



Mississippi River Project



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

April Showers Bring May...

A large amount of rainfall throughout the upper Midwest has brought challenges to the Mississippi River Project already this season. Many of the recreation areas along the Mississippi River opened up for the spring last month only to close again a week or so later due to rising water levels. The staff along the river will be working hard to stay on top of the clean-up efforts thought out the Project but it may take some time. Large debris such as the trees you see here in this photo of the Park-N-Fish recreation area require special equipment to remove and in some cases the ground will be too soft to safely move in and start the clean-up process. Please remember to be careful in and around any area that is affected



by high water and if you have questions about a recreation area and if it may be closed please feel free to check out our website at www.missriver.org and click on the HOT INFO button where we keep updated information about the status of all our recreation areas. You can also call our Visitor Center at 309-794-5338 any day between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM for updated information.

WEEKEND LOCK AND DAM TOURS BEGIN - MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

Public tours are scheduled on weekends between Memorial Day and Labor Day at many of our Lock and Dam facilities along the river. Topics covered during the tours include river history, lock and dam operation, towboats, barges, cargo, river hazards and much more.

The tours last about an hour and will be dependent on weather conditions and staff availability. Tour size is limited to 20 people and proper footwear (enclosed shoes) will be required. While on the tour there will be no camera or cell phone use allowed and all backpacks, purses, and bags must be left in your vehicle. Group tours must call ahead and any non-US citizens must get prior security clearance before attending. Specific lock sites and requirements are listed below.

- **Lock and Dam 11 in Dubuque, Iowa** - Walking tours of the lock and dam will be held every Sunday at 2:00 PM, Meet at the overlook building. Contact Dubuque ranger station for information, 563-582-0881.



- **Lock and Dam 13 in Fulton, Illinois** - Walking tours will be held on Sundays at 1:00 PM, meet at the visitor overlook. Contact Thomson ranger station for information, 815- 259-3628.
- **Locks and Dam 15 in Rock Island, Illinois on the west end of Arsenal Island** - Walking tours will be held on Saturdays and Sundays at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM For security purposes all persons over age 16 must carry photo ID to enter island. Reservations are recommended, 309-794-5338.
- **Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine, Iowa** - Walking tours will be held on Sundays at 2:00 PM. A special Memorial Day weekend tour will be held on **Saturday, May 25 at 2:00 PM** as well to kick off the summer season. Pre-registration is required, contact Muscatine ranger station for more information, 563-263-7913.
- **Lock and Dam 21 in Quincy, Illinois** - Tour times are flexible. Reservations are required. Contact Quincy ranger station for more information, 217-228-0890.

Natural Resources Team News

FOREST INVENTORY DATA COLLECTION

A collaborative effort amongst US Army Corps of Engineers and US Fish and Wildlife Service – Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge was conducted to finalize forest inventory data collection on cooperatively managed lands within the Mississippi River Bottomland Forest. The prevailing decision for conducting forest inventory within the Big Timber Division of the Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge in pool 17 was to assist foresters and land managers in creating educated forest and wildlife management based decisions. Previous forest inventory data for Big Timber Division was collected over 20 years ago and currently doesn't reflect conditions of the floodplain forested resource. Over the past couple decades; this area has been subject to several flood events which has assisted in altering the volume, growth, basal area, diversity, regeneration and mortality of forested resource.

Forest inventory sampling plots were established in a systematic sampling fashion with 330 feet between plots, therefore creating one plot for every 2.5 acres. Data was collected using a hand



held Global Positioning System (GPS) to obtain geographic coordinate data for each plot center so that data collection could be replicated at future periods in time. Forest inventory data collection will assist in documenting site and stand specific trends in volume, growth, basal area, forest health, structure, regeneration, age, and herbaceous vegetation to include invasive non-native species. Results will be assessed and interpreted to allow for informed decisions about future management of the forested resource.

Dubuque Ranger Station News

EARTH DAY EVENT AT GRANT RIVER – MAY 4

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, May 4, 2013. 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. Please contact the Dubuque Park Rangers by calling (563) 582-0881.

22ND ANNUAL ECO-MEET – MAY 10

The Dubuque Field Station will be hosting the 22nd Annual Ecology Meet at Eagle Point Park on Friday, May 10th. Topics to be presented and tested on are as follow: Forestry, Fish of the Mississippi, Water Safety, & Native Americans Along the Mississippi River. This year's sponsors include the Dubuque Audubon Society, Coca-Cola, & Papa John's.

BLANDING LANDING RECREATION AREA SCHEDULED TO OPEN – MAY 10

The Blanding Landing Recreation Area is off the beaten path offering a quiet camping get-a-way. Nestled along the backwaters of the Mississippi River, this area is a well known birders paradise plus access to miles of great fishing. It is located 13 miles south of Galena, Illinois off of Blackjack Road in Jo Daviess County. The Class "A" campground features 30 campsites with 50 amp electrical service, 7 non-electrical sites, a shower building, sewer dump station and more! This secluded area also has a playground, picnic shelter, boat ramp and great views of the backwaters of the Mississippi River with the main channel on the far shoreline.

The Blanding Landing Recreation Area offers summer interpretive programs and activities for visitors on select weekends throughout the camping season. All programs are held at the Blanding Landing Campground amphitheater, unless otherwise noted. Announcement of the weekend programs will be on campground bulletin boards, and by contacting the Dubuque Park Rangers at 563-582-0881.



The area is full of activities and adventures for outdoor enthusiasts including kayaking, canoeing, biking, hiking and more! Come and discover why Blanding Landing is Jo Daviess County's best kept secret!

PLEASANT CREEK RECREATION AREA SCHEDULED TO OPEN – MAY 15

The Pleasant Creek Recreation Area is rustic and relaxing with front row seats of the main channel of the Mississippi River. It is located 3 miles south of Bellevue, Iowa, along Highway 52. The campground has 55 first-come, first-serve campsites, drinking water, and vault toilets. There is no electrical service or flush toilets making this a perfect spot for primitive campers. The area also has a sewer dump station and concrete boat ramp with direct access to the main channel. Recline in your lounge chair and watch the river traffic navigate up and down the river below Lock & Dam 12.

Camping at Pleasant Creek is located in two locations – the main campground and the island. Both offer drinking water and vault toilets for your convenience. The area is monitored by a volunteer campground host who assists campers with the self-registration process and is available to answer visitor questions.

Thomson Ranger Station News

RECREATION AREAS AFFECTED BY FLOODING



This past month has led to some interesting events along the Mississippi. The Mississippi River Project prepared the recreation areas to open on April 12. The following week of non-stop rain put an end to the 2012 drought and forced Rangers to prepare and close most areas for flooding. The Thomson Rangers closed the Thomson Causeway Recreation Area, Bulger's Hollow Recreation Area, Lock & Dam #13 camping and boat ramp, and Cattail Slough boat ramp due to flood predictions. As the water begins to recede, Rangers will be working with project maintenance staff to repair the damaged pads, washed out shoreline and clean up debris that floated into the parks to allow for safe visitor access.

Anticipated Park Reopening Dates:

Thomson Causeway – May 1

Lock & Dam #13 Camping – May 1 (Boat Ramp and Observation Deck Open)

Bulger's Hollow Camping – May 3 (Boat Ramp and Day Use Open)

Cattail Slough Boat Ramp – May 7

For more information regarding closings or expected opening dates contact the Thomson Ranger Office at (815)259-3628.

IOWA STATE TURTLE RESEARCH CONTINUES AT THOMSON CAUSEWAY

For the Past 26 years Dr. Fred Janzen, with loyal groups of students, has been collecting data on turtle reproduction in the Thomson Causeway. Each spring as the group returns it becomes a topic of conversation for the campers as they watch students huddle around the campground counting nests, documenting hatch success and the predation rate. The goal of the research is to document how temperature variation within the campground can effect/influence the gender of turtles.

The group does not limit data collection to turtle nests. They can usually be seen checking nets in Potters Marsh where the catch mature turtles or on the Thomson Sand Prairie to document the various reptile populations. At any given time the group will have snakes, reptiles and large snapping turtle to discuss with curious visitors.

Mississippi River Visitor Center News

FIELD TRIP SEASON ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER



Springtime at the Visitor Center means field trips and lots of them. Hundreds of students from schools within a 30 mile radius venture to Locks and Dam 15 to learn about the importance of this great natural resource. Students can learn about how the locks and dams work, why they are here, and how the river connects the Midwest to the rest of the world.

Some schools may also choose to expand on their visit to the Locks and Dam by taking a ride on a local excursion boat called the Celebration Belle. This boat offers educational cruises that are staffed by rangers from the Mississippi River Project and offer a great way to get kids out on the water.



Muscatine Ranger Station News



CAMPGROUND PROGRAM

The first campground program of the season for the Muscatine area will be held Saturday, May 25 at 6:00 PM. This program will not be held at a campground but instead at the Fairport Fish Hatchery located at 3390 Hwy 22, Muscatine, IA 52761. Please meet at the hatchery to enjoy a tour from the Iowa DNR staff.

Quincy Ranger Station News

CHANGES TO BOAT CLASSES MADE NECESSARY BY HIGH WATER

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi River Project announces that the Quincy Park Rangers have made changes to the dates and location of the upcoming Illinois Safe Boating class being offered in the Quincy area. Classes offered in May will now be held at the Adams County Farm Bureau at 330 S. 36th St. Quincy, IL on Wednesday, May 15th and Thursday, May 16th. Classes will run from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. each night and **BOTH** sessions must be attended to successfully complete the class. Additional classes are scheduled for June 8th and July 13th and will be offered at the Americas Best Value Inn. Contact the Quincy Park Rangers at (217) 228-0890 to pre-register for this class or future classes.

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

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