



Mississippi River Project



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Springtime Brings Flooding to the Mississippi River

Many of you have probably seen the images on the news of springtime flooding along the Mississippi River. Thankfully in most of our areas we are headed on the downhill slope for now as the water recedes and we begin our cleanup efforts. In this month's newsletter we will show you why it is necessary for us to close many of your favorite recreation areas to keep everyone from being in harm's way.

Dubuque Ranger Station News



BLANDING LANDING RECREATION AREA FLOODING

This photo was taken at Blanding Landing Recreation Area located near Hanover, IL. a few days after the river had crested in the Dubuque, IA around 21.2 feet on April 20th. Now that the water has started down, the rangers can begin to clean up the park and hopefully if the rain holds off, Blanding Landing will still be able to open on its originally scheduled date of May 13, 2011.

UPCOMING CAMPGROUND PROGRAMS

Saturday, May 28th at Grant River Recreation Area located near Potosi, WI. "Bigfoot in the Midwest" will be presented by Stan Courtney of the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (BFRO).

On Sunday, May 29th, at Blanding Landing Recreation Area located near Hanover, IL. "Bigfoot in the Midwest" will again be presented by Stan Courtney of the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (BFRO). These programs are free to the public and everyone is invited. Call the Dubuque Rangers at 563-582-0881 for more information.

Thomson Ranger Station News

VOLUNTEER FLOOD CLEANUP

The Mississippi River Project has experienced severe flooding this spring. As a result, damage to our recreation areas and the debris left behind will be a major undertaking in order to return them to their previous condition. If you or your group is interested in volunteering to help clean up the parks after the flood call the Thomson Ranger Office at (815) 259-3628 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Dave Reynolds – Park Ranger

I started my career with the Corps as a student ranger with the Mississippi River Headwaters Lakes Project at Leech Lake in northern Minnesota. I was hired on as a permanent seasonal ranger after completing my education at Mankato State University. After three years at Leech Lake I accepted a full-time position at Eau Galle River Lake Project in Spring Valley, Wisconsin where I was the lead ranger from 1998 to 2004 when I became the park manager. In April 2008 I moved to Clinton, Iowa after accepting a position with the Mississippi River Project as the lead park ranger at the Thomson Field Office. At Thomson we oversee and patrol the recreation areas in pools 13 and 14 which include: Big Slough, Thomson Causeway, Bulger's Hollow, Lock and Dam 13, Cattail Slough, and Fisherman's Corner. As you can see here in the photo of the Thomson Causeway

Recreation Area, there can often be challenges far beyond our control. I have enjoyed the numerous opportunities and challenges that working for the Corps has offered me in the last 15 years, and I am looking forward to 15 more.

Natural Resource Management News

PLEASANT CREEK CAMPGROUND TREE PLANTING

The natural resource section of the Rock Island District has a focus in enhancing and preserving forested lands. Though it's not readily apparent, forests along the Mississippi River are changing over time. One concern is having all of the Upper Mississippi River forest maturing at the same time. The Mississippi River Project's Forest Management Program has used timber harvest to help jumpstart the establishment of younger forest. Having a balance of mature forest and young forest will provide different types of habitats for wildlife along the river.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pleasant Creek Campground is a recreational site located just down river from Bellevue, IA. A ten acre site adjacent to the downstream end of the campground was selected to be managed for creating a younger stand of trees. In 1986, a timber harvest was conducted. Select mature trees were left to provide seed for natural regeneration of new trees. Unfortunately, an invasive grass (reed canary grass) took over the area and prevented any trees from developing naturally. With assistance from Living Lands and Waters and volunteers from the ADM workforce out of Clinton, IA, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Savanna District containerized trees were planted in the fall of 2008. Since that time there has been routine mowing and spraying to prevent the aggressive growth of grass and vines from killing the trees.



Shade from trees greatly reduces the prolific growth of the invasive plants on this site. So, to limit the need of mechanical mowing and use of herbicides to combatant the grass and vines, an additional management resource is being utilized. Fast growing trees such as cottonwood and willow are being planted amongst the slower growing bottomland tree species. Willow and cottonwood can be cut into sticks during dormancy and pushed into the ground. They will then develop roots and begin to grow. This



form of tree propagation is called “planting cuttings”. The flood plain forest has plentiful amounts of cottonwood and willow trees that can be harvested and then planted. Young, small diameter trees are preferable to use in this method of tree planting. A single willow tree harvested can be cut into multiple cuttings which in turn develop into multiple trees. Willow trees tend to grow in thickets and harvesting these trees as a thinning cut has a low impact on the remaining trees. There is actually improved health of the remaining trees by creating more growing space. After the cuttings are planted, they will develop into trees that will cast shade on the aggressive invasive grass and vines. The more shade the trees cast, the less growth the sun loving invasive plants will have. In the long run, this helps to reduce the need for mowing and spraying to ensure the slower growing planted trees survive. Planting willow and cottonwood cuttings is an exciting method of timber management that will help develop a diverse, closed canopy forest while lowering long term maintenance cost.

Mississippi River Project Office News

NEW RANGERS ON STAFF FOR THE SUMMER

With the 2011 recreation season comes some new faces (and some familiar returning faces) at our field stations to fill our seasonal park ranger staffs. The following people will be working in the parks this recreation season:

DUBUQUE RANGERS - Andrew Vlazny & Phillip Gartner

THOMSON RANGERS - Gregg Dolan, Trevor Popkin, & Chelsea Mayer

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT OFFICE BOAT PATROL - Kim Strunk

MISSISSIPPI RIVER VISITOR CENTER – Lacey Schmoll & Lindy Tarkington

MUSCATINE RANGERS - Bill Yost, Scot Bierman, & Wesley Ericksen

QUINCY RANGERS - Dennis Franks

HAPPY TRAILS!

May 31 will mark a day we at the Mississippi River Project have been dreading for a long time. Our maintenance supervisor Danny Till will be retiring from the Mississippi River Project after 28 years of federal service. The Mississippi River Project has grown and developed into one of the most diverse and challenging projects in the Corps to maintain and operate. Through numerous floods, staff changes, limited equipment, aging facilities and infrastructure, and changes in management, Danny has been there to lead his small crew of talented maintenance staff and accomplish more work than many people ever thought they could. If you visit any of our parks up and down the river, you will see his handy-work present in all of them. Replacing his knowledge of the project will be impossible. We thank him for his dedication, expertise, and hard work, and wish him the best of luck in his well-deserved retirement! Hooah!!

Mississippi River Visitor Center News

MISSISSIPPI RIVER VISITOR CENTER GETS A RECEPTION DESK REBUILD

Mississippi River Project Visitor Center located at Locks & Dam 15, on the Rock Island Arsenal has completed a two week project of their new reception desk area rebuild. The Mississippi River Visitor Center has a Cooperative Agreement with the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau, this agreement led to the funding of the new reception desk. This new desk has features that make it more user friendly to both the visiting customers and the VC Staff. The VC staff had several more work and storage areas added to the desk, there are also a couple safety features that have been added to assist the employees. Please stop by and see our new addition to the VC.

Before



After



UPCOMING PROGRAMS OFFERED AT THE VISITOR CENTER

Bicycle Tour of Historic Arsenal Island – May 7, 2011

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. Did you know that the town of Davenport was named after a murdered Colonel, or that hundreds of people died while in prison on the Island? The answers to these questions and many more can be found on this relaxing informational ride. This six-mile ride will be held on **Saturday, May 7th from 1:00 – 3:00 PM**. 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 bicyclists. Advance registration is required. Helmets are mandatory. An adult must accompany children under 12 years of age. For more information, or to sign up for the tour, please contact the Visitor's Center at (309) 794-5338.

Historic Clock Tower Tour – May 8, 2011

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 in a Historic Clock Tower Tour. Relive the early days of the Rock Island Arsenal as you climb your way up the historic corridor of the Clock Tower Building which has been a Quad City landmark for over 100 years! Waiting at the top is a spectacular view of the Mississippi River. Visitors are invited to join this tour on **Sunday, May 8th at 2:00pm**. The tour will be approximately 1½ hours long 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. For more information, or to sign up for the program, please contact the Visitor Center at (309) 794-5338.

Nature Walk Series-Discover Nature – May 15, 2011

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 when strolling around in nature searching for signs of wildlife. Visitors are invited to attend this program on **Sunday, May 15th at 2:00pm**. The program will be approximately 1 hour long 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. For more information, or to sign up for the program, please contact the Visitor Center at (309) 794-5338.

Nature Walk Series-Birds – May 21, 2011

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. On this walk guests will have the opportunity to view area birds from the bank of the Mississippi. Guests will learn a few simple ways to identify birds with scopes and field guides available to assist them. Visitors are invited to attend this program on **Saturday, May 21st at 10:00am**. The program will be approximately 1 hour long 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. For more information, or to sign up for the program, please contact the Visitor Center at (309) 794-5338.

Muscatine Ranger Station News

MUSCATINE RANGER STATION WILL BE MOVING TO A NEW LOCATION IN JUNE!

Our current address is 1611 2nd Ave., Muscatine, IA 52761. However, we will be moving to 810 N. Main Street, Muscatine, IA in the beginning of June. This is the old Krieger's Super Saver car lot located just 4 blocks northeast on Grandview Avenue.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Cindy Klebe – Park Ranger

I just love it...don't you? Winter fun has passed, and Spring is in full bloom, ready to take on the adventurous camper in all of us! I remember my first high water event on the Mississippi River nearly 17 years ago. I was new to the job, new to Muscatine, and new to the Mississippi River Project. I grew up on a farm near Pearl City, IL where I went to school and played sports. After graduating, I played basketball for Highland Community College in Freeport, IL and then softball at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. I took advantage of the UWSP College of Natural Resources program and participated in a semester abroad in Australia and New Zealand. Then for a



summer mandatory course, I had to study soils, waters, wildlife, and water in Germany or Wisconsin. Needless to say I chose Germany for eight weeks. Upon my return and new found focus to our Natural Resources, I started my career with the US Army Corps of Engineers at the Mississippi River Visitor Center on Arsenal Island as a Co-op Student.

As my co-op experience was coming to a close, I was blessed with moving into the second permanent ranger position, at the Muscatine Ranger Field Station. Here I learned what it would take to become a "field" ranger in the campgrounds and recreation areas. I discovered that visitor assistance, enforcement of Title 36, and operations and maintenance of the areas I was stationed at, was what I wanted to do as a lifelong career.

A significant change took place in 1996 when the lead ranger from the Muscatine Field Station left to pursue other opportunities. This provided me the chance to prove my passion and knowledge and ability to grow as a ranger. Ranger staff from nearby stations within the Project provided me with the support and knowledge and experience necessary to successfully carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Station. As the summer came to an end, I was encouraged by my supervisor to apply for the Lead Ranger position. I wasn't sure I was ready, but with the encouragement and support from our Mississippi River Project Team, I applied.

The rest of the story can be found when you come to camp, fish, boat, or just relax along the river. When you do arrive, look me up and I'll be happy to share with you my other interests like rock climbing, my passion for tennis, our wonderful pets, and volunteer vacations. My husband says I'm too adventurous, but I say you got to "Explore the Possibilities" to reap the blessings of life!

LOCK AND DAM 16 TOURS

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.

CLARKS FERRY RECREATION AREA FLOODING



In the picture shown here you can see the playground at Clarks Ferry Recreation area. The photo was taken when the river stage was at 20.68 in Illinois City. As you can see there will be lots of work in getting this area cleaned up and ready for visitors.

Quincy Ranger Station News

Quincy Rangers have a familiar face back in the office as Dennis Franks has returned as a summer hire. This is Dennis' second summer since his official retirement, and his wealth of knowledge in the Quincy area is undoubtedly beneficial to Rangers Alger and Groesch. They are glad to have him aboard and are looking forward to a productive summer, once the water goes down. The Quincy area is accustomed to high water every spring, and this spring is no different. In late April, the river crested at 22.21 at Lock and Dam 21. Surprisingly, the Quincy area did not receive the worse when it came to spring flooding; however, most of their areas are still eight feet under water. Last fall, Canton Chute received new vault toilets that are supposed to be indestructible. The rangers are anxiously waiting to see how the new toilets handled the high water event.

COURTESY VESSEL SAFETY INSPECTIONS

The Quincy Rangers will be partnering with the USCG auxiliary once again in conducting courtesy vessel safety inspections. There are 3 days in the month of May that the public can bring their vessels to have them checked for the legal requirements needed to boat on federal and state waters, for free. Vessels passing the inspection will receive the 2011 USCG Aux. inspection sticker. The dates of the inspections are:

7 MAY- Hannibal, MO @ the Treasure Chest parking lot.

14 May- LaGrange, MO @ LaGrange riverfront.

21 May- Quincy, IL @ Quincy Riverfront.

Inspection hours are from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM at all location.

For further information, contact the Quincy Rangers @ 217-228-0890

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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