

# MVD

## WATER SAFETY INITIATIVES SECOND QUARTER



**APRIL 2025**

Prepared by

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[National Water Safety Program Gateway](#)

# Retirement

— PARTY —  
Honoring Pam Doty

Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center & Virtually

MS Teams Meeting ID: 993 553 432 153  
Passcode: jC6se7D3

MAY 15, 2025  
2:00 PM - 3:00PM



## National Water Safety Team

Pam Doty - *Program Manager*

Toby Isbell - *Program Graphic Designer*

Julie Franco - *Safety Rep*

Romanda Walker - *Public Affairs Rep*

Robert Moreno - *Bilingual Sub-Committee Chair*

Amanda Kruse - *Special Projects Coordinator*

Chelsea Jones - *LRD Rep*

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-PG5

MVR - PG6-PG10

MVP - PG11

MVS - PG12-PG15



Always wear your life jacket!





# VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

## Louisiana Field Office

Natural Resources Specialists Jesse Wisterman and Chip Wells attended PE classes at Riser Middle School in West Monroe, LA. Wisterman and Wells educated 195 students on water safety using life jackets, throwables and paddles as visual aids.



Natural Resources Specialists Jesse Wisterman and Chip Wells made a special appearance at Sterlington Elementary School in Sterlington, LA. Wisterman and Wells educated 120 students on water safety using video, life jackets, throwables and paddles as visual aids.



Natural Resources Specialists Jesse Wisterman, Chip Wells, David May, and Courtney Wiley made a special appearance at Barkdull Faulk Elementary School in Monroe, LA. The Natural Resources Specialists educated 100 students on water safety using video, life jackets, throwables and paddles as visual aids.



Natural Resources Specialist Destiny Garcia attended Shreveport Aquarium's Paddlefish Festival in Shreveport, LA. This annual event educates the public about natural resources, conservation, and recreational safety. Garcia spoke with 350 persons about water safety using water safety promotional products from the National Water Safety Program, life jackets, and a Bobber the Water Safety Dog spin wheel game she designed herself.





# VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

## Lake Ouachita



Lake Ouachita Natural Resources Specialist, Amy Shultz, presented a boating and water safety program to a group of fifty-five 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Lakeside Junior High on February 25<sup>th</sup>



On Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, Lake Ouachita Park Ranger, John Bates, along with Natural Resources Specialist, Amy Shultz, presented water safety programs to eight classes at St. John's Catholic School in Hot Springs, Arkansas. One hundred and thirty students' grades K-8 attended the program.

DeGray Lake Lake Ouachita in partnership with DeGray Lake and the Little Rock District hosted a water safety information table at the Hot Springs Boat, Tackle, and RV show February 28<sup>th</sup> – March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bobber the Water Safety Dog was a hit on Saturday during the show. Approximately 2200 direct water safety contacts were made during the three-day event.





# VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

## Lake Greeson

Updating all the bulletin boards and kiosk. Campgrounds reopened on 1 March 2025. Lake Greeson has 30 bulletin boards and kiosk. The boards had camping regulations, water safety posters many including hypothermia posters, and boater safety which concentrated on the dangers of CO2.



## Enid Lake

Enid Lake personnel participated in 3 local Christmas parades during the Christmas Season. Rangers decorated the patrol boat and invited Santa to ride along.



## Arkabutla Lake

Arkabutla Lake partnered with 5 local schools to throw out footballs at local high school football games with our water safety message on them.

38 bulletin boards and 4 billboards on the project to promote water safety and we are continuing our tumbler program to reach an older age group than just children.

## Grenada Lake

Grenada Lake student Andrew Whittemore attended the Vicksburg Mardis Gras parade handing out water safety items to parade goers.





# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Lake Red Rock Project



Lake Red Rock purchased ad space for a water safety message in the Iowa Sportsman magazine's April issue. The "ad" highlights the importance of wearing life jackets year-round, no matter the water sport and features men in the 18-54 year old demographic. The magazine is posted online in electronic format, mailed to their subscribers, and copies will also be distributed at the Iowa Deer Classic in Des Moines (March 2025) and at Pheasant Fest in Kansas City (March 2025).

Planning for Red Rock's annual Outdoor Days got underway this winter, an event scheduled in May. The three-day event for area 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders features five activity stations of which a water safety station is included. Staff from the Iowa DNR, Marion County Conservation Board, Missouri River Energy Services partner with USACE on the effort. Five schools from throughout Marion County have signed up to participate this year.



Lake Red Rock, USACE Rock Island District  
Published by Tracy Spry  
February 12 at 11:24 AM

Cold weather means bodies of water may be ice covered. Ice is never 100% safe, especially in areas where water levels fluctuate or if there is a current. The minimum guideline for walking or fishing on new, clear ice is 4-inches thick. Check ice thickness before you venture out.

**Ice is Never 100% Safe!**

4" 5-7" 8-12" 12-15"

Minimum Ice Thickness Guidelines  
for New Clear Ice Only

m DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES mndnr.gov/icesafety

Lake Red Rock, USACE Rock Island District  
Government organization

Lake Red Rock continued its "Water Safety Wednesday" Facebook posts during the winter 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.



# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Coralville Lake Project



Bobber the Water Safety Dog and park rangers attended 2 hockey games around the Coralville Lake surrounding area. The first was the Heartlanders in Coralville, and the second was the RoughRiders in Cedar Rapids. Bobber and rangers spoke with visitors and was on the ice for mascot games and to help get the crowd involved in the game. Over 2,800 contacts were made.



Park Rangers attended the Cedar Rapids Outdoor Show to promote Coralville Lake, deliver a water safety message, and hand out water safety promotional items. There were 356 contacts made over the weekend.



Coralville Lake staff attended a community event, Freeze Fest to promote water safety and hand out various water safety items. There were 181 people contacted at the event.



# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Mississippi River Project

On December 14, Bobber attended a Quad City Storm hockey game. Bobber met with fellow mascots to celebrate the team mascot Radar's birthday. Even though the water is frozen at a hockey game, Bobber still went around with a Park Ranger to promote the importance of water safety. There were approximately 5,000 people in the crowd and they were quite excited when all the mascots got on the ice for a short game of broomball.



Park Rangers promoted water safety during various Bald Eagle watching events in January and February. Rangers helped visitors spot eagles along the Mississippi River while also ensuring they stayed safe near the water's edge.

Some of the events also had informational booths where water safety giveaways were handed out. Events were held in Clinton, IA; Fulton, IL; LeClaire, IA; Rock Island, IL; Muscatine, IA; and Quincy, IL. A total of 2,461 direct contacts were made.



Natural Resources Specialists staffed a water safety booth during back-to-back weekends at this year's Outdoor and RV Camping shows at the QCCA Expo Center in Rock Island, IL on February 13-16 and 21-23.

The events attract outdoor enthusiasts with an interest in boating, fishing, hunting and camping. Staff at the Corps booth were available to answer questions about the project, promote upcoming events and hand out water safety giveaways. Upper Mississippi River Navigational Charts, Annual Day Use and America the Beautiful Passes were also available for interested customers. During both events a total of 2,352 direct customer contacts were made.



On February 14, a Park Ranger presented a Life on a Towboat program to a homeschool group in Osco, IL. The program focuses on navigation on the Mississippi River, how locks and dams work and concludes with dressing students up as members of a towboat crew. A key part of this program is the safety of the crew. We have the students demonstrate how to properly fit and wear a life jacket and go over some basic safety measures. 40 students and parents attended the program.



# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Illinois Waterway Project

Eagle Watch Weekend YMCA Youth: Project Coordinated and hosted a Bird of Prey program at the local YMCA for almost 600 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from area schools. Over 500 Every Kid in a Park passes were issued to local 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Every student in attendance received a Safe Passages Book, Flying Ring, and Jr Ranger sticker.



Eagle Watch Weekend Kids Packet: In coordination with the Heritage Corridor, contributed water safety materials to 160 families through take-home activity kits handed out at Eagle Watch Weekend. Eagle Watch Weekend is an event that was started in 1998, and this year over 2,200 individuals visited the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center. Water Safety materials were on display for any visitor who wished to take them. The kids drawing and activity table was also available.

Partnership with Starved Rock Country Welcome Center: Water Safety giveaways continue to be regularly supplied to the Heritage Corridor Welcome Center, a local visitor center in downtown Utica, IL. Bobber Water Safety Bags are provided to their gift shop, so that people making purchases there receive their purchase in a Bobber Bag. They also give away Flying Rings among other various Water Safety items.

The Illinois Waterway Visitor Center will be teaching 6 boater safety courses in the summer of 2025. They take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month from April through September. Advertisements for the course were taken out in 3 area publications, Starved Rock Country Magazine, LaSalle County Visitors Guide, and Travel Starved Rock magazines. The advertisements will run in the spring and summer issues of the publications.

**ILLINOIS WATERWAY  
VISITOR CENTER**  
AT STARVED ROCK LOCK AND DAM  
  
YOUR BEST VIEWS OF STARVED ROCK  
  
950 N. 27TH RD. (DEE BENNET RD.)  
OTTAWA, IL 61350  
(815)667-4054



- I&M Canal Information
- Illinois Waterway Information
- Group Programs
- Gift Shop
- Observation Deck

**Free Boater Safety Classes**  
Call to Register for 2025 Dates

- April 19th
- May 17th
- June 21th
- July 19th
- August 16th
- September 20th





# BOAT SMART FROM THE START!

Make sure your vessel has all required safety equipment before heading to the water.



- At least 1 USCG approved life jacket for each person
- USCG approved throwable flotation device
- Type B fire extinguisher
- Sound-Producing device
- Working navigation lights
- Know the vessel's capacity limits
- Obey all buoy markings

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Rock Island District

[www.facebook.com/SaylorvilleLake](http://www.facebook.com/SaylorvilleLake)  
[www.pleasewearit.com](http://www.pleasewearit.com)

# ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

## Saylorville Lake

The new publication of the Saylorville Lake Area Recreation Guide is now out and available for the public. Inside the recreation guide is information about the lake and recreation areas in the vicinity. However, one of the most important things in the recreation guide is the water safety ad and information about life jacket loaner stations! Each year a water safety ad is included in the guide to promote water safety, not only at Saylorville Lake but around the area as well. The article about life jacket loaner stations provides information about the loaner stations, where to find them, and how they benefit the public.

### Practice water safety this summer

The U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have teamed up to create a new water safety guide. This guide is designed to help you and your family stay safe while enjoying the water. It includes information on how to choose the right life jacket, how to use a life jacket, and how to use a throwable flotation device. It also includes information on how to use a fire extinguisher, how to use a sound-producing device, and how to use a navigation light. The guide is available for free download at [www.pleasewearit.com](http://www.pleasewearit.com).

**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**  
Summer is a time of fun and relaxation, but it is also a time of unexpected events. Be prepared for the unexpected by having a plan in place. This plan should include a list of emergency contacts, a map of the area, and a list of items to take with you. It should also include a list of items to leave behind. The plan should be reviewed and updated regularly.

**WEAR A LIFE JACKET**  
A life jacket is your best chance of survival in an emergency. It is designed to keep you afloat and protect your head. It is not a toy. It is a life-saving device. It should be worn at all times when on the water. It should be the right size for you. It should be properly fitted. It should be inspected regularly. It should be replaced when it is damaged or worn.

**KNOW YOUR SWIMMING ABILITIES**  
Do not overestimate your swimming abilities. Do not drink alcohol before swimming. Do not swim alone. Do not swim in unfamiliar areas. Do not swim in areas with strong currents. Do not swim in areas with rocks or other hazards. Do not swim in areas with power lines. Do not swim in areas with boats. Do not swim in areas with other swimmers. Do not swim in areas with children. Do not swim in areas with pets. Do not swim in areas with wildlife. Do not swim in areas with insects. Do not swim in areas with weather. Do not swim in areas with water. Do not swim in areas with anything.

For more water safety tips, visit [www.Pleasewearit.com](http://www.Pleasewearit.com) and follow Rock Island District on Facebook and Instagram.

Winter weather allows for Park Rangers to catch up on life jacket inventory and maintenance for life jacket loaner stations. Each life jacket is inspected for rips, tears, functioning zippers and clips, and to make sure the foam inside the life jackets is still firm and usable.

Park Rangers at Saylorville Lake have submitted the yearly Sea Tow Foundation Grant for life jacket loaner stations. This grant allows Rangers to regularly stock and maintain the life jacket loaner stations with life jackets provided by the Sea Tow Grant. Decisions for 2025 Grant applicants will be made in early April 2025 for delivery in May 2025. If selected, our project will be able to keep stations stocked with life jackets in various sizes available for boaters to borrow free of charge for the day, promoting safety on the water.





# ST. PAUL DISTRICT (MVP)

Mississippi Headwater's Project, Cross Lake Recreation Area – Winterfest Event: Winterfest is a city-wide community event where businesses prepare soup for the public as part of a competition. Cross Lake Recreation Area Staff, in partnership with Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway (PBSB), prepared and served nearly 200 visitors soup, s'mores, and hot chocolate. As part of this event, Park Rangers hosted a water safety coloring contest in which the winners of 4 different age groups got to pick out a new life jacket, donated by the PBSB. Volunteers and Park Rangers also hosted a t-shirt coloring activity in which kids had the opportunity to color and create their own water safety t-shirt.



Mississippi Headwater's Project, Sandy Lake Recreation Area – Kids Fishing Day event:

USACE staff participated in a winter Kids Fishing Day on Hanging Kettle Lake put on by the Aitkin County Sheriff Department. Local law enforcement created several stations on the lake where 5<sup>th</sup> graders from local schools could learn about different ice-related activities – ice fishing, ice auger use, and ice/water safety. USACE Rangers gave a brief discussion about ice safety and rescue procedures and then students were given the opportunity to use ice picks to simulate a self-rescue by lying flat, picking, Army crawling, and kicking along the ice surface to disperse body weight and simulate a self-rescue. Students were allowed to “ice pick race” against one another for fun.

Mississippi Headwater's Project, Gull Lake Recreation Area – Special Olympics Winter Carnival:

On Thursday, February 13, 2025, Park Rangers Brian Turner and Ellie Tabako brought Bobber to Confidence Learning Center to spread water safety messaging at their annual Special Olympics Winter Carnival. Student Athletes of all ages were reminded of the importance of wearing their life jacket and how to be safe on the frozen lakes. Water safety towels and flying rings were provided to 200 athletes who met with Bobber.





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Carlyle Lake

The groundwork for the yearly "I Got Caught" campaign commenced in March, rallying support from nearby businesses of the Carlyle Lake Project. This season, we've secured over 30 partners who've joined hands in our efforts. As part of our collaboration, each partner will have their business name prominently featured on t-shirts to be distributed among summer visitors adhering to life jacket safety protocols.



USACE water safety messages were applied to Carlyle Lake's utility vehicle to promote water safety awareness while patrolling day-use areas and campgrounds around Carlyle Lake.



Water safety messages, provided by the National Water Safety Program, were posted to the Carlyle Lake Project Facebook and Instagram pages generating a total of 11 posts with a reach of 87 (likes, comments, and shares).



Water safety messages were displayed on the digital reader board along Illinois Highway 27 and were also prominently featured on all bulletin boards designated for day-use activities resulting in a total of 104 static unique contacts for the quarter.





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Rend Lake

The Rend Lake ISOP team hosted a “Build Like a Beaver” Small World Program, where rangers explained how beavers live near water and the importance of staying safe around it. While participants built beaver dams, rangers discussed how beavers build dams to protect themselves from strong currents, similar to how we use safety measures like life jackets to stay safe around water. There were 40 participants.



The Rend Lake ISOP team participated in a career day at Benton High School and shared the story of the “Many Hats of the Corps”. The team emphasized the role of USACE Rangers in educating the public about water safety and facilitated water safety trivia.



Rend Lake Project Office/Visitor Center Facebook page continued to promote water safety through unique social media messages. The electronic marquee at the Rend Lake Visitor Center promoted water safety through unique messages.

The Rend Lake team hosted the annual Holiday Celebration Small World Program for children ages 5 and younger. During the event, Santa’s helper and Bobber the Water Safety Dog shared Bobber activity books, while Santa handed out Bobber’s Water Safety books to all the participants.

Rangers also reminded everyone about the importance of never playing on icy lakes and ponds. 71 children and their family members attended.





# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Rivers Project Office

In partnership with Meeting of the Rivers Foundation, Mississippi River Water Trail Association, and several other local organizations the Rivers Project presented the fourth annual Ice Jam at the Dam at the National Great Rivers Museum. On 15 February nearly 800 visitors attended the family-focused event. Attractions included open tours of Melvin Price Locks and Dam, live animal presentations, live music, winter-themed educational booths, and visits from Bobber the Water Safety Dog and mascots Louie and Blazer of the St. Louis Blues and Lewis & Clark Community College, respectively. Open tours of Melvin Price brought visitors to the top of the structure to learn about the Navigational Channel and how it can change when the Mississippi River freezes over in the winter. Additionally, a special water safety-themed Polar Passport was granted to children who visited the 10 educational booths.



Rivers Project Rangers participated in Little Creek Nature Area's (LCNA) 'First Saturday' public event on 1 Feb which focused on survival skills. LCNA is a unique 97-acre outdoor educational facility owned and operated by the city Ferguson serving the regional school districts with outdoor educational

opportunities. Rangers partnered with the educators from the Audubon Center at Riverlands to teach students and their families, approximately 120 contacts, the importance of life jackets and 'Reach, Throw, Row, Don't Go' through a water safety obstacle course. Other survival skill activities included fire-making, knot tying, and navigating.



Weekly #WaterSafetyWednesday, holiday-themed messaging, and other periodical social media posts containing water safety messaging and content have reached over 15,000 users through the National Great Rivers Museum (NGRM) and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (RMBS) social media platforms. Of note, a good news story on 14 FEB had high reach numbers for cold water safety was promoted as a part of wildlife rescue by the Rivers Project ES team. A young deer had fallen through the ice in Ellis Bay. In response, biologists safely launched a boat into the river to help the struggling animal. They were able to navigate through the icy waters to reach the deer, bring it into the boat, and return to shore for release into the prairie. Biologists were wearing life jackets, winter weather gear, and had a hypothermia kit in the boat in case of emergency.



# ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

## Wappapello Lake



Cupid Shuffle on 14 February was held at the O Neal Elementary School for grades 1-3 in Poplar Bluff, MO. Park Ranger Andrew Jefferson staffed a booth and provided water safety items including sea bags, activity sheets, and water safety tattoos to 285 students and teachers.



**ON AIR**



Five thousand Safety Pizza Stickers were distributed on 18 February to local pizza franchises in Poplar bluff, Wappapello, and Dexter, MO by Park Ranger Andrew Jefferson. This is an annual safety push that occurs during the weekend of the Superbowl.

Media Cultivation: Five radio and three television interviews were done by Wappapello Lake staff and Missouri Department of Conservation representatives. Topics included Eagle Days, Water Safety, Facility Closures, Special Event Calendar, etc.



24 March Southeast MO Regional Water Safety Council is scheduled to meet. This will be the second meeting during FY 25. Previous meeting was in October 2024.