

MVD WATER SAFETY INITIATIVES

July 2024
THIRD QUARTER

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 [National Water Safety Program Gateway](#)

*"I got caught at Eau Galle
Recreation Area"*



Keep up the great work you're doing at our recreation areas, rivers, lakes, and visitor centers!

National Water Safety Team

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This issue:

MVK - PG3

MVP - PG8

MVR - PG11

MVS - PG17



VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Lake Greeson

Vicksburg District Water Safety PDT held their Annual Spring Meeting. This was the first face-to-face meeting since 2019 due to COVID and budget restraints. The members that were not able to drive to Lake Ouachita Field Office for the meeting attended through TEAMS. Also attending the meeting was Aaron Posner Chief, Technical Support Section Project Resources Management Branch and PAO Chief Christi Kilroy. The projects discussed each projects initiatives, our Annual Water Safety Award, and event that would be large enough and reach the most people that the Districts Water Safety Team would work. Amy Shultz and Diane Golden discussed

how to get new resources & a possible new water safety law in Arkansas. We attended the TEAMS meeting MVD Water Safety Program and National Water Safety Program update and mandatory water safety training now required for all employees who work around the water per updated EM 385-1-1 – Erica Nabers. We then traveled to DeGray Lake to work a Boots On The Ground (BOTG) drowning that had recently occurred.

Diane Golden was requested to return to Nashville Elementary school and do 2 programs on how to recycle paper. A few children had a chance to make their own paper after being shown the process. Golden was able to incorporate Water Safety into the message in a little different perspective than a normal water safety program. By recycling we reduce the number of materials that go to our landfills and trash. They could also be thrown into our streams, creeks, & waterways.

NRS Diane Golden spent the entire day of the Solar Eclipse at Parker Creek on Lake Greeson. The eclipse gave the perfect opportunity to talk about water safety.

The moon affects the flow of water, which opened a doorway to provide many impromptu water safety discussions to small groups though out the day reaching more than 100 individuals and groups.



Teamwork

VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Lake Greeson, Millwood Lake and Dierks Lake partnered to provide the FCC Preschool in Murfreesboro a Water Safety/Alligator Safety on 15 May. Millwood presented the alligator safety and LGFO presented Water Safety Programs and Bobber the Water Safety Dog made an appearance for the first program.



Education In Motion (Lake Ouachita, DeGray Lake, Lake Ouachita) May 10th & 17th Magic Springs Theme Park hosted STEM education programs for school groups across Arkansas and neighboring states. Total reached with the 2 days of the event totaled 2,255.



Draft Days was a 2-day event that 1,843 students from multiple schools came to see what careers were available to them in various fields. Rangers from all 3 of the AR Vicksburg District worked the event.



I got caught...



VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Lake Ouachita

Lake Ouachita Natural Resource Specialists, Pam Herrin, and Amy Shultz, presented environmental and water safety programs to 256 fifth graders from Jessieville and Fountain Lake Schools at Entergy Park for Arbor Day.



Lake Ouachita Natural Resource Specialists Jon Munz and Shawn McBay presented Backyard Critters and Water Safety programs to a group of 95 (K-8th grade) students at St. John's Catholic School and to 74 third and fourth grade students at Cutter Morning Star School. Shawn McBay pictured with snake.

Lake Ouachita Avery School programs pictured on right is Pam Herrin and on left is Amy Shultz.



VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

DeGray Lake



The 9th Annual Duck Derby was held at the Lower Lake Area. This was the first time for it to be held at DeGray Lake. Arkansas Game and Fish, Bismarck EMT, Clark County Sheriff's, Clark County Firefighters, and NRS's Jake Huey, Gracie Garner and Kolin Cogburn helped work the event. There were about 300 in attendance with 3000 plastic ducks put in the water. A net was stretched across the lower Caddo River to catch the ducks, which were numbered. The 1st 10 to the net got prizes.

NRS Jeffrey Arthur presented water safety and wildlife programs to Rug Ratz preschool group.



DeGray Lake partnered with Keeping DeGray Lake Beautiful, Mt. Saint Mary's, Veolia, and Lake Ouachita to present programs to Arkadelphia 5th Grade students. Water safety, wildlife, environmental, fishing, and water quality testing were covered. 120 students in attendance.



VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Mississippi Lakes

Arkabutla Lake, Enid Lake, and the MS Project Office participated in Wear Your Life Jacket to Work-Day.



NRM Specialists and Park Rangers from Arkabutla Lake, Enid Lake, Grenada Lake, Sardis Lake, and the MS Project Office staffed a water safety booth at the Bass Pro Shops-Memphis Pyramid during Safe Boating Week 18-23 MAY. Staff answered questions and handed out water safety items. Approximately 400 direct contacts were made.

NRM Specialists from Sardis Lake, Enid Lake, and the MS Project Office partnered with the Lafayette County Soil Conservation Office to host their annual Conservation Field Day with Oxford City Schools on 16 MAY. Several agencies were on hand to promote outdoor education. USACE made 200 water safety contacts at the event.



ST. PAUL DISTRICT (MVP)

Mississippi Headwaters Project

Staff at all 6 Headwaters Project sites (Gull, Leech, Winnibigoshish, Pokegama, and Sandy) conducted water safety programming over the Memorial Day weekend including the “I got caught program,” direct contacts while on patrol, and an orange pine cone and medallion hunt for water safety goodie bags.



Rangers gave out several water safety goodie bags, with more activity on the weekends, including partnering with local Aquatic Invasive Species Inspectors to disseminate a water safety message and materials.



Eau Galle Recreation Area



Staff at Eau Galle Recreation Area have been busy presenting “I Got Caught” certificates to adults wearing life jackets this season.



ST. PAUL DISTRICT (MVP)

Lake Ashtabula/Baldhill Dam

Staff have been attending local community safety festivals including Grand Forks Safe Kids event (Grand Forks, ND) and the Brookings Water Safety Festival.



Now that camping season is in full swing, the team has been implementing weekend water safety programming.

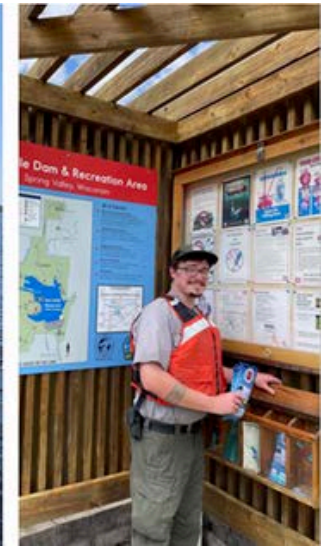
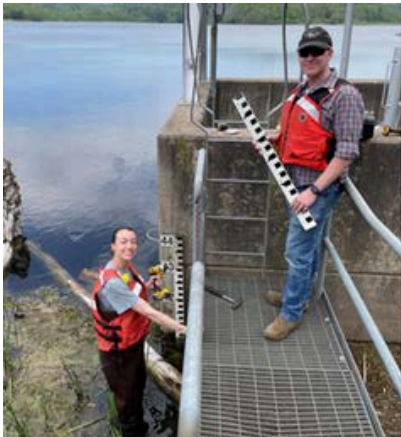
Water Safety Information was presented at a Lake Ashtabula Lake Association meeting.



ST. PAUL DISTRICT (MVP)

Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day

St. Paul District Recreation and Natural Resources Branch staff all participated.



ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Saylorville Lake



On March 10th Park Rangers Jones and Phipps, as well as a volunteer, attended the Iowa Wild Crash's Birthday Party at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. Bobber appeared with many other area mascots to participate in activities such as Broom Ball and giving away shirts and stickers. A volunteer ran a table with water safety information and giveaways to visitors on the concourse. 750 water safety contacts were made.

On April 28th Ranger Phipps hosted a lesson with Girl Scout Troop #1281 from Ankeny Iowa. The scouts were given a couple different lessons including mammals, birds, and of course water safety. The troops learned "Reach, Throw, Row, Go for help" and how to tell if someone in the water is in trouble. A life jacket fitting lesson was also included. Ten scouts and their parents were in attendance.



On May 9th Rangers and a volunteer from Saylorville and Red Rock attended an ICubs game at Principal Park in Des Moines. Rangers set up a Water Safety table on the concourse to hand out water safety information. Bobber was also able to throw the first pitch during the game. Tables also had a new water safety informational wrap on them in the concourse area of the stadium, and outfield banners displayed a water safety message. This is a great way to spread our water safety message to many people at once. Water Safety contacts were 2000 people between the concourse table and from Bobber throwing the first pitch.



On May 17th Rangers from Saylorville Lake participated in Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day. Rangers took photos in their life jackets, which were then posted to social media pages. This showed the public the importance of wearing our life jackets so we can all go home safely to our families.



ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Coralville Lake Project

Coralville Lake held program days every week during the month of May for local community schools. Each week, approximately 200 children and chaperones attended water safety, Devonian Fossil Gorge, and environmental habitat programs led by park rangers. Children learned about the importance of wearing life jackets and practiced emergency scenarios where life jackets are important.



Coralville Lake installed new volleyball nets with water safety messaging at two of our day use areas. New stencils were also created and used at all our beaches and boat ramps on project.

Park Rangers attended the Cedar Rapids Rock, Mineral, and Fossil show and promoted water safety to attendees. We incorporated water safety messaging by using our famous Dunkleosteus mascot, Dudley, as a life jacket model and handed out water safety items. There were over 2100 people that visited our booth.



We've attended (5) community events; Earth Expo, Beach Daze, Penn Elementary Science Night, Cedar Falls STEM event, and the Burr Oak Prairie Preview. At each event, our booth focused on water safety, the history of Coralville Lake, and handed out various water safety items. We contacted over 1200 people at all the events.



Coralville Lake enlisted the help of Park Ranger B to help with Social Media efforts to promote water safety. Ranger B has been popular on our Facebook page and will make multiple appearances throughout the summer to help share the importance of life jacket safety!

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Illinois Waterway Project

Boat patrols have resumed on the Illinois River. On May 26th the patrol boat was taken out for the first time this season. With last season being plagued by multiple mechanical issues, the boat received a full service at the marina prior to launching.

October will mark the 30th anniversary of this patrol boat on the Illinois River. Several upgrades were made to the boat including a new Garmin unit to replace the aged Humminbird, and whale tails being added to the outboard motors to help the boat to get up on plane. Rangers Kevin Ewbank and Bob Petruney used the first boat patrol of the season to address a safety hazard along the river.

On an island owned by USACE, a rope swing was observed hanging over the river. The tree limb supporting the rope swing was sawed off, leaving nowhere for a rope swing to be attached to the tree. Another rope swing affixed to a rock outcrop was cut midway up, with rangers not being able to safely reach the top of the swing to remove the entire rope.



Narrated Tour of the Illinois River Resume for 2024 - USACE in collaboration with the Sainte Genevieve Riverboat, an antique paddle-wheeler, resumed guided tours of the Illinois Waterway. Five tours have already happened, with another 14 scheduled throughout the rest of the summer and into early fall. Rangers narrate the tour "Lock and Lunch" which is an opportunity for the passengers to learn about and lock through Starved Rock Lock and Dam. Participants learn about the history of the Illinois Waterway, including the creation of the lock and dam system for commerce and transportation.

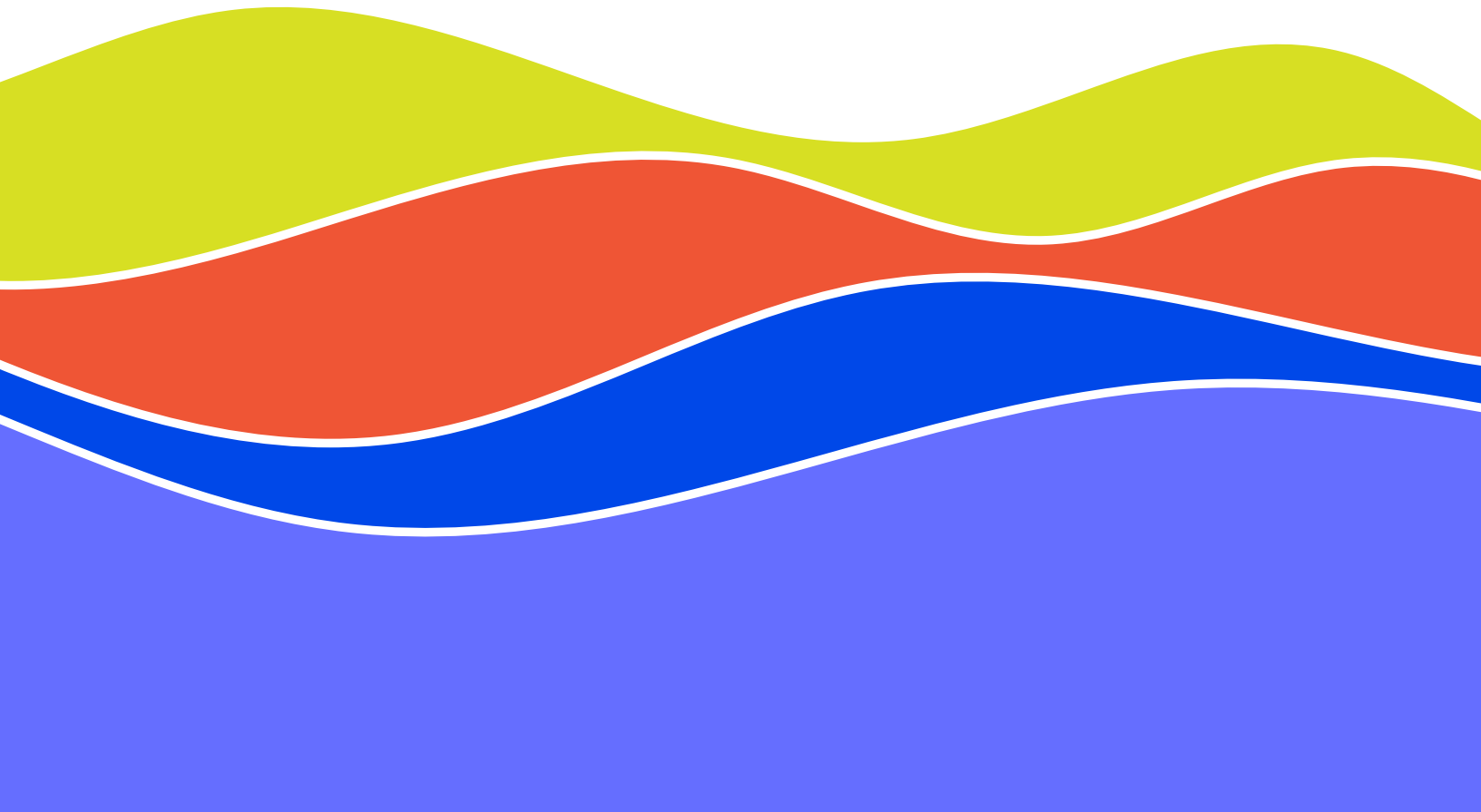
Peoria Clean Water Festival - Rangers Fisher, Ernenputsch, and Petruney attended the annual Clean Water Festival at the Peoria Civic Center. The event caters to middle and junior high school students from the greater Peoria area. Over 1,000 students were in attendance. Water Safety materials were brought for an estimated 1,000 students, and by the last hour of the event the booth was almost cleaned out of materials. A working model of a Lock and Dam was demonstrated, and students learned about lock and dam safety, and the inner workings of a lock and dam.



ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Illinois Waterway Project

Kayakers Self Rescue on Illinois River- Rangers Sarah Fisher and Bob Petruney observed an upside-down kayak with arms emerging and flailing from the sides. It was ascertained that a kayaker had capsized and was stuck inside the kayak having trouble freeing themselves of the boat. Several other kayakers were present, though did not attempt to render aid to the downed kayaker upon fear of capsizing themselves. After freeing themselves from the kayak, the boater unsuccessfully attempted multiple times to get back in the boat. Each attempt resulted in the boat capsizing on top of the kayaker's head, and the kayaker being pushed under the boat repeatedly. Due to a sand bar in the way, rangers could not get the boat closer than approximately 15 feet from the boaters. Rangers talked the group through swimming the capsized boat to a nearby shore and assisting the kayaker with emptying the water out of the boat to resume their paddling trip. Rangers called the company who had rented out the kayaks to alert them to the issue, in hopes that future customers will be better educated on what to do if they capsize on the river. It was also suggested that the concessionaire purchase a jet ski or other craft to be deployed to incidents, as the concessionaire does not have a motorized vessel for emergencies.



ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Mississippi River Project

Throughout the spring Park Rangers participated on the Celebration Belle's Education Cruises on the Mississippi in the Quad Cities area. During the cruise participants learn local river history while on the outside decks. Inside the Corps gives a few interpretive programs such as life on a towboat and water safety. School groups are the primary audience for these cruises and there were 1,080 total participants this spring.



Every Saturday in April, project staff instructed at four public boating safety classes held at the Mississippi River Project Office. The Corps partners with Illinois DNR and US Coast Guard Auxiliary during these free classes. Topics include: basics of your boat, getting underway, rules of the water, legal requirements and emergency situations. Participants who successfully complete the class are issued a Boater Safety Card recognized by all states. A total of 71 people attended with everyone passing the class.



On May 18th Park Rangers and Bobber celebrated Armed Forces Day on the Rock Island Arsenal. The day started out with some running races where Bobber cheered on the kids before preparing to race against his fellow mascots. Bobber made a pit stop to brush up on his knot tying skills with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. The rest of the event was spent at the water safety booth handing out stickers and other goodies to participants. Around 300 people attended the event.



The Mississippi River Visitor Center hosted many field trips that Park Rangers gave tours and programs for students nearing the end of the school year. Students took lock and dam tours, learned about mammals, participated in water safety activities, and even played some Jr. Ranger Jeopardy. More than 1,300 students came in for a visit.

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Lake Red Rock Project



On 24 MAY, interpretive staff and volunteers teamed with Iowa DNR officers to provide water safety messaging during the annual “Helmets and Hotdogs” event in Knoxville. The Knoxville Police Department organized the event and teamed with local sponsors/donors to offer free bike helmets to area school children, give them the chance to win

several donated bikes, and provided grilled hot dogs for lunch. At the USACE/DNR station, children played a Water Safety “Plinko” game and win water safety-related prizes and had the chance to meet Bobber the Water Safety Dog. Approximately 350 children and their parents attended the event.



To kick off National Safe Boating Week, members of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 4 from Des Moines provided free vessel safety checks for boaters at the Whitebreast Rec. Area ramp on 20 MAY. Bobber was also on hand to visit with participants during the event.



To commemorate “Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day” on 17 MAY, staff took part in “photo shoots” wearing their PFDs around the project. The photos were shared on social media to promote water safety and encourage life jacket wear

In late May, approximately 2 boxes of water safety placemats were distributed to 15 area restaurants. The local restaurants were very willing to accept the donations, and the placemats provide a great avenue to share a water safety message with their patrons.



Interpretive staff and guest speakers hosted the 45th annual “Outdoor Days” event for 5th and 6th graders 06-08 MAY. Weather conditions were favorable for all three days of the event. Programs included topics on wetland ecology, water safety, wildlife, geocaching, and powerhouse tours. USACE hosted the event in partnership with the Marion County Conservation Board, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Missouri River

Energy Services. The lake’s Education Host Volunteer Natalie Mong and retired Park Ranger Mark Pollastrini also assisted with presenting programs. Approximately 441 students and teachers participated from five area schools.

ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Carlyle Lake

In April, Carlyle Lake Project park rangers actively visited three local high schools to promote water safety awareness. Through fun, interactive challenges, students learned essential skills for staying safe on the water. Excel Bottling Company of Breese, Illinois generously providing t-shirts and stickers to incentivize student participation. A total of 985 individuals participated in 23 separate presentations, collectively making a significant impact on the community.



On May 16, during a monthly safety meeting, Carlyle Lake team members reviewed essential elements of water safety. New Pathways Interns received instruction on the proper use of a life ring and throw bag. In addition, the Carlyle Lake staff celebrated Where Your Life Jacket to Work Day with a visit from COL Pannier.



This spring, Carlyle Lake park rangers teamed up with six local radio stations (WDLJ, WKRV, WJBD, WGEL, WMIX, and WCXO.) to record public service announcements in preparation for the recreation season. These water safety messages will be broadcast from Memorial Day through Labor Day.



With the support of numerous local partners, Carlyle Lake park rangers conducted water safety patrols throughout Memorial Day weekend. Visitors who were caught wearing life jackets, both on the water and on the sand, were rewarded. A total of 167 visitors received either "I Got Caught Wearing My Life Jacket" Campaign t-shirts or ice cream coupons provided by DQ Grill & Chill of Carlyle, Illinois.



ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Wappapello Lake

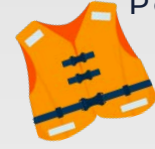
Jack Miller Memorial Kids Fun Day - Jack Miller Memorial Kid's Fun Day took place on June 1, 2024 at the Spillway Recreation Area. It was done in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation, Wal Mart, Millie's, and Friends of Wappapello Lake. Participants consisted of children ages 5.-14 years old. Activities included fishing, water safety games, and a cookout. Door prizes and trophies awarded to winners of various age categories. 65 attended.



Several folks have been caught by Ranger Jefferson and rewarded because they were caught wearing their life jackets.



Distribution of Water Safety Pizza Stickers (5,000) during Memorial Day Weekend to Dominoes, Pizza Hut, Godfathers, Little Caesars, Pizza Inn, and Rhodes 101 (Wappapello, Dexter, and Poplar Bluff).



Safety Messages on Electronic Marquees each major holiday weekend from Memorial Day to Labor Day (Poplar Bluff, Dexter, and Sikeston)



ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Rend Lake

On 8 June 2024, the Rend Lake team hosted the annual Beach Blast event at South Sandusky Beach. Park Rangers facilitated water safety games, hosted a sand sculpture contest, and gave away prizes. The Sesser Fire Protection District and Abbott EMS brought their unique lifesaving equipment for participants to look at. The Air Evac Life team 11 landed 2 helicopters for beachgoers to see! Despite rainy weather, 228 beachgoers participated in the annual water safety celebration!



The Rend Lake ISOP team facilitated a water safety training as part of the onsite Volunteer Orientation on 2 April. The team highlighted new additions in EM 385-1-1 regarding water safety training.

The Rend Lake ISOP team participated in the Rend Lake College Career Connection event on 12 April. The team discussed the “Many Hats of the Corps” and interpreted the USACE mission and water safety for 93 local high school students.



Since the beginning of the recreation season, the Rend Lake ISOP team, including new student interns have been conducting water safety programs at the beaches and other recreation areas. The team has also done several roving programs throughout the campgrounds for a total of 666 water safety contacts since the beginning of the recreation season.



ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Rivers Project Office

3rd Annual REC Fest -The National Great Rivers Museum (NGRM) hosted the third annual REC Fest on 18 May to promote safe recreation along the Mississippi River for the summer season reaching 1,700 event attendees. More than 25 organizations provided activities and information related to safe recreation, conservation, and environmental education. Notable attractions included open tours of Melvin Price Locks and Dam, live animal presentations, rock climbing, fishing/casting, water safety, and archery lessons. A mascot parade attracted guests of all ages featuring Bobber the Water Safety Dog, Fredbird of the St. Louis Cardinals, Smokey the Bear, and Blazer of Lewis and Clark Community College. Additionally, water-safety themed goody bags were distributed to children that visited at least 10 booths and completed their adventure passport.



Fishing Fair - Park Rangers and NGRM staff provided general and water safety support at the 35th Annual Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair on 8 June. The event was hosted at Pere Marquette State Park and organized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Approximately 5,000 guests (including 2,000 children) attended the event. We directly engaged an estimated 900 visitors throughout the day at our booth, which included water safety discussions, life jacket fitting, and a drunk/dizzy goggle obstacle course. Hundreds of water safety-themed gear were given out at the event.

Park rangers, staff, and volunteers participated in the 157th Annual Alton Memorial Day Parade on 29 May, the nation's longest consecutive running Memorial Day Parade, with a themed safety-boat-float and special appearance by Bobber the Water Safety Dog. Over 2,000 water safety-themed ring flyers were distributed among 7,200 participants. The Meeting of the Rivers Foundation also provided 'Life Saver' candies for volunteers to distribute to parade goers as well.



Wellness Paddles - The Rivers Project and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary hosted Wellness Series paddling/kayaking programs throughout the spring in partnership with the Audubon Center at Riverlands and the Mississippi River Water Trail Association. Six public kayaking sessions were held engaging 30 paddlers on proper water safety practices, kayaking 101 skills, and how to fit/wear a PFD.

ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Lake Shelbyville

Main Street to Corps Day on May 9, 2024 brought over 350 students from Shelbyville Elementary for a day of outdoor fun. 1st graders spent their time at the beach playing water safety games and learning about the importance of wearing a life jacket and swimming with a buddy. 3rd graders at Lithia Marina all practiced finding, and putting on, the correct size life jacket. These two groups had nearly 200 direct water safety contacts.



April 4, 2024 A Water Safety Task Force Meeting was held at Lake Shelbyville to discuss water safety updates and how to

promote water safety at Lake Shelbyville. Local sheriff's deputies, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, USACE staff, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and local partners were in attendance.

Ten comfort station doors were recently wrapped at Lake Shelbyville at various boat ramps and two beaches. The doors display water safety messages.



In support of National Safe Boating Week, help May 18th- 24th. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary was present the entire week at Dam West Recreation Area at Lake Shelbyville. They performed 52 Vessel and Paddlecraft Exams (43 of Passed, and 9 failed)

