe weather. Programs for the month of July include:

- Saturday, July 7, 2012, 7:00 PM, Clark's Ferry Campground - A program on Fishing the Mighty Mississippi will be presented by area angler Don Swensson. He keeps fishing simple by explaining where to go, what bait to use and most importantly what to catch.
- Saturday, July 14, 2012, 7:00 PM, Shady Creek Campground - Don Swensson travels downriver to pass on his years of experience and knowledge on how to fish the mighty Mississippi.
- Saturday, July 21, 2012, 7:00 PM, Shady Creek Campground - Dr. Bill Hampes from Black Hawk College will reflect on the history of the Colonel Davenport House, and why Colonel Davenport is important to our local history.
- Saturday, July 28, 2012, 8:00 PM, Clark's Ferry Campground - KeeKee Pregracke will discuss how her son Chad Pregracke began his one man quest to clean up the Mississippi River. He founded Living Lands and Waters in 1998, and has received national attention for his mission. Learn about the projects past, present, and future goals.

Clark's Ferry Campground is located just off Highway 22 at 3860 Sunset Beach, Montpelier, IA 52759. Clark's Ferry offers 45 campsites, electrical hookups, shower and restroom facilities, drinking water, a dump station, playground, boat launch and wood. Shady Creek Campground is located at 3550 Highway 22, Muscatine, IA 52761. Shady Creek offers 53 campsites, electrical hookups, shower and restroom facilities, drinking water, a dump station, playground, boat launch and wood. To reserve a campsite, contact the National Recreation Reservation Service toll free at (877) 444-6777. Campsites are also available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please contact the Muscatine Park Rangers by e-mail at [mvrodmn16@usace.army.mil](mailto:mvrodmn16@usace.army.mil) or by phone at (563) 263-7913.

### **STILL LOOKING FOR A BLANCHARD ISLAND VOLUNTEER CAMPGROUND HOST**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces that it is looking for a Fulltime Volunteer Campground Host to work at Blanchard Island Recreation Area until October 15, 2012. Blanchard Island Recreation Area is located along the Mississippi River just south of Muscatine, Iowa. The campground host is responsible for the daily tasks of greeting park visitors, informing campers of self-registration procedures, cleaning the restrooms daily, cleaning out fire rings weekly, and informing the park rangers of maintenance needs. Volunteers will not collect nor handle money. Hosts provide an average of 21 hours of volunteer service per week and may serve for the entire recreation season. Click [here](#) for a full job description. The volunteer selected for this position is provided a campsite with water, electric, and a dump station in the park. If you are interested in volunteering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers please contact Park Rangers by calling 563-263-7913 or email [kevin.j.zidarich@usace.army.mil](mailto:kevin.j.zidarich@usace.army.mil).

## Quincy Ranger Station News

Quincy Rangers are taking advantage of a rare event this recreation season - no flooding to date in any of their recreation areas! In a region of the lower part of our project that has sometimes seen as many as five flood events in one year, the youthful staff there (Lead Ranger Brent Groesch, new permanent ranger Trevor Popkin, and new summer ranger Jordan Hagerty) are taking full advantage of these dry conditions to whip their parks into shape, and their efforts are paying off with increased camping numbers and positive feedback from their customers on all the improvements. The staff there lends much assistance to our forestry staff due to their intimate knowledge of the project in this part of the country, and the distance (3 plus hours away) between our Project Office and many of the lands and waters they help manage on a daily basis. A Summer of Paddling 2012 event in the area is being coordinated requesting assistance with water safety patrol from our rangers at Quincy as well. More details on that event to follow.



**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,**

**Natural Resource Management Staff**

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

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