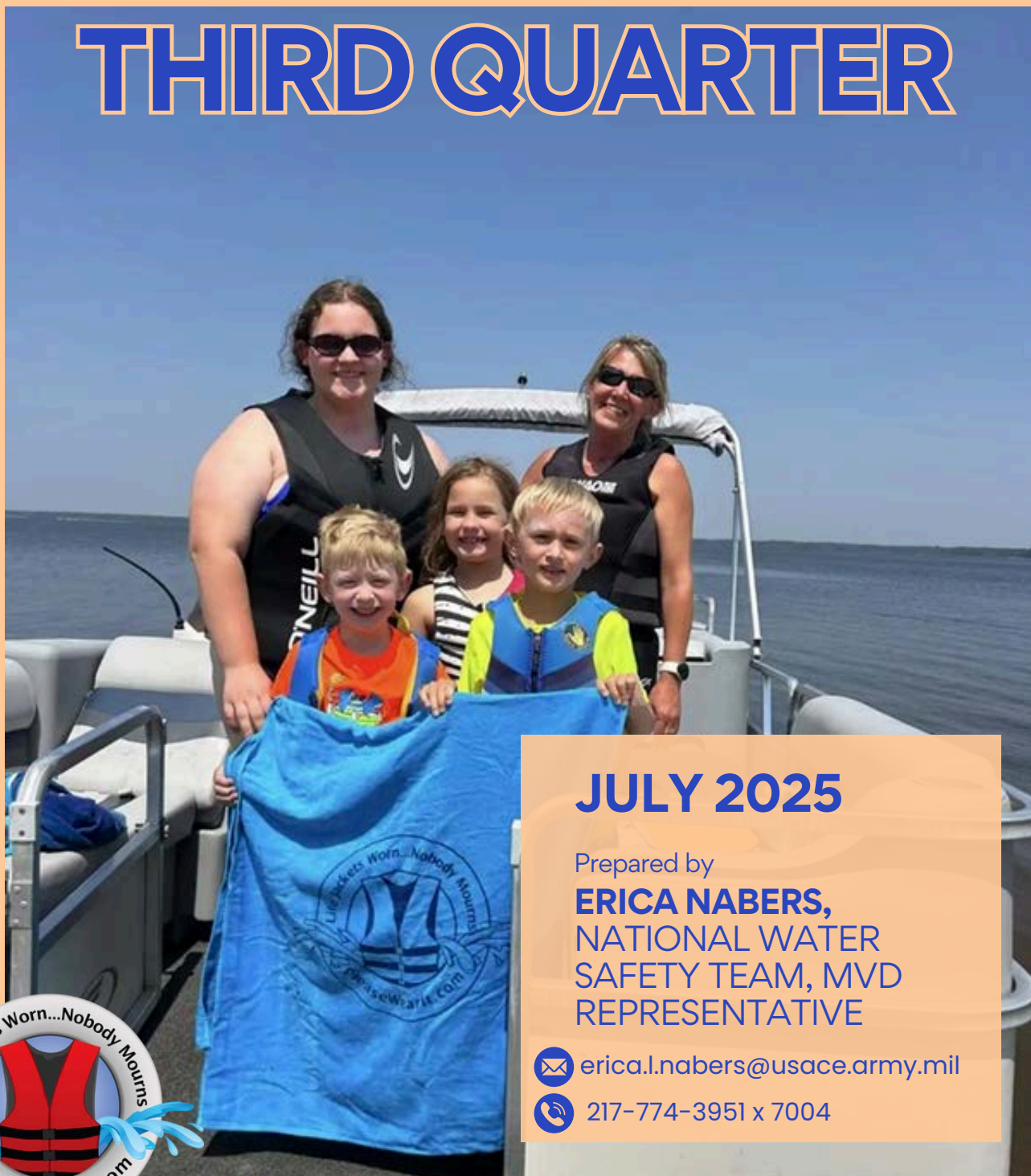


MVD

WATER SAFETY INITIATIVES

THIRD QUARTER



JULY 2025

Prepared by

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A note from Jeff Krause

Thank you and your teams for all you do to save lives with your water safety efforts!

Following the recent retirement of Pam Doty, Heath Kruger Senior Policy Advisor for Park Ranger Activities will serve as the interim Headquarters proponent of the National Water Safety Program. I ask for your support with Heath's efforts and actions that will assist with program delivery.

Key program updates are as follows:

- Fatality reporting continues; Heath will work with MSC NRM Leads and District Safety Offices as necessary.
- The publications depot is closing this summer. National Water Safety Product orders have begun to ship and will continue until all orders have been received.
- NRM publications (Title 36, Citation/Warning Books, etc.) will ship out after the water safety product orders to projects who had requested them .
- "I Got Caught" campaign products have shipped.
- The National Water Safety Committee will continue sending out monthly social media posts through September 2025.
- The National Water Safety Committee will continue Ripples, the quarterly water safety journal, but will transition to a bi-annual journal. Please continue submitting entries to your water safety division representatives. The next issue of Ripples will be out in October 2025.

National Water Safety Team

Heath Kruger - *Interim Program Manager*

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:

MVS - PG3-PG7

MVK - PG8-PG14

MVR - PG15-PG19



ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Carlyle Lake

With the support of numerous local partners, including The Corps Foundation, Carlyle Lake park rangers conducted water safety patrols starting Memorial Day weekend to reward visitors caught wearing their life jackets, both on the water and sand. Visitors received items such as our “I Got Caught” t-shirts provided by local partners, items from The Corps Foundation (dry bags, beach towels, and lunch coolers), and ice cream coupons provided by DQ Grill & Chill of Carlyle, Illinois. A total of 154 visitors have received an “I Got Caught” reward since Memorial Day weekend.



During the months of March and April, Carlyle Lake park rangers actively visited 4 local high schools to promote water safety awareness. Students worked in groups to investigate several water safety accident scenarios using clues left behind: an activity called Water Safety CSI. This activity encouraged the students' critical thinking skills and taught the overall lesson to always expect the unexpected when recreating in or near water. Excel Bottling Company of Breese, Illinois generously provided water safety t-shirts and stickers to incentivize student participation. A total of 1,214 individuals participated in 29 separate presentations, collectively making a significant impact on the community.



Five Water safety billboards were updated with summer water safety messages in high-visitation areas around Carlyle Lake.

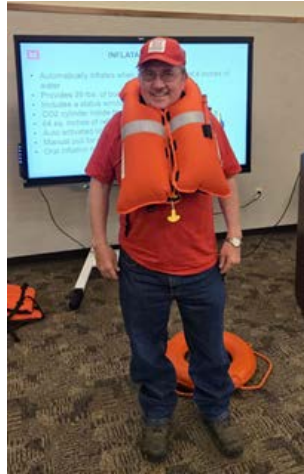


Carlyle Lake park rangers added water safety stencils with the message, “Life Jackets Worn, Nobody Mourns” to 5 Carlyle Lake boat ramps.

ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Rend Lake

The Rend Lake ISOP team facilitated a water safety training as part of the onsite Volunteer Orientation on 23 April. The team highlighted new additions in EM 385-1-1 regarding water safety training, such as Reach, Throw, Row, Don't Go.



Over the Memorial Day weekend, the ISOP team facilitated several water safety programs in the Visitor Center, campgrounds, and beaches. Bobber the Water Safety Dog visited campers throughout the weekend. The team made 460 direct interpretive contacts throughout the weekend.



The Rend Lake team partnered with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office to host the "Bikes and Badges" event on 31 May.

The event focused on bike and water safety. The ISOP team facilitated a water safety booth and taught participants life saving skills in a Reach, Throw, Go for Help relay. 71 direct water safety contacts were made.

Throughout June, The Rend Lake ISOP team has been conducting water safety roving at the beaches and boat ramps. The team actively seeks visitors for the "I Got Caught Campaign." Roving has resulted in 183 direct water safety contacts for June.



ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Rivers Project Office

In partnership with the National Park Service, Rivers Project Rangers provided water safety programming and outdoor recreation opportunities to approximately 670 fourth grade students through the 'Every Kid Outdoors' program and 'Paddle Your Parks' spring events at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary and National Great Rivers Museum (NGRM). Throughout April 2025, nearly 500 students from the Edwardsville School District travelled to the NGRM and Melvin Price Locks and Dam for water safety programs and dam tours while Riverlands hosted 170 students on 7 and 13 May for field day experiences such as safety relays, fishing, and canoeing with Big Muddy Adventures (BMA). Students paddled with BMA in Ellis Bay, a calm backwater of the Mississippi River, and learned the importance of practicing water safety and wearing a life jacket.



Park Rangers and National Great Rivers Museum staff participated in the 158th Annual Alton Memorial Day Parade on 26 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 ~10,000 participants. Additionally, NGRM hosted a special water safety themed scavenger hunt throughout the museum gallery over the holiday weekend. Over 25 families completed the scavenger hunt to earn a water safety goody bag.

The Rivers Project team participated in several community outreach events throughout the Spring of 2025 to promote safe recreation on project lands and waters as well as practicing proper water safety. Events included Palisade Sierra Club Speaker Series, Leave No Trace Spotlight at Riverlands including a trivia night and volunteer trash bash, Old Bakery Riverbend Earth Day Festival, Riverlands Native Plant Festival, Little Creek Nature Area First Saturdays: May, and Lewis and Clark Community College's Summerfest directly reaching 1,500+ community members.



ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Wappapello Lake

Special request water safety programs were conducted by Park Ranger Andrew Jefferson on 6 June at the Central Elementary School located in Park Hills, Missouri. He provided numerous sessions for grades k-3 (approximately 270 kids).



Wappapello Lake hosted several school field trips during the months of May and June. Students were given gate house tours, water safety programs, visitor center tours, specialized programs, and tours of the green house.

The Jack Miller Memorial Kids Fun Day was held on 7 June 2025. 97 kids and parents attended the event. Trophies and medals were provided by Ann Miller (widow of Jack); bait provided by Millie's gas Mart; fish provided by Missouri Department of Conservation; Food and prizes provided by Friends of Wappapello Lake Association; Baldwin Toyota; and Peoples Community Bank. The Corps of Engineers provided the fishing tackle including rods and reels. Mingo Job Corps provided students to assist. Volunteers prepared the food. This event is for children under the age of 15. Categories were the Most Fish Caught and the Largest Fish Caught. One young angler caught 48 which was tops!



ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS)

Mark Twain Lake


The Mark Twain Lake Team is working to form their Water Safety Task Force. Highway Patrol, Black Jack Marina, Indian Creek Marina, MT State Park Partners have been contacted and the first meeting will be held in July.

The team is working with Mark twain State Park to order additional water safety signs for the State Park's lifejacket loaner stations.




Mark Twain Lake - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
April 26 · 🌐

With boating activity picking up on Mark Twain Lake take time to take an online boating safety course! Find the right course for you so you can be better prepared the next time you go boating, fishing, or paddling. <http://uscgboating.org/recreat.../boating-safety-courses.php>



Take a Boating Safety Course



7 5 shares

In addition to many water safety posts on social media, a water safety commercial is currently airing on WGEM local News Station.

Maintaining and updating lifejacket loaner stations around the lake weekly.

VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Louisiana Field Office

Natural Resources Management Specialists Sarah Nix and Heidi Goldsmith participated in “Ag Magic” at the Alexandria Mega Shelter in Alexandria, LA where they hosted a water safety information table. They demonstrated the correct way to wear a life jacket and other lifesaving tips to over 500 students.



Grenada Lake



Rangers Kyle Morgan, Heath Mixon, and Coby Williams gave a water safety program to 1st graders at Coffeeville Elementary School. Later that same day, Rangers Kyle Morgan, Coby Williams, and Will Clark gave a program for the 1st graders at Kirk Academy.

Enid Lake

Enid Lake Natural Resources Management personnel conducted water safety programs for Pope Elementary and Batesville Intermediate schools at the Bob Tyler Fish Hatchery. Approximately 616 students were in attendance.



Natural Resources Management personnel attended the Ajinomoto Corporation’s Safety Day on May 5, making 175 water safety contact.

VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Louisiana Field Office

2025 Barksdale Air Show Water Safety Event



These photos sum up the 2025 Barksdale Air Show Water Safety Event. Park rangers were able to reach families with life-saving messages of water safety, while watching the world famous Thunderbirds. Many of the USACE booths focused on water safety, while the others focused on our various waterways and lock and dam mechanics.

Even Park Ranger Cory and Bobber made an appearance! They interacted with crowds to help spread our water safety message.

VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Arkabutla Lake



Arkabutla Lake hosted its first ever fishing rodeo at the Hernando Point Day Use Area where all rangers from the project participated. Youth that signed up from the area got to fish in a pond where they also learned about water safety through rangers and giveaway items such as life jackets (20 given away) and bobbers and fishing lures with water safety messages inscribed into them. 189 contacts were present at the event.



The Tunica Parks and Recreation Youth Field Day took place at Dub Patton day use where rangers hosted a booth and spoke to kids about water safety and gave away water safety items. There were approximately 180 kids at the event. During the event, rangers provided a water safety program that highlights proper PFD wear and also provided each participant with water safety material.



Park Rangers from Arkabutla Lake, Rob Hoff and Brady Bozeman, hosted a booth inside of the Bass Pro Shops at the pyramid in Memphis, TN to promote water safety during National Safe Boating week. During the event, 64 individuals were contacted, and water safety items were given to them as well as a quick synopsis of why water safety is important, where to practice water safety and what to wear to be safe in the water.

VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)



Lake Ouachita



On April 11, Natural Resources Specialists, Matthew Gilbert (AKA Bobber) and Amy Shultz presented a water safety program to 18 pre-school students at Mt. Ida HeadStart Program.



Natural Resources Specialist, Shawn McBay presented a Backyard Critters program to 21 pre-school students at Mountain Pine School on April 15th



Natural Resources Specialist, Matthew Gilbert presented a Backyard Critters Program at Mount Ida HeadStart to 25 pre-school students on April 18th.



Natural Resources Specialist, Amy Shultz, presented a boating and water safety program to 36 students at Lake Hamilton High School Alternative Learning Center



Natural Resources Specialist Shawn McBay hosted a water safety information table during Easter Egg Extravaganza at Gross Funeral Home on April 19th where he visited with over 450 participants.

VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

DeGray Lake

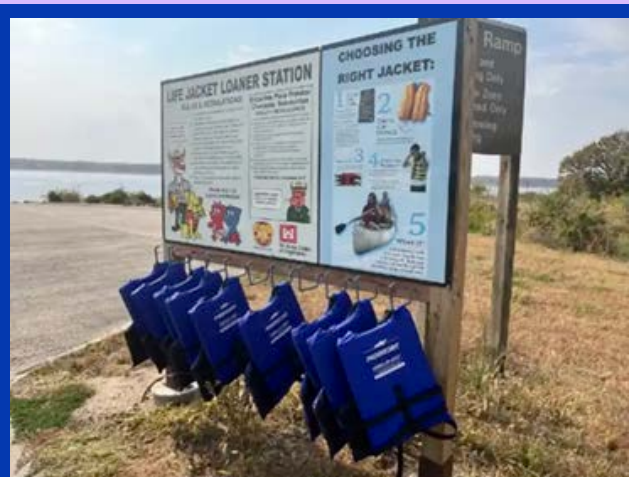
DeGray Lake hosted an Outdoor Education Day at the Lower Lake with their partner, Mt. Saint Mary's 11th grade biology class. There were 160 Arkadelphia 5th grade kids and about 50 parents and about 20 kids from Mt. Saint Mary's school. The people working this event were: Josh Voss, Derek Lynch, Jeffrey Lockwood, Jeffrey Arthur, Ryan Hellums, Dustin Thompson, Jimmie Ward.



Dad's Day Event on 26 April at the Arkadelphia Family Park. It was worked by Ryan Hellums and Kyleigh Sigman. They talked to about 300 people on Water Safety and Corps Mission



Ranger Jeffrey Arthur gave a water safety program to Systems, LLC located in Malvern, AR during their Global Safety Day event. He spoke to approximately 300 people as they rotated through various stations during their lunch break.



Progressive Insurance supplied 114 life jackets at DeGray Lake on dedicated racks near boat ramps and information centers. Adult size U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets were distributed because USACE is one of the nation's leading federal providers of outdoor and water-based recreation. This initiative aligns with Progressive's dedication to supporting community safety and responsible boating practices, and with the USACE mission to safeguard public enjoyment of natural resources.

VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

Lake Greeson

On 14 May NRS Diane Golden presented Water Safety to Pike County 4-H students at Kirby High School to approximately 26 participants.



Lake Ouachita, DeGray Lake, & Lake Greeson participated in a career Future Fest, Draft Days a large event for Senior High Students from area schools that was held at Lake Hamilton High School arena April 9th and 10th. 415 direct contacts were made during this event.



I got caught!



VICKSBURG DISTRICT (MVK)

This summer the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg is promoting life jacket use with the WEAR IT to Win It campaign on Facebook and Twitter!

Memorial Day Weekend, May 25th through July 5th, visitors could win a prize just by sharing photos of themselves or friends and family wearing a life jacket!

WEAR IT TO WIN IT!

Send us a picture of you, your family or friends wearing your life jacket correctly for a chance to win exciting prizes!

2 nights of camping
or
1 day-use pass & 1 day-use picnic shelter

A Grand Prize of an Annual Pass good for any Corps managed facility within the US or 4 nights camping (excluding holiday weekends) within the Vicksburg District will also be awarded.

Send your photos to Diane.Golden@usace.army.mil with a subject line "Wear It To Win It!"

Winning photos will be shared on our social media pages and may be used in USACE communication products such as websites, blogs and brochures.



GRAND PRIZE WINNER!



Week 4 Winner



Week 2 Winner



Week 1 Winner



Week 5 Winner

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Lake Red Rock Project

Interpretive staff and guest speakers hosted the 46th annual "Outdoor Days" event for 5th and 6th graders 07-08 MAY. Weather conditions were favorable for all three days of the event. Programs included topics on wetland ecology, water safety, wildlife, hikes, and geocaching. USACE hosted the event in partnership with the Marion County Conservation Board and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The lake's Education Host Volunteer Natalie Mong and retired Park Ranger Mark Pollastrini also assisted with presenting programs. Approximately 266 students and teachers participated from four area schools.



On 29 APR, interpretive staff, and Bobber the Water Safety Dog and USACE staff provided a water safety program for youngsters of a volunteer couple stationed at the North Overlook Beach. The kids learned about the importance of wearing a life jacket, swimming with a buddy, and other important safety information.

To commemorate "Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day" on 16 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.



On 13 APR, Natalie Mong, Lake Red Rock Education Volunteer Natalie Mong staffed a water safety booth at a local environmental event sponsored by the Marion County Conservation Board. This was the first year Lake Red Rock participated in this seasonal event.



Staff and the Education Host Volunteer repainted the "Life Jacket Zone" stencils at the Corps managed boat ramps. The water safety message is prominently placed at each ramp to remind boaters to make sure they have their life jackets before leaving shore.

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Coralville Lake Project



Campground Programs have started at Coralville Lake's Sugar Bottom Campground and are held every Saturday night. So far, three campground programs have been held that feature water safety as a main topic. Campground Jeopardy featured important water safety facts and Water Safety games tested both adults and kids on their ability to put a life jacket quickly and use a throw ring.



Coralville Lake held program days during the spring for 16 local community schools. Each week, approximately 200 children and chaperones attended water safety, Devonian Fossil Gorge, and environmental habitat programs led by park rangers with a total of 1,054 contacts. Children learned about the importance of wearing life jackets and practiced emergency scenarios where life jackets are important.



Coralville Lake posted Park Ranger PSA's discussing the importance of wearing life jackets and where to find them at our life jacket loaner stations. 18 businesses across the Coralville Lake Project area also participated in Wear Your Life Jacket to Workday to promote life jacket usage in our community.



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

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Mississippi River Project

The Mississippi River Visitor Center welcomed approximately 1,500 students coming in for field trips this spring. Most schools came to go on Locks and Dam 15 tours. During these tours students learn about navigation on the Mississippi River, how the lock works and ways to stay safe around the river.



Bobber the Water Safety Dog participated in Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day and later the same day ran a mascot race as part of Armed Forces Day on the Rock Island Arsenal. Though Bobber was a little tired after the race, he cheered on all the kids running their own races.



Every Saturday in April the Mississippi River Project Office hosted free public boating safety classes. USACE partners with Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary to instruct at these classes. 56 participants successfully passed the all day class and received their NASBLA certified safe boating cards.

Mississippi River Project ranger staff are again looking for boaters in the "I Got Caught Wearing My Life Jacket" campaign. Two boaters using the ramp at Big Slough Recreation Area were caught and are now proud owners of some new water safety towels.



ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Illinois Waterway Project

Veterans Expo - Presented by the LaSalle County Veterans Assistance Commission, the Veterans Expo, sought to connect veterans and families to the resources they need. Park Rangers, Petruney and Ernenputsch and volunteer Tammy Petruney handed out water safety materials and issued America the Beautiful park passes to veterans, disabled guests and active duty military members.



The Clean Water Celebration is held each spring at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria, Illinois. The goal of the event is to teach the importance of thinking globally and acting locally to protect the right to clean water and a healthy environment. Park Rangers, Ernenputsch and Petruney spoke to 1,400 attendees and handed out safe passages books, flying rings, and Jr Ranger stickers to every student that attended.

Numerous schools came to the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center this spring. Flanagan Elementary students learned about geology, navigation, water safety, and wildlife identification.



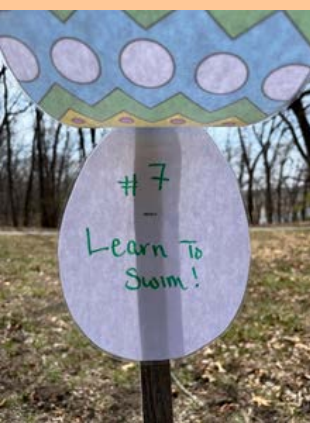
The Oglesby Health And Safety Fair is designed to promote health and safety awareness within the Oglesby, IL community. Ranger Petruney offered a life jacket fitting exercise and water safety quiz questions for attendees to win prizes.

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR)

Saylorville Lake

On June 6th Rangers Schabilion and Phipps attended the Safe Summer Kickoff with the Des Moines Police Department. This event was geared towards summertime safety while kids are out of school and enjoying outdoor recreation. Rangers brought the patrol boat along with various water safety handouts. Rangers also took the time to demonstrate life jacket fittings for children. 300 direct water safety contacts were made.

To commemorate "Wear Your Life Jacket to Workday" on 16 MAY, staff took part in "photo shoots" wearing their PFDs around the project. The photos will be shared on social media to promote water safety and encourage life jacket wear.



On April 12th rangers put together a "Water safety easter egg hunt". Park Rangers Phipps and Schabilion hosted the first Water Safety Easter Egg Hunt at the Saylorville Lake Visitor Center. Participants searched for eight hidden eggs, each containing answers to a water safety clue sheet. Upon completing the sheet, guests returned it to the visitor center to receive a water safety-themed prize. The event was a fun and educational way to promote water safety awareness for all ages. 30 direct water safety contacts were made.

A model of a low-head dam was donated to Saylorville Lake from the ICON Water Trails group. This model shows the dangers of low-head dams and how the currents they create can be uncontrollable. This model will be used during water safety events to show how dangerous they can be and how to avoid them.

