



Mississippi River Project



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Gearing Up for a Safe Summer

Each summer you will find our US Army Corps of Engineers park rangers from the Mississippi River Project working on both land and water to keep our recreational users safe. Although safety in our parks is very important, safety on the water is a high priority. You may sometimes see our rangers working on the river on water safety patrol where they enforce federal regulations to keep boaters safe. Other times you may find rangers at the boat ramps offering courtesy inspections of vessels to assist people with knowing what is needed before they get out onto the water. Throughout the Project our rangers also take time to help educate people of all ages by offering boating safety classes and hosting eco-meets for local school groups. In this month's newsletter you will learn about the many ways the Mississippi River Project is working to keep you safe.

BOATING SAFETY CLASSES GET BOATERS READY FOR THE SUMMER

Each spring the park rangers with the Mississippi River Project offer boating safety education classes for boaters of all ages and experience levels. These classes are taught in cooperation with the IL Department of Natural Resources and provide a great deal of information for new boaters as well as seasoned veterans that have been boating for years. Some of the topics covered during the class include basic terminology used when boating, required equipment needed on a boat, and safe operation on the water. These eight hour classes allow participants to ask questions of the rangers as well as conservation officers about how to stay safe on the river. They also cover information on using a navigation chart and how to take a private vessel through the lock.



So far this year the Project has completed 5 boating safety courses with a total of 92 participants. All 92 participants passed the class and received certification.

If you missed one of our first 5 classes and are interested in taking a class yet this year there will be two more chances to attend in the Quincy, IL area. The law requires that if you choose to operate a boat in Illinois between the ages of 12-18 that a boating safety certification is required. The dates the classes will be offered are June 11th and July 9th from 8:00 AM till 5:00 PM each day. Certification can be completed by attending either of the two classes.

For more information or to register for a class, contact the Quincy Rangers @ 217-228-0890

SPRING ECO-MEETS GET STUDENTS INVOLVED

Each spring our Dubuque and Thomson ranger offices coordinate friendly competitions among their local area schools. These day-long events, known as Eco-meets, are a great way for teachers to give students a chance to interact with a number of agencies on a variety of topics from forestry to water safety. Each school forms a small team of students which attend the event. While at the Eco-meet, students take part in workshops where volunteers from agencies like, the Iowa DNR, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Army Corps of Engineers, present the students with information on a specific topic. Once the team of students has completed a workshop they are then tested on the knowledge they have gained. At the end of the day, the team who has scored highest in all the tested areas is named the winner. This year between the two events there were 185 students from 34 schools that participated.



East Dubuque Elementary

The winners of this year's Dubuque Eco-meet were: 1st place: East Dubuque Elementary (East Dubuque, IL), 2nd place: St. Clement (Lancaster, WI), 3rd place: Holy Ghost Immaculate Conception (Kieler, WI). Each team was awarded trophies that were donated by the Dubuque Audubon Society.



West Carroll Black Team

The winners of this year's Thomson Eco-meet are as follows: 1st place: West Carroll Black Team (Thomson, IL), 2nd place: West Carroll Green Team (Thomson, IL), 3rd place: Northeast Elementary B Team (Goose Lake, IA). Each team was awarded trophies that were donated by The Carroll County Review.

WATER SAFETY NIGHT WITH THE QUAD CITY RIVER BANDITS

Join the US Army Corps of Engineers Wednesday June 8th at Modern Woodman Park in Davenport, IA for a fun evening of baseball and water safety education. Get a chance to talk with park rangers to learn about the importance of wearing life jackets. Check out a ranger patrol boat that will be on display in front of the stadium. And even watch Bobber the Water Safety Dog throw out the first pitch of the game. The game starts at 7:00 PM and tickets can be purchased by contacting the Modern Woodman Park Box office at 563-3-BANDIT. We hope to see you there.



Mississippi River Project Office News

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Steve Vacek – Park Ranger

Hi, I am often referred to as “Ranger Steve”. I am one of the “old timers” here since I have 32 years of service with the Mississippi River Project. I work at the project office and assist with the management of Locks and Dam #14, Fisherman’s Corner Day Use Recreation Areas and Smith’s Island National Recreation Trail. I also keep busy by presenting numerous environmental education programs for schools and organizations in and around the Quad City area. During the summer, I am busy organizing a special event. The Project’s annual “Fishing Clinic” is held in early August. By the way, this year’s clinic will be on August 6th. I also work with many volunteers, especially students from Pleasant Valley High School. I was born and raised in Bellevue, Nebraska (located close to Omaha). I began my career with the Corps in 1975 working in South Dakota. I was a summer park ranger at Fort Randall Dam located in Pickstown for a couple of years. After graduating from South Dakota State University in 1977 with a park management degree, I spent a year as a VISTA Volunteer (Volunteers in Service to America). I worked about six months in Mitchell, South Dakota and the rest of the year in Columbia, South Carolina. In 1979, I started my employment with the Rock Island District. The visitor center at Lock and Dam 15 was scheduled to open so I helped with getting this facility ready. In May of 1980 the center opened and I worked there until 1994. In my spare time I enjoy spending time with my wife Martie and son Brett. Brett is a junior at Taylor University (Upland, Indiana) and on the football team. So during the fall I am busy cheering the Trojans and #36 to another tackle and interception since he is a DB. As an audiophile, I enjoy expanding my collection of vintage stereo equipment (especially tube electronics and turntables). Hope to see you at the fishing clinic!



Ranger Steve with his son Brett (standing next to him) and other volunteers at the fishing clinic.

Dubuque Ranger Station News

TOURS OF LOCK AND DAM #11 TO BEGIN FOR SEASON

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces that they will offer tours of Lock and Dam #11 in Dubuque beginning on Sunday, May 29th.

Every Sunday from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend, Lock and Dam Tours are offered to the public. Meet at Dubuque’s Lock and Dam #11 Visitor Building Observation Deck at 2:00 PM to join a tour. Participants must wear shoes with enclosed toes and back, tennis shoes are best. Walking is required. Group size is limited. Tours may be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

For additional information please contact: Dubuque Park Rangers, 2595 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, Iowa 52001 or call (563) 582-0881.

Thomson Ranger Station News

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Gregg Dolan – Summer Park Ranger



I am currently working on my 22nd summer with the Corps of Engineers at the Thomson Ranger Station. I started while I was a student at the University of Northern Iowa. I graduated from UNI in 1992 with a degree in secondary education and have taught high school science for the past 19 years. The past 10 years I have been at Morrison High School. Besides being a teacher and a ranger, I am also a coach. I currently am the head wrestling coach and the defensive coordinator for our varsity football team. Between these four positions I keep pretty busy. Actually my oldest son has said several times that I am a workaholic.

When I am not at work I enjoy spending time with my family. My wife Tami and I will be married 20 years this summer and have two sons Tylr (16) and

Reilly (11). We spend most of our time following the boys to sporting events. Both of them are involved in football, wrestling, and baseball. In what free time we have my family loves to travel and spend time outdoors. We especially like heading to Door County Wisconsin or just working in the yard.

Over the past 22 summers I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from many great people. When I started I thought I would be here a couple of years until I was finished with school. I never imagined the job turning into a second career but 22 summers later it looks like it did. It has been a great experience and who knows what the next 22 camping seasons will bring.

TOURS OF LOCK AND DAM #13 TO BEGIN FOR SEASON

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi River Project announces that weekly tours of Lock and Dam 13 in Fulton, IL will begin May 29, 2011. The weekly Lock and Dam Tours will take place every Sunday from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend at 1p.m.

The tours will cover a brief history of the Mississippi River and the purpose of Locks and Dams along the river. All tours will start near the overlook building located at Lock and Dam 13 Day Use Area. All participants must wear closed toed shoes to attend the full lock tour. If you or your group is interested in participating in a tour, contact the Thomson Ranger Office at (815) 259-3928.

THOMSON PHOTO CONTEST

The Mississippi River Project's Thomson Park Rangers are sponsoring the 20th Annual Thomson Causeway Photo Contest. Categories for the photo contest include Wildlife, Recreation and Landscape with both an amateur and advanced division. Photo contest entries will be accepted from Thursday, May 27, 2011 to Friday, August 26, 2011. The contest is free and open to the public, but registration is required. Entry forms will be available, beginning May 27, 2011, at the fee booth or Thomson Ranger office.

CAMPGROUND PROGRAMS AT FISHERMAN'S CORNER CAMPGROUND

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project invites campers and the visiting public to attend campground programs held at Fisherman's Corner Campground near Hampton, IL. 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. Programming for the month of June includes the following:

- Saturday, June 4, 2011, at 7:00 PM – Join Kendall Davis for a fun interactive program on boomerangs.
- Saturday, June 11, 2011 at 7:00 PM – Join Berry Williams for a demonstration on the techniques and woods used for whittling.
- Saturday, June 18, 2011 at 7:00 PM – Join Ann Sullivan for a presentation on the mammals of Illinois.
- Saturday, June 25, 2011 at 7:00 PM – Join Beth Carvey for an informative program on the history of Native Americans along the Mississippi River.

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 or by phone at (815) 259-3628.



Mississippi River Visitor Center News

BICYCLE TOUR OF HISTORIC ARSENAL ISLAND

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 bicycle tour of historic Arsenal Island. This six-mile ride will be held on Saturday, June 11th from 9:00 – 11:00 AM. Historic points of interest include Colonel Davenport's Home, the old Moline Lock, Arsenal Quarters #1, the Confederate Cemetery, and many more. The tour will begin and end at the Mississippi River Visitor's Center, located on the western end of Arsenal Island at Locks and Dam #15. This tour is free of charge and is limited to 15 participants. Advance registration is required and helmets are mandatory. 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 tour, please contact the Visitor's Center at (309) 794-5338.

NATURE WALK SERIES-TREES

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces that the Visitor Center at Locks and Dam #15 is inviting guests to come participate on a Nature Walk along the lock. We use more than just our eyes when going about our daily routine. On this short hike, guests will be encouraged to use all of their senses to learn about the different species of trees that live along the river. Visitors are invited to attend this program on Saturday, June 18th at 10:00 AM. The program will last approximately 1 hour 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.

TOURS OF LOCKS AND DAM # 15 TO BEGIN FOR SEASON

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project announces they will be offering free tours of Locks and Dam 15 starting this Memorial Day weekend and running each weekend through Labor Day.

Corps of Engineers Park Rangers will offer free lock and dam tours each Saturday and Sunday at 11:00am and 2:00pm (weather permitting). Participants must wear shoes with enclosed toes and backs, tennis shoes are preferred. Cameras and pictures are not allowed on the tour but they are allowed in the Visitor Center. Walking is required. Pre-registration is also required and the group size is limited.

If you do not have time to attend tours then just stop by for a visit. The Corps of Engineers Visitor Center gives you a great view of the locking through process at Locks and Dam # 15. There is picnicking and restroom facilities, as well as items unique to the river for sale. The center is located on the west end of Arsenal Island in Rock Island, Illinois and is open 9:00 AM till 5:00 PM daily.

The facility is accessible via the Davenport or Moline entrances. All persons over the age of 16 must carry a photo ID in order to enter the island. All vehicles are subject to random search and participants should allow 15 minutes extra to ensure proper arrival time. Contact the ranger staff at (309) 794-5338 to make a tour reservation or for any additional questions.



Muscatine Ranger Station News

MUSCATINE RANGER STATION MOVING TO A NEW LOCATION IN JUNE!

The Mississippi River Project's Muscatine Ranger Field Station will be moving from 1611 2nd Avenue to 810 N. Main Street in Muscatine, IA in June. Our new location is in the old Krieger's Super Saver Car Lot located at the corner of N. Main and Grandview Avenue. It is four blocks upriver from the Hardees Restaurant. Our phone number will remain the same, 563-263-7913, only our address has changed. If you have any questions or need assistance please call us first to make sure you can find us; as we will be in the process of moving. Thank you.

TOURS OF LOCK AND DAM #16 TO BEGIN FOR SEASON

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project invites the public to enjoy a tour of Lock and Dam 16. Every Sunday from May 29, 2011 through September 4, 2011 at 2:00 PM, weather permitting, tours of Locks and Dam 16 will be conducted for the public. Lock and Dam 16 is located off 102nd Ave West on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River about one mile upstream from the Muscatine Bridge. Participants will be presented with a history of the Upper Mississippi River system, how the river system operates and the process it takes to move a barge through a lock. The tour is capped off with a walk on the lock and dam structure. Walking is a part of the tour so participants must wear shoes with enclosed toes and an enclosed back (tennis shoes are best). Advance reservations are required as group size is limited. Please allow approximately one hour to complete the tour. For more information and to make reservations, please contact the Muscatine Park Rangers by e-mail at mvrodmn16@usace.army.mil or by phone at (563) 263-7913.

CAMPGROUND PROGRAMS AT CORPS OF ENGINEERS PARKS

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. Programming for the month of June includes the following:

- Saturday, June 4, 2011, 6:30 PM, Fairport Fish Hatchery, 3390 Highway 22, Muscatine, IA, meet Ken Snyder from the Department of Natural Resources fish hatchery to learn how a fish hatchery works and tour the facility.
- Saturday, June 11, 2011, 7 PM, Clark's Ferry Campground, perfect the art of knot tying with Bob Burchett.
- Saturday, June 18, 2011, 7 PM, Shady Creek Campground, Berry Williams will explain some of the techniques and woods he uses when he whittles.
- Saturday, June 25, 2011, 7 PM, Clark's Ferry Campground, come and learn about greyhounds and the Quad Cities Greyhound Adoption program.

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 at either location, 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 or by phone at (563) 263-7913.

Quincy Ranger Station News

The boating season is just about here and much focus has been geared toward boating safety. The Quincy Rangers partnered with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary and conducted courtesy vessel safety inspections (VSI) that were free to the public. These beneficial inspections of vessels are used to inform the owners of what they legally need to have onboard, as well as provide safety information that will be useful on the river. The Rangers were able to access their parks toward the end of May after high water had made it impossible. Much work was done to get the parks and boat ramps cleaned up and ready for the holiday weekend. Unfortunately, yet not surprisingly, the Upper Mississippi River was once again inundated with what seemed to be a monsoon and all cleanup efforts were washed away as several parks went underwater again just days before Memorial Day weekend.

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**

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