



# Mississippi River Project



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

## Mississippi River Project, Back in Action, Ready for Winter

Despite the 16 day government shutdown that affected federal recreation across the nation, rangers on the Mississippi picked up where they left off and welcomed visitors just in time to wrap up the camping season. Although the temperatures may drop and the campgrounds “close” for the season it does not mean that recreation along the Mississippi River has to stop. Many outdoor and indoor recreational opportunities are still available to those who don’t mind the cold. Boat ramps and day use areas will be busy in late fall and winter for hunting season. Many fishermen also enjoy cool weather angling because different species of fish tend to bite as the water temperatures drop. Once we get colder temps for an extended period of time ice fishing also becomes a popular activity in many of the backwater areas along the river.



As for indoor recreation don’t forget about our Visitor Center located on Rock Island Arsenal Island at Locks and Dam 15. The Mississippi River Visitor Center stays open year round from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM seven days a week and offers a great view of boats locking on the river as well as provides a warm indoor location for eagle viewing on even the coldest of days. The Visitor Center staff has been working hard on some new updates the facility and should have them finished just in time for prime eagle watching during the upcoming winter months.

If you would like further information on winter recreational opportunities please feel free to call us at 309-794-5338 or e-mail [mvrodmn15@usace.army.mil](mailto:mvrodmn15@usace.army.mil) and we would be happy to help you out.

### “RANGER STEVE” HANGS UP HIS HAT

After 35+ years of federal service, Ranger Steve Vacek hung up his ranger hat on August 26<sup>th</sup> and put on his Mississippi Mud fishing hat to get a feel for retired life.

A devout Nebraska Cornhusker fan, and educated as a "Fighting Jackrabbit" at South Dakota State University, Steve started his federal career as a VISTA volunteer and joined the Rock Island District in 1979 when the Mississippi River Visitor Center was just preparing for its grand opening. He stayed with the Rock Island District as part of the Mississippi River project for the rest of his career and worked at the Project Office at Locks and Dam 14 for the last part of his time as a ranger.



Everyone who knew or met "Ranger Steve" remembers him. He is passionate about the Mississippi River, has educated literally thousands of visitors on its history and nuances, and taught them lifelong skills - like how to fish through his "Fish Iowa" programs and clinics he put on over the years. Always eager to learn new things, and never being shy, Steve has made many partnerships and positive contacts with our customers over the years. He is truly one of a kind, and will be missed by all that had the opportunity to interact with him over the years.

## Dubuque Ranger Station News

### WINTER CAMPING

Grant River and Blanding Landing Recreation Areas closed on October 27th, however, free winter camping is still available within the park as weather allows. Free winter camping is also welcomed at Pleasant Creek Recreation Area. Water and electric are not available for winter camping and the 14 day stay rule still applies. Feel free to give the Dubuque Park Rangers a call at 563-582-0881 if you have any questions about winter camping in our parks.

### DUBUQUE BALD EAGLE WATCH SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

- Outdoor viewing at Lock and Dam 11 from 9:00–4:00
- Live Eagle & Bird of Prey Programs by the University of Minnesota Raptor Center at 9:30, 12:15 & 3:00
- Pella Wildlife Co. – presenting on the differences between coyotes and wolves at 11:00 & 1:45
- Indoor Exhibits from 9:00 - 4:30 at the Grand River Center - Port of Dubuque
- Trolley rides from Grand River Center to the National Mississippi River Museum and the outdoor viewing area starting at 10:00am until 3:00pm.
- For more information call the Dubuque Ranger office: 563-582-0881

## Thomson Ranger Station News

### TRICK-OR-TREAT IN THE PARK WELCOMES VISITORS BACK AFTER SHUTDOWN



and gathered supplies for trick-or-treaters. Despite a large number of reservation cancellations and a murky weather forecast, the campground was nearly full for the big weekend. Kids, with parents in tow, fought the chilly temps and light rain to parade through the campground visiting the haunted campsites and collecting candy. With all the obstacles to overcome this year, the event was still a success with over 200 trick-or-treaters from our local community.

The Thomson Causeway campground was closed for 16 days due to the government shutdown. Upon re-opening on October 17th, the phones rang off the hook with questions regarding the annual Trick-Or-Treat weekend. With only two days to prepare the rangers quickly reopened the buildings, began spreading trick or treat information through local media outlets,



## WINTER CAMPING

Thomson Causeway closed on October 27th, however, free winter camping is still available within the park as weather allows. There is no winter camping allowed at Fisherman's Corner Recreation Area. Free winter camping is also welcomed at Bulger's Hollow and Lock and Dam 13 Recreation Areas. Water and electric are not available for winter camping and the 14 day stay rule still applies. Feel free to give the Thomson Park Rangers a call at 815-259-3628 if you have any questions about winter camping in our parks.



## CLINTON BALD EAGLE WATCH SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

- Outdoor viewing: Lock & Dam 13, 8:30-2:30
- Live Bird and Nature Programs: Clinton Community College, 10:00-2:00
- Exhibits: Clinton Community College from 9:00-2:00
- Free bus service from college to the outdoor viewing area.
- For more information call the Thomson Ranger office: 815-259-3628.

## Mississippi River Visitor Center News

### QUAD CITY BALD EAGLE DAYS

#### FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JANUARY 10-12

- QCCA Expo Center, 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois
- Hours: Friday 4:00-8:00, Saturday 10:00-8:00, Sunday 10:00-5:00
- Live Eagle & Bird of Prey Programs by The World Bird Sanctuary
- Special Attractions - Pella Wildlife Company and Niabi Zoo.
- For more information contact the Mississippi River Visitor Center 309-794-5338 or the QCCA 309-788-2543

### MISSISSIPPI RIVER VISITOR CENTER EAGLE WATCH / CLOCK TOWER TOURS JANUARY 4TH, 5TH, 25TH, & 26TH AND FEBRUARY 1ST, 2ND, 8TH, & 9TH

- Combination eagle watches and historical clock tower tours
- Saturday and Sunday times are: 9:00-10:30 and 12:30-2:00
- Reservations required. Group size is limited. For more information or to make reservations call the Visitor Center: 309-794-5338



## Muscatine Ranger Station News



### WINTER CAMPING

Shady Creek Recreation Area closed on October 27th, however, free winter camping is still available on the first eleven sites. There is no winter camping allowed at Clark's Ferry Recreation Area. Free winter camping is also welcomed at Andalusia Slough, Blanchard Island, and Ferry Landing Recreation Areas. Water and electric are not available for winter camping and the 14 day stay rule still applies. Feel free to give the Muscatine Park Rangers a call if you have any questions about winter camping in our parks. Our number is 563-263-7913.

### MUSCATINE BALD EAGLE WATCH

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

- Outdoor viewing from 9:00 to 3:00 at Pearl City Station, Lock & Dam 16, and Muscatine Boat Club
- Live Eagle programs at 9:30 & 11:00 at the Pearl City Station in Riverside Park
- Environmental exhibits inside the Pearl City Station located on the riverfront in Muscatine
- For more information call the Muscatine Ranger office: 563-263-7913

## Quincy Ranger Station News

As the summer recreation season has come to an end, the Quincy Rangers move right into the hunting season that is already upon us. Duck hunters have been busy at the ramps, as they put their final touches on their blinds and spread their decoys. The deer hunters will soon flock in and set up deer camp at Bear Creek, which has become a tradition for some groups ever since the Long Island could be hunted and you had to draw for tags.

Moving into the winter days also marks another round of Jr. Ranger programs and Eagle Watches. Quincy Rangers are anticipating having two schools interested in the programs and hope to start them after the students Christmas break, in early January. Rangers are also teaming up with the Quincy Area Visitors convention Bureau for this year's Great River Eagle Days, January 24-25. Indoor activities will be held at the Oakley Lindsay Civic Center with outdoor viewing at the Lock and Dam 21 both days.



### KEOKUK BALD EAGLE DAYS

#### SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JANUARY 18-19

- Indoor programs and Environmental Fair at the River City Mall, Keokuk, Iowa
- Live Eagle Programs Saturday 10:00-3:00 and Sunday 11:00-3:00
- Outdoor viewing along the River Front 8:30 – 4:30
- For more information call the Keokuk Chamber of Commerce: 1-800-383-1219

**QUINCY GREAT RIVER EAGLE DAYS**  
**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JANUARY 25-26**

- Indoor exhibits and events from 9:00 – 5:00 both days at the Oakley Lindsay Civic Center
- Outdoor viewing at Lock and Dam 21: 8:00 - 3:00 each day
- For more information call the Quincy Ranger office: 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,**

**Natural Resource Management Staff**

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