

# MVD

## WATER SAFETY INITIATIVES

# FIRST QUARTER

**DECEMBER  
2024**

Prepared by

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National Water Safety Program Gateway



The zombie Ranger Danger attended The Bossier Arts Council's annual Zombie Walk with her popular "Wheel of Doom" which told zombies how they met their demise, and educated them on how they could potentially avoid that fate in the future.

## National Water Safety Team

Pam Doty - *Program Manager*

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Romanda Walker - *Public Affairs Rep*

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Amanda Kruse - *Special Projects Coordinator*

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Erica Nabers - *MVD Rep*

Jenna Conner - *NAD Rep*

Tana Wilson - *POD & NWD Rep*

Emily Jones - *SAD Rep*

Pam Bowie - *SPD Rep*

Abby Jones - *SWD Rep*

### This issue:

MVK - PG3-PG4

MVR - PG5-PG9

MVP - PG10

MVS - PG11-PG15



Always wear your life jacket!







# VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

## Lake Greeson

NRS Diane Golden and Brandon Carmack manned a Water Safety Booth at the “Golden Gathering” Event at Nashville Arkansas City Park. The annual event is for citizens aged 55 and older. The 4-hour event provides live music, information booths, games including bingo, prizes, and lunch free of charge to all attending.



NRS Reid Hellums partnered with Millwood Lake NRS Will Posey to present Water Safety Programs to students at Murfreesboro Public School. Two water safety programs were presented, the first program was presented to K-6th graders. Reid Hellums was Bobber the Water Safety Dog, Hellums enthusiasm always entertains while educating children. The 2nd program was presented to 7th – 9th graders where Hellums and Posey discussed why it is still important to wear a life jacket even though it is not legally required for them.

## DeGray Lake & Lake Ouachita

Lake Ouachita Pathways Student, Johnathan Bates along with DeGray Lake Natural Resource Specialist, Jeffrey Arthur hosted a water safety and recreation information table and visited with over 300 people during the Hot Springs Water Resources Festival, a partnership with Hot Springs National Park Service. The festival was held on Arlington Lawn in Downtown Hot Springs.





# VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

## Mississippi Project Areas

A Ranger from Sardis Lake presented a Water Safety program to “Excel By 5” students in New Albany, MS. “Excel By 5” is a community-based program to develop children to be prepared to start school at age 5.

Sardis Lake presented a Water Safety Program to 30 students at Hillcrest Preschool located in Pontotoc, MS.

Grenada Lake’s Visitor Center has elementary school children making water safety Christmas ornaments to decorate the tree inside the Visitor Center. This activity is currently active in the month of DEC 2024.



The Bossier Arts Council hosted its annual Zombie Walk on October 12th, 2024, from 4pm-9pm. Just like any arts festival, there are families contests, food trucks, activities, booths, live music, but at this event there is a twist- everyone is a zombie!

Attendees are in their best undead attire as they roam the streets of the market. The zombie Ranger Danger was there with her popular “Wheel of Doom” which told zombies how they met their demise, and educated them on how they could potentially avoid that fate in the future. A crowd favorite was Doom #12 “Unknown- You were swimming alone, no one will ever know what happened.” A great reminder to every zombie in attendance to play it safe and stick with the hoard! Ranger Danger handed out tools and information on how to keep from becoming a zombie when in and around water to the hundreds of zombies in attendance.

[www.facebook.com/sbczombiewalk](http://www.facebook.com/sbczombiewalk)



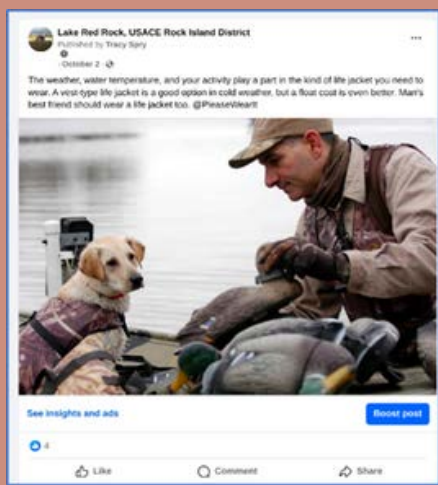
# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)



## Lake Red Rock Project



Interpretive staff took part in the new Fire Safety event at Pleasantville Elementary School on October 7th. While the lake's booth at the event focused on being safe around campfires in conjunction with the event's theme, staff shared various water safety giveaway items to the young participants and their families.



Lake Red Rock continued its "Water Safety Wednesday" Facebook posts after the recreation season. Most of the content was provided via the Please Wear It Facebook page which offers many messages pertinent to all seasons of the year.



To incorporate a water safety message during the holiday season, interpretive staff set up a tree in the visitor center decorated with water safety key chains, various boats and other nautical ornaments, mini life jackets made from craft foam, stickers, decoupaged ornaments with water safety messages, pens, and other related items.



Lake Red Rock purchased ad space in the Pella Travel Guide and the Marion County Travel Guide for the 2025 season to share a water safety message with potential lake visitors. Both ads promoted the various life jacket loaner stations available in the parks. The Pella Travel Guide ad featured members Pella's Central College football team wearing life jackets!



### Take Time To InVest

Life Jacket Loaner Stations Available:

- Whitebreast Boat Ramp
- Marina Cove Boat Ramp
- South Overlook Boat Ramp
- Howell Station Landing
- Whitebreast Beach
- North Overlook Beach
- Red Rock Visitor Center

[www.lakeredrock.org](http://www.lakeredrock.org)

### Need a Life Jacket? Borrow One!

**LIFE JACKET LOANER STATIONS AVAILABLE**  
Infant, Child, Youth, and Adult Sizes  
Borrow for Free and Return at End of Day

**Loaner Station Locations:**

• South Overlook Ramp	• Whitebreast Beach
• Whitebreast Ramp	• N. Overlook Beach
• Marina Cove Ramp	• Visitor Center
• Howell Station Landing	

[www.lakeredrock.org](http://www.lakeredrock.org)



While many fair-weather boaters finish their season around Labor Day, there are still many fishermen that use the lake during the fall months. To ensure off-season boaters still have access to life jackets, the PFDs at Corps managed boat ramp loaner stations remained available until the courtesy docks were removed for the season. Many off-season boaters are men that fit the demographic age of the most common drowning victims (men aged 18-54, in smaller watercraft, boating alone).



# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Coralville Lake Project

Coralville Lake Park Rangers conducted multiple project tours where students learned about Water Safety, the Devonian Fossil Gorge, and Coralville Lake History. 4 different schools participated with over 265 students taking part in the programs. The instruction included dam safety, warning students about the dangers of water and swimming near dams.



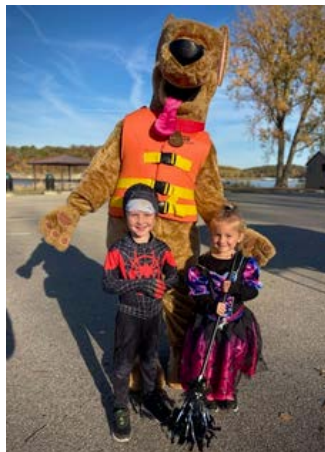
Park Rangers improved the 7 permanent life jacket loaner stations across the Coralville Lake Project. Upgrades included new hooks for life jackets, allowing for easier access for users, and room for life jacket donations. In addition, new signs were designed and implemented, showcasing clearer instructions and an easier-to-read format. The placement of the signs on the life jacket loaner stations established a dedicated area for the posting of custom monthly water safety messages.



Coralville Lake Park Rangers conducted in person classroom visits where students learned about Water Safety and the "Role of a Park Ranger". There were 152 students who took part in the programs. The instruction within classrooms included water safety activities, which engaged the students and helped them retain the information.



Staff hosted the 1st annual Halloween Campground Trick or Treat event in West Overlook Campground on 19 OCT. Park Rangers, Bobber, local first responders, and campers handed out candy and water safety giveaways to approximately 1025 visitors.



Coralville Lake promoted weekly water safety messages on their Facebook platform. The posts this fall reached 11,667 users, with 392 users directly interacting with the content





# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Mississippi River Project

On September 16, Mississippi River Project Rangers presented navigation and water safety programs at the Tri-County Conservation Day in Savanna, IL. This is a multi-agency event where classes rotate around to different presenters in the park throughout the day. At the Corps location students learned about properly wearing a life jacket and how large vessels such as towboats navigate the locks on the Mississippi River. As an added bonus, all 4th grade students attending received an Every Kid Outdoors pass.

In October, Shady Creek and Thomson Causeway recreation areas held Trick or Treat events. During these events, roads are temporarily closed so families can safely Trick or Treat throughout the campgrounds. Rangers and volunteers are also busy handing out water safety goodies and other treats.



On October 23, operators from Locks and Dam 15 staffed a water safety table at the Rock Island Arsenal's Boo on the Rock Trunk or Treat Event. Different military commands on base set up Halloween themed booths both inside and outside Heritage Hall that families can trick or treat at.



Park Rangers presented 13 Locks and Dam tours in the fall. Tour groups learn about how the locks and dams work and also leave with a boating and water safety message as there are some unique hazards present around these structures.



# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Illinois Waterway Project

This fall concluded the 2024 Lock and Lunch tour series with the Ste Genevieve Antique Paddle-wheeler Riverboat. Due to popularity, tours this fall were increased from monthly to weekly, with Illinois Waterway River Rangers providing interpretation and Water Safety information to approximately 1,000 passengers. Passengers depart from Ottawa, IL and lock through Starved Rock Lock and Dam on their way to disembark at Starved Rock State Park. A second group of passengers boards the boat at the State Park and takes the boat back through the lock and up to Ottawa, IL. The boat holds approximately 120 people, for a total of up to 240 guests per day.



Monitored Lock Traffic in order to award “I Got Caught” certificates and giveaways. There was a large presence of “Loopers” completing the Great Loop throughout the fall. Due to temporary closures of several locks on the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway, Looper traffic came through later this fall than previous years.



The Illinois Waterway Visitor Center continued to promote the USACE Jr Ranger Booklet. Booklets are available online, and there are always several copies printed out behind the desk for individuals wanting to participate. We had multiple families complete their Jr Ranger certificates, with one family of 5 participating that had done over 100 other Jr Ranger programs throughout federal lands. We found an old cache of the Jr Ranger Patches, and started giving those out alongside the Jr Ranger plastic badges that are otherwise available at our site.





# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Saylorville Lake

Ranger Phipps participated in the Fishing with the Fuzz event at Easter Lake. The activity was sponsored by the Des Moines Police Department and offered youth the opportunity to fish and have some fun. Police officers as well as conservation officers from the Iowa DNR assisted kids with fishing and measuring their catch for the chance to win prizes. USACE assisted with providing life jackets for water safety purposes on the docks, helped remove fish from hooks, and distributed water safety freebies.



Park Rangers Phipps and Drendel attended an Iowa Wild hockey game at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines.

The Rangers ran a booth in the concourse area with water safety items and talked to spectators about a range of water safety topics.



Rangers Phipps and Schabillion participated in the Prevention of Childhood Injury Conference, hosted by Safe Kids of Greater Des Moines and Blank Children's Hospital.

The conference aimed to equip statewide injury prevention specialists with innovative strategies for community education.

Ranger Phipps delivered a presentation highlighting USACE efforts in water safety and the programs available to the community. This presentation showcased the Corps' commitment to promoting safety and preventing injuries through education and outreach.

Ranger Phipps hosted a group of Girl Scouts at the Saylorville Lake Visitor Center, where the scouts learned about water safety, local wildlife, and the lake's ecosystem. This provided a valuable opportunity for the girls to explore the lake and deepen their understanding of natural resources, inspiring them to become responsible stewards of the environment. While the girls came to learn about the lake and local wildlife, a water safety lesson was added on. They learned how to properly fit a life jacket, as well as the principles of Reach, Throw, Row, Go for Help.





# ST. PAUL DISTRICT (MVP)

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Mississippi Headwater's Project, Cross Lake Recreation Area - Crosslake Days takes place throughout the city of Cross Lake every fall with family activities, music, and a town-wide chili cookoff. Project staff, volunteers, and volunteers with Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway help serve chili and also give a water safety message to all the visitors along with handing out water safety goodies.



Project staff visited a local elementary school to give out 68 EKO passes to 4th grade students. Water safety was discussed with the students and the movie Safe Passage was played while passes were disbursed.

The St. Paul District water safety team designed water safety zip top bags which are intended to target the adult male audience. Rangers will utilize the bags as a tool to engage visitors at fish cleaning stations, boat landings, and other locations about water safety. The baggies can be used for fish fillets, dry storage, etc.

*(Idea credit: Jeff Steere, Mississippi Headwaters Project, Section Supervisor)*





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Carlyle Lake

Park Rangers created a water safety Christmas tree titled “Splashin’ into the Holidays” to put on display at the Festival of Trees in Carlyle, IL. Spectators viewed the water safety tree and were challenged to find the hidden park ranger for water safety prizes.

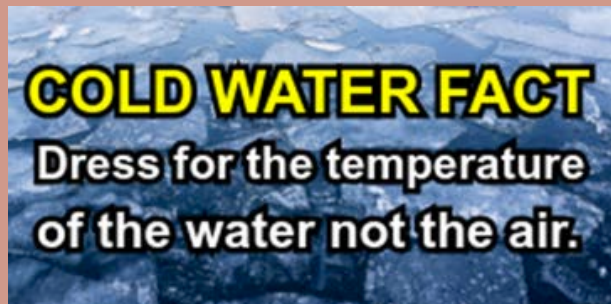


The Carlyle Lake Haunted Trail was held October 18 & 19. The USACE made sure to add in a water safety-themed display along the trail to haunt the over 1,500 participants throughout the weekend.

All five billboards, located in high visitation areas of the Carlyle Lake Project, were transitioned from summer to winter messaging to remind the public of various general and water safety tips. Messages include, but are not limited to, “Lake Ice Is Never Safe” And “Avoid Hypothermia Dress in Layers”.



Posted water safety messaging on Illinois Highway 27 digital reader board and on all day-use bulletin boards.





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Clarence Cannon Dam and Mark Twain Lake Project



The 2024 Halloween Walk was a huge success. The dedication and efforts of the USACE team and 4 contributing partners resulted in an attendance over 8,000. The FOREST Council, Ralls County health Department, Missouri Department of Conservation and the M.W. Boudreaux Visitor Center and Educational Resource Committee along with countless volunteers made this popular event successful. Tickets for the event sold out and campsites for the event booked within 4 hours. Partners utilize the proceeds from the ticket sales to fund special events throughout the year to include the Clarence Cannon Dam Firework Show, Kids Fishing Day, Ben Sapp Memorial Shed Hunt, Fish Habitat, Annual Halloween Walk and Live Exhibits at the Visitor Center.





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Wappapello Lake

On 5 October 2024

Park Ranger

Andrew Jefferson  
staffed a booth at  
the Annual Home  
Depot Safety Day in  
Poplar Bluff, MO.



On 12, 19, and 26 October 2024 Friends of Wappapello Lake Association in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staffed a booth at the Greenville Jack O Lantern Jubilee which was held in the Greenville Campground. Campers decorated their campsites and recreational vehicles as part of the festivities. All visitors who dared to show up received water safety goody bags and plenty of candy. 8,264 attended.

On 29 November 2024 the 32nd Annual Festival of Lights Auto Tour commenced. It was relocated back to Redman Creek Campground East. This event was open weekends only until 8 December 2024. It will be opened nightly 13-25 December 2024 5pm-9pm. Visitors are provided free candy canes and the opportunity to vote on the best decorated site. It is called the "People's Choice Award" 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place. Winners receive a monetary award. It is done in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Friends of Wappapello Lake Association.





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Rend Lake

The Rend Lake team partnered with local businesses and organizations to host the annual Trick or Treat the Visitor Center on Tuesday, October 29. This event was open to the public but specifically designed to meet the needs of pre-k, home school, and special needs participants. The event featured a water safety scavenger hunt, environmental education, and other activities that interpreted agency missions.



The Rend Lake ISOP team participated in the annual Southern Illinois Conservation Fair. Park Ranger Breanna facilitated the “Beavers: Nature’s Engineers” program that focused on water safety at lakes and other reservoirs as well as STEM education.



As part of the Every Kid Outdoors program, the Rend Lake ISOP team has been traveling to schools to promote recreation at water safety. Park Ranger Breanna visited Giant City School on November 15 for a Life Jacket Engineering program in the 4th grade classroom. 19 students worked in teams to design, construct, and test various life jacket designs. In December, the students took a field trip to the Rend Lake Visitor Center to learn more about several agencies missions including water safety.





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Rivers Project Office

Through Lewis and Clark Community College, the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) hosted Water Festival on Wheels, a mobile version of the beloved Water Festival for 5th grade students. The event connects elementary school students to water, their local environment, and organizations that help conserve the environment. Several regional schools participated in Water Festival on Wheels through attending a field day at schools and a community science fair.

The Rivers Project relaunched the Every Kid Outdoors (EKO) Field Day this fall at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary as well as expanded the program to Clarksville, Missouri at Lock and Dam #24. The EKO program provides 4th grade students the opportunity to visit public lands through providing free bus transportation and an 'America the Beautiful' pass, all while inspiring a future generation of stewards for the Nation's public lands. 396 fourth grade students across 17 classes and 6 school districts attended 2 separate field days in West Alton and Clarksville, MO in October 2024. Five USACE Teams were represented throughout the field day activities – Education, Recreation, Wildlife, Forestry, and Navigation – while 6 State, Federal, and Nonprofit Organizations partnered to present activities. Field day activities included: Canoeing with Big Muddy Adventures, wildlife presentations, fishing and casting practice, archery, birding, lock tours at LD#24, and water safety relays.



The Rivers Project has relaunched and reimagined the beloved 'Corps Kids' program, formerly called 'River Rangers', serving the regional Riverbend Head Start & Family Services which provides early childhood education for income-eligible families. ISOP Rangers visit preschool classes quarterly to provide an activity relating to USACE missions; Forestry, Water Safety, and Wildlife. At the end of the school year students will attend a special ceremony to receive a 'Corps Kid' badge and certificate. On 26 November, Rangers provided the Water Safety lesson of this program to approximately 120 pre-school students. The lesson included a Sesame Street story book about density, a sink or float demonstration/game, and a Bobber the Water Safety Dog coloring craft.

