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March-April 2006



FEATURES

- 12** *Savanna — Looking for Its Future*
Will tourism, a new winery, biodiesel, data storage and other creative ideas rescue this river town?
By Abbie Reese
- 17** *Saying Goodbye to the Dredge Thompson*
A documentary video tells the story of a boat that spent 70 years keeping the Main Channel open.
By Molly McGuire
- 18** *A Valley Full of Eagles*
There's never been a better year for watching bald eagles on the Upper Miss.
By Pamela Eyden
- 20** *Looking Ducky*
The first colors of spring arrive on the wings of northward migrating waterfowl.
By Pamela Eyden and Reggie McLeod
- 25** *All About Wakes*
Two writers explore boat wakes — complex and interesting phenomena with a big impact on river shorelines.
By John Heddle and Reggie McLeod

DEPARTMENTS

- 3** *From the Riverbank*
Nobody goes there anymore.
By Reggie McLeod
- 5** *River News*
River otters, giant bronze clammer and plans to put more nuclear waste on the banks of the river.
- 41** *Advertiser Index*
Where did I see that ad...?
- 42** *River Calendar*
Bird-banding, star watches, eagle watches, In-Fisherman swap meet
- 44** *River People*
Native river mussels didn't get no respect before Marian Havlik came along.

Cover: Two eagles (Carol Knabe)

Above: The cutterhead dredge William A. Thompson works on a misty Upper Mississippi in 1963. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



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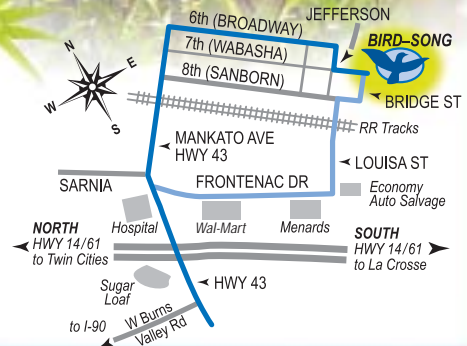
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From the Riverbank

Reggie McLeod
Editor/Publisher

Big River™

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ARE HUMANS AN INVASIVE SPECIES?

Yogi Berra once explained, “Nobody goes to Coney Island anymore — it’s too crowded.”

The recent series of public meetings about the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge probably could have benefitted from Yogi’s intellectual acuity and sense of humor.

For instance, at the meeting in Lansing, Iowa, discussion centered on two situations. First, some airboaters are adamant about their “right” to take their airboat anywhere on the river at any time. This point of view clashes with new features in the proposed refuge management plan that would create a few, small quiet areas in the backwaters. The proposed plan would also restrict access to some areas where waterfowl rest and feed during hunting season.

Most of the airboaters were from Stoddard, La Crosse or Onalaska, Wis. Some of the same airboaters went to meetings in many communities. As a group, they stand to lose the most, because Plan E would ban them year-round from six “electric-motor areas” (Plan D had 17) and ban them from March 16 to October 31 from eight “slow, no-wake areas” (Plan D had none). The electric-motor areas would make up less than one percent of the refuge and the slow, no-wake areas would make up 4.4 percent of the refuge.

The second situation that received a lot of attention at the Lansing meeting was a proposed hiking trail to a remote backwater area. This area is currently very hard to reach, so only a few locals make the effort to go there. It’s also a great place to hunt and observe wildlife, thanks mainly to its inaccessibility. Several people argued passionately that build-

ing a hiking trail to this area would ruin it, because too many people would go there. However, nobody suggested that airboats and hovercraft, by bringing more noise and human activity to remote backwaters, might be ruining the hunting and wildlife viewing in those places. Some of the same people were lambasting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service both for making the refuge more accessible and less accessible.

We don’t like to admit it, but we humans are a lot less logical and consistent than we like to think we are. Take the SUV commercials (please). Millions of these lumbering, gas-guzzlers have been sold to people who think they are going to drive from their suburban garage to a mountain top where they can watch bears. However, please note that in these commercials you never see another SUV on the mountain top. If they showed six other SUVs driving around that mountain top, the ads wouldn’t work.

So the real issues are accessibility, noise and the fantasy of controlling your own little piece of public land. Many of us who use the refuge would like to be able to easily reach our favorite places and not have other people get in our way. That’s why folks buy airboats, and that’s why folks buy kayaks. The airboat owner feels he or she is privileged to go to that place, because he or she worked to earn the money to buy the airboat. The kayaker feels the same, because he or she worked to paddle into the place.

Perhaps we can accommodate both fantasies to some degree, but it will require compromising. One thing is for certain, in 12 years or so when the Fish and Wildlife Service begins the next round of

COMING IN
MAY-JUNE 2006

Travel Issue

Visit the 1800s on the River

Art Show in Muscatine

Mudpuppies!

Peregrine Update

refuge planning, there will be more airboats and kayaks on the river, and fewer inaccessible places.

Written comments on the plan are being accepted until March 6, 2006. ☎

Contacts (800) 303-8201. For information about stories, columns and River News, contact Reggie McLeod, Pamela Eyden or Molly McGuire (editors@big-river.com). For calendar events, contact Kathy Delano or Molly McGuire (editors@big-river.com). For information about placing an ad in *Big River* or for information about selling *Big River* magazines contact Kathy Delano or Maureen J. Cooney (ads@big-river.com). We must receive calendar events by March 25 to get them into the May-June 2006 magazine. We must receive ads by March 15.



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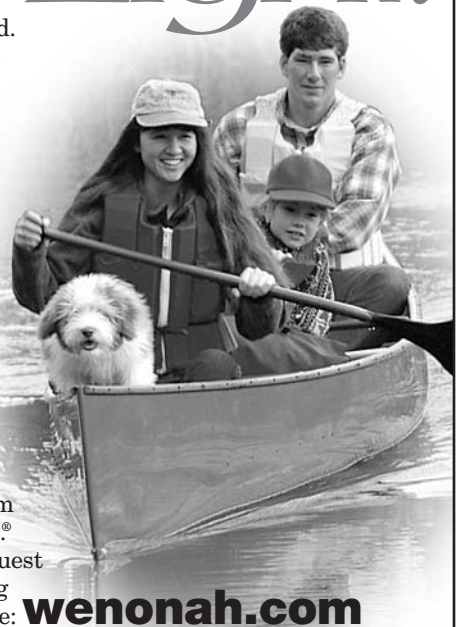
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River News

Illinois Disconnect

Chicago — A stupendous canal built to save human lives now threatens both Great Lakes and Mississippi River ecosystems.

The 28-mile Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which was completed in 1900 after eight years of construction, pulled Chicago's sewage away from Lake Michigan, where the city got its drinking water. The canal links Lake Michigan to the Des Plaines River, which flows into the Illinois, which flows into the Mississippi at Alton, Ill.

Now the engineering triumph serves as a path for invasive species moving between the Great Lakes to Mississippi.


Pinch it off? A conference of scientists suggested so in 2003. But the waterway has become a major barge

Outright separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi basins was the top recommendation of nearly 70 scientists, engineers and invasive-species experts.

route and recreational stream.

The zebra mussel that now plagues the Upper Miss came to the river by way of the canal. Our next invader may be the voracious round goby, a Caspian Sea import now in the Illinois. Asian carp are headed the other way.

An electrical barrier at Romeoville, Ill., prevents movement of fish between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, but may not keep out larvae and eggs. The \$3.5 million demonstration barrier switched on in April 2002 convinced officials to spend another

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\$9.1 million for a bigger, more permanent barrier 800 feet downstream that will begin operating this spring. The federal government paid for the demo. The state of Illinois is seeking federal help to pay for the new barrier.

Rail-like steel billets on the bed of the 25-foot-deep canal carry an electrical charge that drives away fish. The new barrier covers 480 square feet at the bottom of the 160-foot-wide canal. The Army Corps of Engineers, which is building the barrier, says the voltage won't harm humans.

The barrier's target for now is Asian carp, which grow to five feet and 100 pounds. These imported plankton eaters escaped from an Arkansas fish farm in the 1970s and are now displacing native species in the Mississippi.

Asian carp haven't reached Romeoville as of this writing. "They're not sitting there with their noses on the edge of the electricity," said Chuck Shea, project manager with the Army Corps' Chicago District.

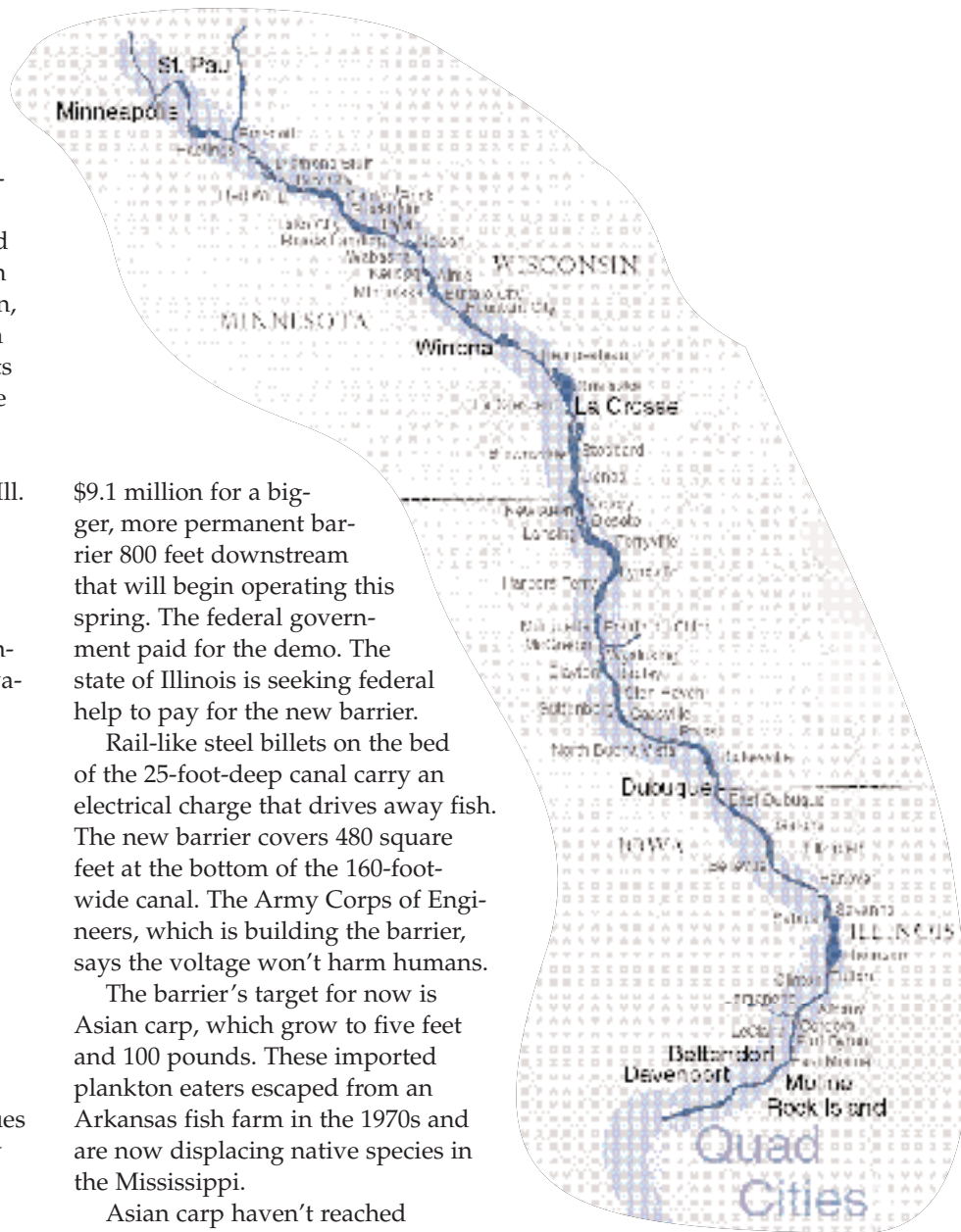
Even if it stops fish, however, Great Lakes advocates fear larvae and eggs can drift through the barrier.

Outright separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi basins was the top recommendation of nearly 70 scientists, engineers and invasive-species experts at the 2003 Aquatic Invasive Species Summit in Chicago. But it would cost tens of billions of

dollars and take years. A possible alternative would be a system of locks with water filters to screen out organisms. Congress is considering authorizing funds to study options.

The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, dug between 1892 and 1900, is deeper and wider than the original Chicago River and so reversed the flow of that stream in the flat country of northeastern Illinois.

Other Great Lakes states sued over the prospect of the artificial waterway lowering the level of the big lake. In 1926, the U.S. Supreme Court limited



outflow through the canal to 3,200 cubic feet per second. Most of the flow in some parts of the canal is effluent from wastewater treatment plants, serving five million people in Cook County, Ill.

The canal let zebra mussels and the round goby into the Mississippi basin. Both arrived in the ballast holds of seagoing vessels in the Great Lakes. Zebra mussels, two-inch European shellfish, attach to and smother native mussels and clog water intake pipes. Great Lakes states spend about \$1 billion a year in damage and control costs, and now Mississippi River states have the same problem. The round goby is a bottom dweller from the Black and Caspian seas that grows to 12 inches with a large head, like a giant tadpole. Aggressive and prolific, it may displace some native species in the Great Lakes and the Mississippi.

Meanwhile, the Asian carp has taken over some fishing areas on the Mississippi and would likewise threaten the \$4.5 billion annual Great

Lakes' sport and commercial fishing industry.

That set off alarm bells around the big lakes and led to the movement to separate the Great Lakes from the rivers again or do something.

It was, said Joel Brammeier, associate director with Alliance For the Great Lakes in Chicago, "sort of a head-slapping moment."

If you're curious and/or concerned about invasive species in the river, don't miss the new exhibit at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium, which features zebra mussels, Asian carp, and other exotic flora and fauna that are threatening ecosystems in the Great Lakes. The permanent exhibit opened this winter.

Price of Success

Des Moines, Iowa — Iowa may allow trapping of river otters, and hunting and trapping of bobcats starting in November, if the Iowa Natural Resource Commission (NRC) decides the animals' populations have recovered enough.

River otters had declined steadily by the time the state began restoring them to Iowa's rivers and streams in 1985. The restoration was successful.

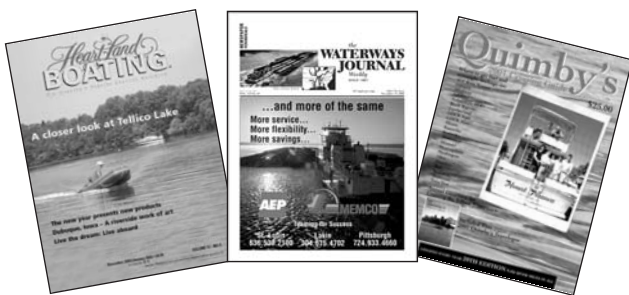
"River otters now live in every county and every watershed in the state," said Ron Andrews of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "They're showing up in streams that are only ankle-deep — otters' ankles."

The proposed otter trapping would be "ultra-conservative," Andrews said, with a maximum harvest of 300 per season, from the first Saturday of November through the end of January. Trapping would be legal only in certain areas, including northeast Iowa.

The DNR would keep close tabs on the number of animals taken every day and let trappers know if and when the maximum was reached.

Bobcat populations have grown in past decades, partly because the Conservation Reserve Program encouraged the growth of sheltering cover. The 15-to-30-pound cats are seen fre-

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quently in 75 Iowa counties, with unconfirmed sightings in another 10. Their population is expected to continue to increase, with or without trapping.

The proposal before the Iowa NRC designates a bobcat hunting and trapping area primarily in the southern part of the state. The season would close when 200 bobcats are taken.

The NRC will make a final decision in June. Public comments are welcome.

Rapids Pilot Honored

Dubuque, Iowa — Intrepid river pilot Philip Suiter (1799-1884) garnered a measure of fame for his ability to safely navigate the Rock Island Rapids. This winter he was inducted into the Rivers Hall of Fame in Dubuque, where he joins Mark Twain, Jacques Marquette, Louis Joliet, Louis Armstrong, Zebulon Pike and many others.

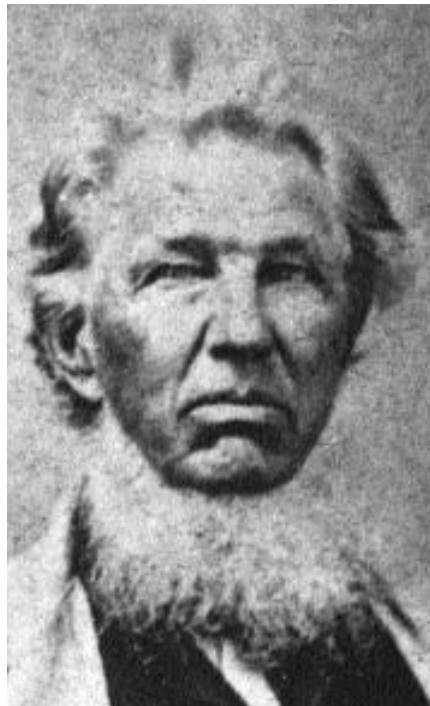
Before the lock and dam system raised water levels, this granite-bottomed stretch of river betweenavenport and Rock Island was one of the places riverboat pilots feared the most. Many boats and a lot of cargo were lost on the rocks there. Suiter, who knew the rapids very well and had a knack for making it through unscathed, made a good living as “the rapids pilot.” He also helped a young Army Lieutenant, Robert E. Lee, survey the channel, and he gave winning testimony in court for a bridge company whose case was argued by attorney Abraham Lincoln.

Suiter’s great, great grandchildren still live in the area. They are restoring his small brick house, which he built in 1839 near LeClaire, Iowa.

The National Rivers Hall of Fame is part of the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium at Dubuque.

On the Map

Washington, D.C. — All 12 species of North America’s map turtles (genus *Graptemys*) have been placed under international protection by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will now be



In the early and mid-1800s, Philip Suiter was one of the first pilots able to navigate a boat through the Rock Island rapids without losing passengers or cargo. (National Rivers Hall of Fame)

working with individual states to regulate exports.

Two map turtles are found along the Upper Mississippi River — the common map turtle and the Ouachita map turtle, both of which are avid sun-baskers that prefer clean, slow-moving waters.

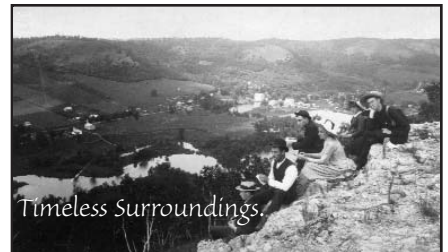
CITES includes 168 countries that work together to monitor and regulate trade in wild animals and plants.

Big Museum Plan

Dubuque, Iowa — Since it opened 30 months ago, the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium has become an important regional attraction and a center for river education activities. In January, the museum announced plans for ambitious new growth, asking the city of Dubuque to dedicate adjacent buildings and land formerly owned by the Adams Company, so it can double its size.

Nearly 700,000 people have visited the museum, which is affiliated with the Smithsonian Institute. It has also formed a network with 58 other museums up and down the river.

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center, expansion plans call for the museum to broaden its focus from just the Mississippi River to all of America's rivers.

The expansion will be a big part of Dubuque's \$188-million riverfront development project. Although plans depend on funding, some parts of the plan may be completed by 2009.

Pool 9 Friends

Lansing, Iowa — River lovers, birders, sportsmen and residents of Pool 9, the stretch of river between Lock and Dam 8 and Lock and Dam 9, are invited to join a new organization — the Friends of Pool 9. Members can help create canoe trails and boat landing wildflower gardens, clean up beaches, plant trees, do frog and bird surveys, and join in picnics and cruises.

"We want to do positive things in Pool 9 in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service," explained group organizer Ric Zarwell of Lansing. "Our focus is on teamwork and fun. I've been wanting to do some-

thing like this for years."

Thirty people had joined the group as of the end of January. Their first project is to reconstruct and restore sandbar beaches upstream of Lansing this summer, recontour the beaches, clean up litter and control the poison ivy.

"We have the permits already," Zarwell said. "A local bulldozer operator is volunteering his time, and Brennan Company is giving us a discount rate to bring equipment down from Lock and Dam 8."

The second project will be a river cleanup and picnic.

The new Friends group is not affiliated with the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge. For more information, contact Zarwell at (563) 538-4991.

Frog Fungus

Costa Rica — Some experts say the research is not conclusive, but others are convinced that a recent study of frog die-offs in the mountains of Costa Rica points to a global problem.

Researchers at the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve have found evidence that warmer temperatures over the last few decades may have spurred growth of a fungus that is lethal to frogs. Reported in the journal *Nature* in January, researchers' conclusions are based on an analysis of fungus outbreaks and frog extinctions in diverse and widely separated areas in Costa Rica.

The chytrid fungus is found throughout the world and has been implicated in amphibian deaths before. It generally prefers cooler conditions than those found in the American tropics, but warmer temperatures increase evaporation, which creates clouds that block sunlight, thus cooling off the daytime temperatures and trapping heat at night.

"Disease is the bullet killing frogs, but climate change is pulling the trigger," said one of the researchers, Dr. Alan Pounds. The impact on biodiversity, he said, is "staggering."

Critics of the research point out that the evidence is all circumstantial.

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The bronze sculpture was based on this historical photograph of a clammer. (Photo courtesy of the Muscatine History & Industry Museum.)

“It is difficult to prove cause and effect on the ground, where multiple factors interact in complex ways,” said Cynthia Carey, amphibian disease expert at the University of Colorado. (*New York Times*, 1-12-06)

Bronze Clammer

Muscatine, Iowa — A 30-foot-tall, bronze clammer standing in a boat and holding two bronze clamming forks crossed over his head, will take up residence on the town’s waterfront some time this spring. The sculpture is currently being created by artist Erik Blome of Chicago. Called “Mississippi Harvest,” it will celebrate the town’s history as a center of river clamming and the pearl button industry.

The sculpture is part of a \$9.6 million Pearl of the Mississippi project funded by public and private donations, as well as a voter-approved, one-percent sales tax. An aquatic center and riverfront renovation are also part of the project.

A scale model of the sculpture is on display at the Muscatine History & Industry Museum.

Domain Challenged

Blaine, Minn. — Owners of riverfront property in Champlin, Minn., who have claimed that the city threatened to force them out of their house to build luxury housing and a marina, spoke in favor of tightening the state’s eminent domain laws at a hearing in the Minnesota House of Representatives in January. The House is considering legislation to change the state’s eminent domain



The bronze sculpture is being made from a cast taken of a full-size clay sculpture. (Photo courtesy of the Muscatine History & Industry Museum.)

laws. Similar legislation will probably be proposed in the state senate.

Minnesota, like other states, has long allowed cities and counties to take private property for economic development. The proposed changes would give landowners more power to fight takeovers. Opponents say the change would also make it more expensive for governments to take any property, even if the land is to be used to create a road, park or school.

Minnesota isn’t alone. Similar legislation has been put forward in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and 23 other states. The move follows last year’s U.S. Supreme Court decision that it was constitutional for the city of New London, Conn., to take private homes and land needed to develop new businesses and residences.

Nuke Full

Monticello, Minn. — Public hearings were held early in February on Minneapolis-based Xcel Energy’s request to store radioactive spent fuel from its Monticello nuclear plant in above-ground casks. It has used a similar “dry cask” storage system at its Prairie Island plant, a few miles from Red Wing, Minn. Both the Monticello and Prairie Island nuclear plants are on the banks of the Mississippi River.

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- Dan’s Pepin Marina
- Dave Peters Edina Realty
- Dockside Mercantile
- Harbor Hill Inn
- Laura Ingalls Wilder Historical Society
- On-Deck Seminars & Charters
- Smith Brothers Landing
- Stockholm Gardens
- The Good Apple & Maiden Rock Apples
- Up a Creek

Xcel has proposed storing the spent nuclear fuel in up to 30 containers made of concrete and steel, which would prolong the life of the plant by 20 years. If the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission does not permit storage of additional waste, Xcel says it will close the plant and replace it with a new one.

Xcel is a public utility that provides electricity and natural gas to Colorado, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin. Xcel says demand for electricity in its system is growing by about 100 megawatts each year.

Casks at Cordova

Cordova, Ill. — Exelon Nuclear Quad-City Generating Station has begun storing its spent nuclear fuel in three thick concrete silos outside the nuclear reactor building in this riverside town 25 miles upriver of the Quad Cities.

When it opened in 1972, the nuclear plant had the capacity to store

up to 40 years worth of waste, or 8,000 rods, in underwater tanks inside the building. It is now running out of room and is moving the waste outside, like the nuclear plant in Red Wing, Minn. One concrete pad can hold 60 storage casks. There is enough space at the Cordova facility for four pads.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has licensed 23 plants to store nuclear waste in outside facilities, as a temporary measure until the federal government takes all the country's nuclear waste to a single storehouse sometime between 2012 and 2015.

In the Movies

Cape Girardeau, Mo. — Director John Madden and actors commandeered the towboat *Elizabeth Ann* and local shipping company offices here in January to film scenes for the movie "Killshot," based on the popular crime novel by Elmore Leonard. The story follows an ironworker and his wife, who escape trouble in Detroit by running to Cape Girardeau,

where he finds work as a welder. Thomas Jane, Diane Lane and Mickey Rourke star in the film. A host of towboat engineers, pilots and deckhands were hired as extras. The film is scheduled for release in the summer of 2006.

Ferry Loses Funds


Cassville, Wis. — The Cassville Ferry, which has struggled through many a season with no governmental support at all, will go without the \$400,000 in federal funding that seemed so sure a few months ago. The funding was needed to help with operating expenses — fuel, insurance and maintenance costs. Instead, the federal funds were granted for capital improvements that it doesn't need.

Village President Louis Okey said the landing area and terminal didn't need improvement, and it wasn't the right time to purchase a new boat.


"We would have to come up with \$70,000 in matching funds to purchase a new boat, and we don't have the money," said Lisa Hoffman, a

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Winner of the March-April River Lovers' Photo Contest!



What do you do while you wait to lock through? On a hot summer day, Ron Vaughn of Dubuque, Iowa, knew the perfect way to pass the time while waiting for barges to lock through. He used a boat bumper as a flotation device and tied the bumper to the boat to keep from drifting away toward the lock and dam. This issue's winning photograph was taken by P. Carter Newton of Galena, Il.

Now it's your turn. Send river photographs to us at Big River by the deadline below. If we select your photo to print in these pages, we'll send you three free copies of the magazine to share with friends. The contest is open to amateurs and professionals, adults and kids. Email a digital JPEG (.jpg) photo file — high resolution photos only, please — to pam@big-river.com. Write "PHOTO CONTEST" in the subject line.

Or send a print to Photo Editor, Big River, P.O. Box 204, Winona, MN 55987. (We cannot return photographs, though.)

Please send no more than three photos for each issue. Include your name, address, phone number and a short description of the photograph — who or what it is, when and where it was taken, etc.

The deadline for the May-June issue is March 20, 2006. The deadline for July-August is April 21, 2006.

member of the Cassville Harbor Commission who has organized several successful fundraising events to keep the old boat running.

The little ferry provides important services to people who would otherwise have to drive to Prairie du Chien, Wis., or Dubuque, Iowa, to cross the river by bridge. It's been operating since 1836 and is the oldest operating car ferry in Wisconsin. The new season opens May 5.

Fish Partnership

La Crosse, Wis. — A new nationwide program to benefit fish and fish habitat, called the National Fish Habitat

Initiative (NFHI), will focus this year on the streams and rivers of the Driftless Area — that hilly, unglaciated region centered on the Mississippi River, and extending from Eau Claire, Wis., to Hastings, Minn., south to northwest Illinois and northeastern Iowa.

"NFHI won't be involved in projects on the main stem of the Mississippi, but on contributory streams," said Pam Thiel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Fisheries biologist.

However, since NFHI projects include streambank protection and keeping cattle out of streams, as well

(River News continues on page 38)

A vertical advertisement for Signatures Restaurant & Event Center. The top half features a stylized tree with a dark red trunk and branches against a light green background. The text "FINE FOOD SERVED DAILY" is written vertically in white, sans-serif capital letters along the right side of the tree. The bottom half of the advertisement has a dark red background. The word "Signatures" is written in a large, elegant, cursive script. Below it, in smaller, white, sans-serif capital letters, are the words "RESTAURANT" and "EVENT CENTER". At the bottom, the text "Winona, MN 507.434.3167" and "www.signatureswinona.com" is displayed in white. At the very bottom, in small white capital letters, it says "NOW BOOKING EVENTS FOR 2016-07".



(Abbie Reese)

Savanna, Illinois

Looking for a Future

By Abbie Reese

Its potential is a matter of perspective.

Savanna, Ill., seems to have a lot going for it. Signs posted from three directions tout this river town as a sportsman's paradise. It sits at one end of the Great River Trail, which stretches 62 miles south along the river to Rock Island. About three miles north of town, Palisades State Park offers camping, hiking and stunning overlooks of the river. Upriver from there, most of the former Savanna Army Depot's 13,000 acres are about to be opened to the public and the other 3,000 acres will be made available for commercial development.

Despite these assets, development in town has struggled with some frustrating setbacks.

"It's been a devastating past," admits Gene Flack, who has served

more than 30 years in local public office, including as mayor.

Maybe it wouldn't seem so bad if the town hadn't once had it so good. In 1938, when Flack arrived in the Savanna area from Wisconsin, the U.S. Army Depot employed 7,000 people and the railroad companies provided jobs for 30 percent of Savanna's labor force. Unlike many people, Flack stayed put even as industries took their business elsewhere, people followed, Main Street retailers abandoned their storefronts and a hospital closed its doors. The economy shriveled. Today, Carroll County's population hovers around 16,000, down from 19,507 in 1960.

The county's unemployment rate was 8.2 percent in 2004, compared to 5.6 percent in JoDaviess County, just upriver, and 6.8 percent in Whiteside County, just downriver, according to state figures.

"People are leaving. People are going outside this area to work to live.

They don't have a choice," said Steven Haring, Blackhawk Hills Economic Development District director, a Savanna native and second-time candidate for state representative.

Industrious Settlers

The first white settlers traveled from nearby Galena by river and trail on Nov. 4, 1828. They built three log cabins within a month, and within a year, they sold lumber on the river. By 1844, Savanna had 500 residents.

In 1862, the Northern Illinois Railroad Company laid track, and more followed its lead in 1885. A year later, five hotels accommodated visitors. Eventually, the railroad industry made up 47 percent of the local economy.

"The history of Savanna was the railroads," Flack explained. "You could go anywhere you wanted to go — north, east, west, south."

In 1917, the Army built the Savanna Army Depot to test artillery on

13,172 acres of prairie and backwaters. Then it added facilities to store and maintain munitions.

Throughout America's wars, the Depot and Savanna thrived. Clothing shops and shoe stores enticed shoppers downtown. About a dozen neighborhood grocers sold produce. Telephone companies and utilities opened offices.

"If you graduated from Savanna High in the 50s or 60s, you were guaranteed employment," said Pam Brown, executive secretary of the Savanna Chamber of Commerce.

Haring thinks the downturn began in the late 1960s when the Depot downsized.

Then, in 1980, the Milwaukee Road, the major company in town, hit on hard times, changed ownership and closed its local operations. Flack, like many, had worked on the railroads. After 32 years as a car inspector, he was out of a job.

As Brown remembers, the first blow to the town's economy was the railroad industry pulling out. Brown's office is an old railroad car, stationed parallel to the train tracks, which are parallel to the Mississippi River. Trains rumble past her window, but they no longer stop in Savanna for servicing.

The spiral continued when the Army Depot was closed in 1995. Employees transferred to the Rock Island Arsenal.

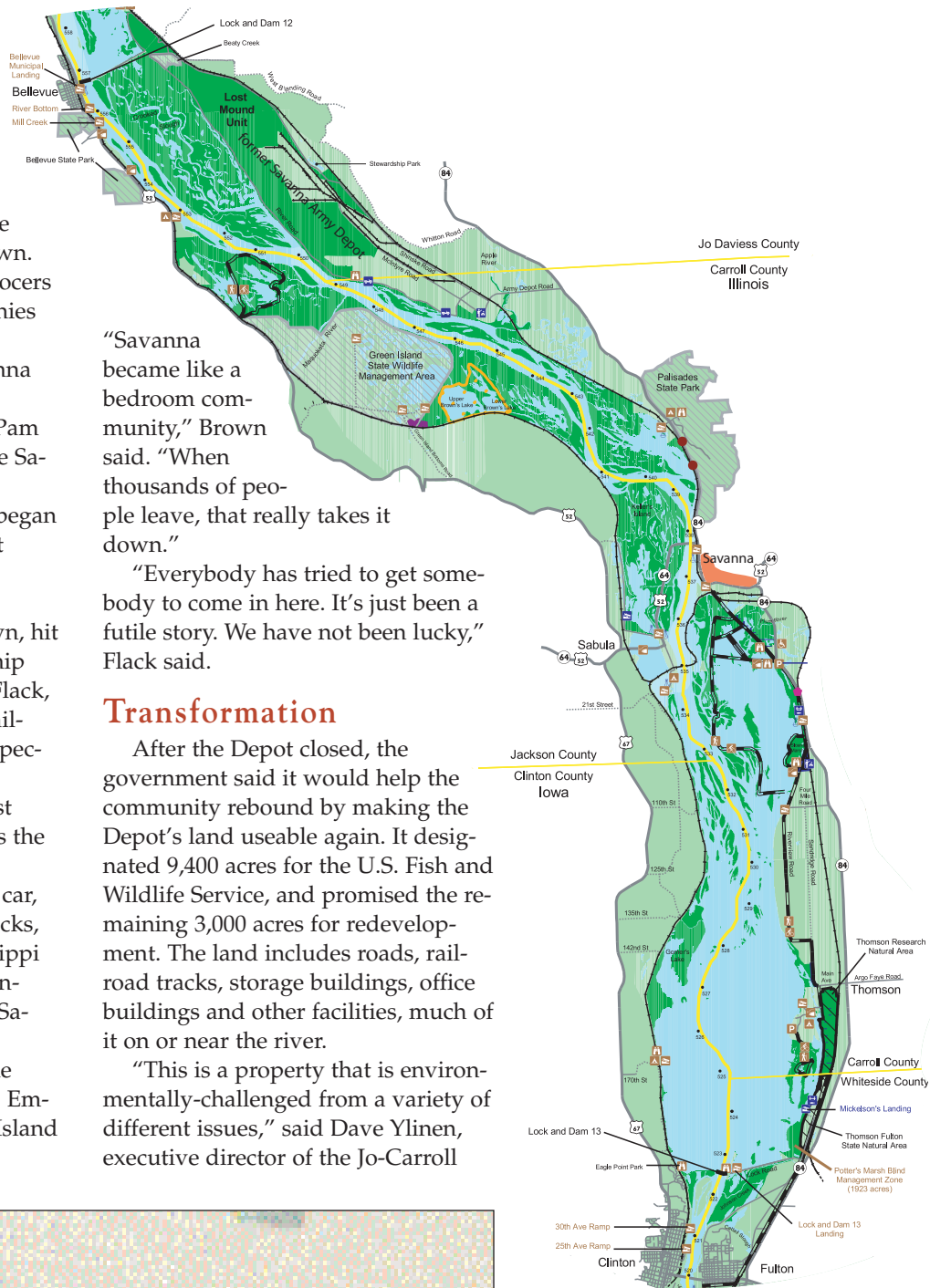
"Savanna became like a bedroom community," Brown said. "When thousands of people leave, that really takes it down."

"Everybody has tried to get somebody to come in here. It's just been a futile story. We have not been lucky," Flack said.

Transformation

After the Depot closed, the government said it would help the community rebound by making the Depot's land useable again. It designated 9,400 acres for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and promised the remaining 3,000 acres for redevelopment. The land includes roads, railroad tracks, storage buildings, office buildings and other facilities, much of it on or near the river.

"This is a property that is environmentally-challenged from a variety of different issues," said Dave Ylinen, executive director of the Jo-Carroll



(Original map courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.)

Depot Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) at Eagles Landing. The possibility remains of an unexploded artillery shell on the grounds.

"People are making a gung-ho attempt," said Haring. "It's been a roller coaster ride. We just can't quit. It's a monumental task."

While rent in some buildings is on-

Mark Skidmore, who moved to Savanna from Chicago five years ago, is planning to move to Galena, where he hopes his art will have a better reception. (Abbie Reese)



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Dave Ylinen, executive director of the Jo-Carroll Depot Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA), is working to bring jobs onto 2,930 acres of former Army land on the Mississippi River, renamed Eagles Landing. (Abbie Reese)

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ly a dollar per square foot, Ylinen says some businesses won't consider moving to the Depot unless they can buy property. The land is scheduled to be turned over to the LRA by 2012, once the clean-up is complete.

"To me," Brown said, "the government has been lax, or lackadaisical, or whatever word you want to use, about getting the Army Depot cleaned and ready for redevelopment."

Haring disagrees, "If we're a victim, maybe that's our own fault. Maybe we need to get beyond that, and create our own destiny."

Recently, the LRA was granted an early transfer of 1,500 acres of land so that even though it isn't clean, as of May 2006, the LRA can sell property to businesses.

The Sac and Fox Indian Nation in Oklahoma has talked about developing a bio-diesel plant and a call center. A security information company plans to store sensitive data in the earth-sheltered bunkers that used to hold munitions. A local winery plans to do business on the old testing site.

"If we get half the projects on the horizon, we'd be a winner," Ylinen said.

The Future

Locals agree on one thing: A robust economic recovery will require

diversity. They learned this the hard way, having suffered from their dependence on the railroads and the Depot.

JB Sullivan Inc. is their prized case study, the local success story. Sullivan's Foods sold groceries before the Army Depot closed and has since opened 10 more grocery stores and two Save-A-Lots within a 350-mile radius. Along the way, the company has picked up other businesses — a hotel, a gas station and a banquet facility.

Brown says the company has really survived and thrived because it has diversified. The community needs to follow suit, with more tourism and more industry.

Lewziana Kitchen, described as a "French Quarter Coffee House," which opened a year and a half ago, draws customers with a menu of espresso coffee drinks and Cajun cooking, including pork creole, red beans and rice with smoked rib tips, and cajun sausage. Co-owner Sandra White said Lewziana Kitchen is a seasonal business, and it will open again sometime after March 1, whenever the weather warms up and people start coming to town.

The occasional new restaurant or antique store helps attract some tourism, but the latest target market-- hailed by some as the town's econom-

Prison Holds Thomson's Economy Hostage

By Abbie Reese

A few miles downriver from Savanna, the smaller community of Thomson, Ill., is also playing a waiting game with the government. Last year, when politicians and business leaders met together for a tri-state planning session in Illinois, a Wisconsin resident said he thought he remembered hearing of an unoccupied prison in these parts.

That prompted sighs from local leaders and this, from Steven Haring, Blackhawk Hills Economic Development District director: "That's our \$145 million ghost.

We have our own white elephant."

The 1,600-cell, maximum-security prison still stands empty more than five years after it was completed.

Mike Schafer, owner of Schafer's Fisheries Inc. in Fulton, Ill., opened his organic fertilizer plant a mile from the Thomson Correctional Center after the state built it.

"They ought to close down one of their prisons that aren't cost-efficient and open this one that is," Schafer said.

Officials visited the town as the prison project unfolded and told residents how many gas stations, houses and hotels the community would need when the prison opened. Locals re-

sponded. Some invested their life savings to prepare for an economic opportunity that never materialized.

"I think we're a victim of poor planning and we continue to be a victim. I think we've been held hostage on that issue," Haring said. "It's a fleecing of Northwest Illinois. It's a fleecing of the taxpayers' money, knowing we have over-

crowding in other facilities and other facilities are crumbling before our eyes."

Dates of the facility's opening were once bandied about, Haring said, but

aren't anymore.

Gene Flack, who spent 30 years serving as a mayor and city council member in Savanna, thinks the next elections could provoke the opening.

"Politics are coming up pretty soon, and that'll make a difference," he said.

When it does open, locals are convinced it will not only revive Thomson, it'll boost the economies of neighboring communities, as well. ☰

Editors note:

At press time, Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich announced the prison will open on Sept. 1, 2006, with 200 beds for minimum-security inmates.

The 1,600-cell, maximum-security prison still stands empty more than five years after it was completed.

ic salvation -- has also drawn some local controversy. A sign on a downtown bar touts, "Bikers Welcome," and another boasts a Biker Museum. On weekends during the warm months, the street is often lined with motorcycles.

Flack calls the campaign to lure motorcyclists into town a fad.

Mark Skidmore, a painter and graphic designer, has attempted to capitalize on it by putting up abstract paintings of Harleys, displayed toward Main Street in Skidmore Gallery, facing Poopy's, a motorcycle hangout. But he admits his strategy has a logistical flaw.

It's hard for a biker to come in, pick up a picture and take off on his

bike.

Skidmore, a Chicago transplant, says he and his wife gave Savanna everything they could for five years. Now they're planning to move to Galena. "As an artist, unless I switch completely and go into tattoo artistry or airbrushing, I don't see much longevity here," he said.

Skidmore created free renditions of an improved riverfront for the city, but locals greeted them with a cool reception. "I've kind of gotten the impression they like things the way they are and don't want to see any improvements," Skidmore said. "Maybe they just don't want to see people come in and rock the boat."

(Savanna continues on page 35)



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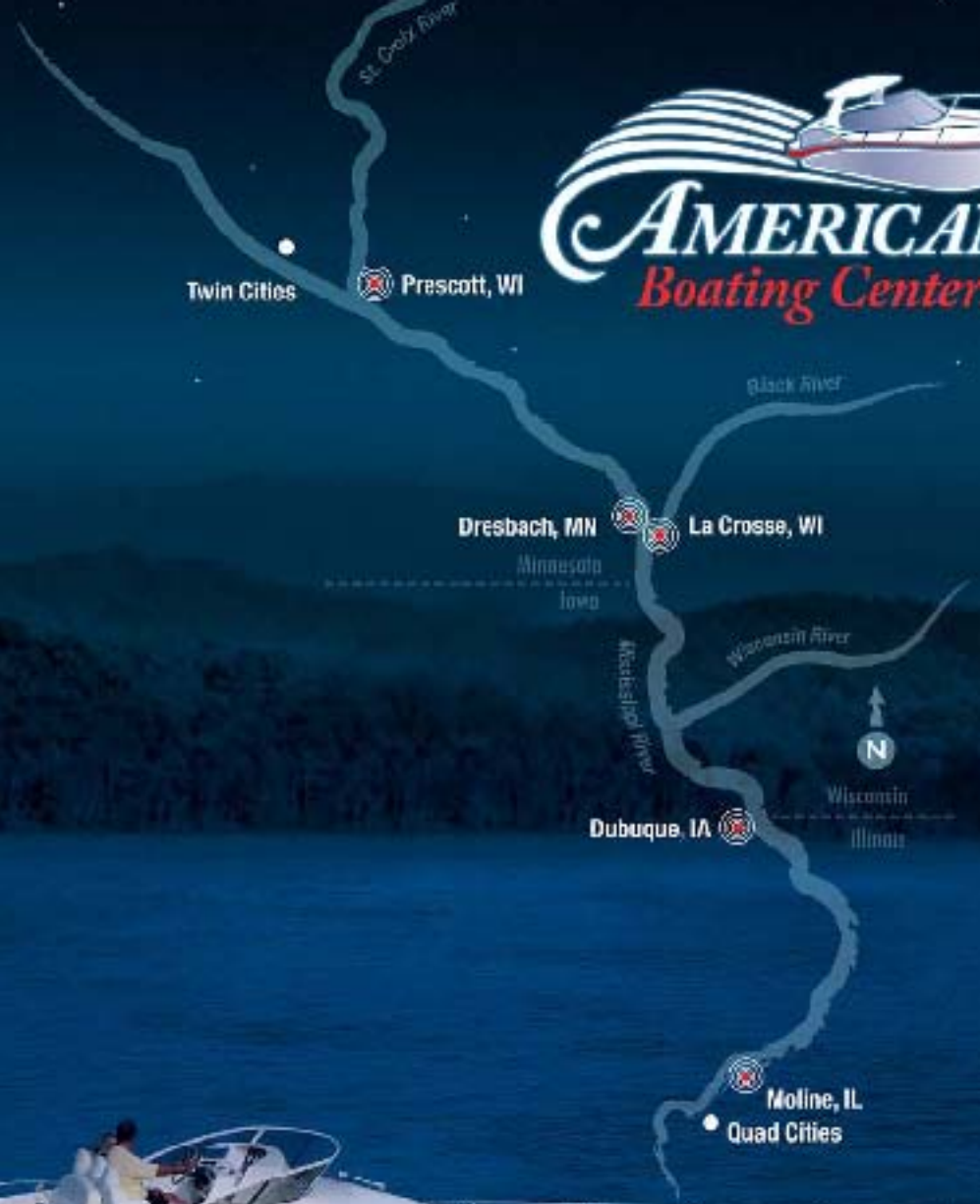


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Sedimental Journey

Video says goodbye to the Dredge *Thompson*

Dredging Up Memories: the Dredge William A. Thompson mediaworks, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District, 2005, 31 minutes, \$10.95.

The first time I spotted the *Thompson* at night I didn't know what I was seeing. Driving around a bend on Highway 61, I saw a huge vessel in the river, spectacularly lit up and looking quite festive. I knew that none of the big *Queen* paddlewheelers were in the area, so what was this glittering vision? Had we been invaded?

Only later did I realize that this 267-ft. boat was all lit up, not for a party, but for the work that went on on the dredge 24 hours, seven days a week when it was cleaning settled sediment out of the Mississippi's shipping channel.

The dredge *William A. Thompson* has been digging sand from the bottom of the river for almost 70 years, way beyond its original life expectancy and long enough for two generations to work on it. In a few years it will be replaced by the *Goetz*. The *Thompson* will retire to Winona, Minn., as part of the Minnesota Maritime Art Museum.

This documentary videotape is a fond farewell to the largest and only

remaining cutterhead dredge on the Mississippi. Not just a history of the boat, it is a glimpse of the river before and after the dredging of the nine-foot channel. It offers an explanation of why dredges are needed on the river, and of course, what it is like to live and work on the dredge.

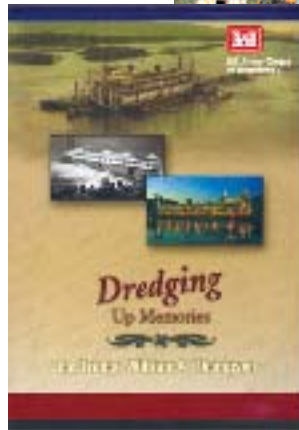
A lot of information is presented in this documentary, with narration by the veteran newscaster Don Shelby, interviews of former and present workers, historical photographs, and readings from printed works. Historian John Anfinson and biologist Cal Fremling, talk about how maintaining the channel for shipping has changed the river. Gretchen Benjamin of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources explains how the St. Paul District of the Corps has made drastic changes in the last 30 years to deposit dredge spoils in a more

(Thompson continues on page 27)



Top: The *Thompson* pulls into its home port at Fountain City, Wis., in 1963. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

Above: The large cutterhead mounted on the *Thompson's* bow digs sand, gravel and silt from the Main Channel. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)





A Valley Full of Eagles

By Pamela Eyden

(RJ and Linda Miller)

The sight of a bald eagle — power-stroking over the river or swooping and diving for fish — stops a lot of people in their tracks. It stops them in their cars, too.

Drivers this year will have more reasons to stop along the river than ever before. Last year was a boom year for bald eagles on the Upper Mississippi River Refuge, the 261-mile stretch of river from Wabasha, Minn., to Rock Island, Ill.

“Eagles are doing really well on the river,” said Brian Stemper, refuge biologist. “The numbers are just phenomenal.”

The number of known, active eagle nests on the refuge doubled in four years, from 81 in 2001 to 167 in 2005, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. An estimated 279 new eagles fledged from those nests.

Crowded Neighborhood

Eagle nests are too big to mistake for anything else. These stick nests — which can be six to nine feet across and weigh a ton or even two — are set high in tall, mature trees. Many nests are visible from the highway.

Look for eagles’ nests in places that are protected and close to both water and a source of food — fish — yet away from other eagles’ nests. If eagles can’t find a spot that meets their

The number of immature eagles was way down this year — a cause of concern to Terrence Ingram of the Eagle Nature Foundation.

criteria, they may move to a tributary river or up on the ridge.

“Eagles are filling in the territory pretty well,” Stemper said. “The only problem is the availability of big trees that can support the nests. The floods have knocked down a lot of the largest trees, so the young birds are having to move farther off to build their nests.”

Stemper noted that 90 of last year’s new nests are in the more remote, undeveloped stretches of the river in Pools 9, 10 and 11, where there are more trees.

Terrence Ingram, who coordinates

a mid-winter bald eagle count for the Eagle Nature Foundation, based in Apple River, Ill., agreed that the number of eagles is up, but he’s concerned that the percentage of immature eagles has been decreasing for the last six years.

“A healthy percentage of immatures to adults is at least 32 or 33 percent. In 2000 we had 38.9 percent, in 2005, it was 24.6 percent and now, in 2006, the count for the Mississippi River was way down — just 15 percent of the eagles were immatures. This concerns me.

“Also, we usually see large concentrations of immature eagles in the winter, but we didn’t in 2005 or in 2006. They just weren’t out there,” Ingram said.

(Immature bald eagles are mottled brown, or brown with white streaks, and they lack the white head and tail feathers of adults.)

Ingram speculated that eagles may be moving farther away from the river to find territory to build their nests. Then when their young fledge, they have to fly farther from their home territory to find food. This may stress



(Allen Blake Sheldon)

them and cause greater mortality.

"We see eagles out in the boonies feeding on dead animals and manure from hog and chicken farms." Eagles are scavengers by nature, he said, "but this may come back to haunt us."

Some speculate that the increased density of nests and territories may result in eagles laying fewer eggs or raising fewer young.

"You'd have to do a study of this to know, but it makes sense," said Mary Beth Garrigan, director of the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minn. "The more nests you have close together, the fewer chicks might make it to fledgling age. There would be more competition for food."

Nests are uncommonly close to each other near Wabasha, Garrigan said.

"We're seeing eagle nests as close as 500 yards apart in some places. There's even a new nest visible from the viewing platform [on the river near the Eagle Center]. Last summer we noticed a lot of interaction between adult and juvenile eagles over

there, but we couldn't see the nest until the leaves fell off the trees," she said.

Eagle Flocks

Eagles only pair up in the spring. During the winter, they roost and feed together in large numbers, where the river hasn't frozen over.

As many as 800 have been counted in Spring Lake south of Savanna, Ill.

People in Bettendorf, Iowa, kept their pets indoors for a week this winter while more than 100 eagles roosted in neighborhood trees downriver from Lock and Dam 14.

Eagle watchers in Alma, Wis., counted 500 eagles fishing below the dam there one weekend this winter.

In March, as the ice melts and the river opens up, eagles disperse and move north. By the time they get back to their home territories, they are ready to settle in to old nests or find territory for new ones. Some of the eagles that move through the Upper Mississippi River Valley continue on to northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin and Canada. Others nest here.

Nesting may begin two weeks earlier near the Quad Cities than near the Twin Cities, and a week earlier near McGregor, Iowa, than Winona, Minn.

Sally and Bob Sloan have lived in their riverside home in Homer township, near Winona, for 10 years. There are four eagle nests within a mile of their house.

"We keep an eye on those families," Sally Sloan said. "When we go to town and come back, we're always ogling the nests to see if anyone's home."

Sally Sloan said the eagles have been very loyal to the four nests.

"Every year they rebuild the nests and raise more babies. They're very productive here! I'm beginning to wonder about eagle fertility."

She looks forward to March and April: "It's spring! The world is right! The eagles are nesting!" ❧

Pamela Eyden is news and photo editor for Big River.

In Spring They Return, Flashing Their Wings and Looking Just Ducky

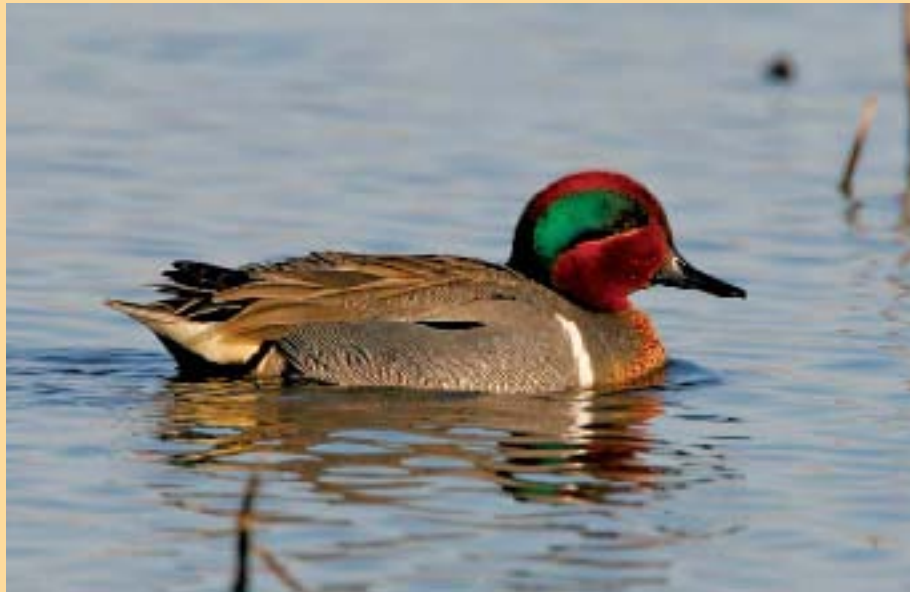
Nature tends to economize. When it's courting time, male waterfowl sport their brightest, show-offy plumage to go along with their loudest calls and show-offy behavior, which they flaunt to get the attention of females. These showy drakes

brighten up springtime on the Upper Mississippi, when much of the riverscape is still dominated by muted browns and grays.

Later in the season — when all chance of mating is over, the young have grown and pairs drift apart to

join larger flocks — molting drakes lose their bright feathers and metamorphose to a more camouflaged appearance, similar to the hens.

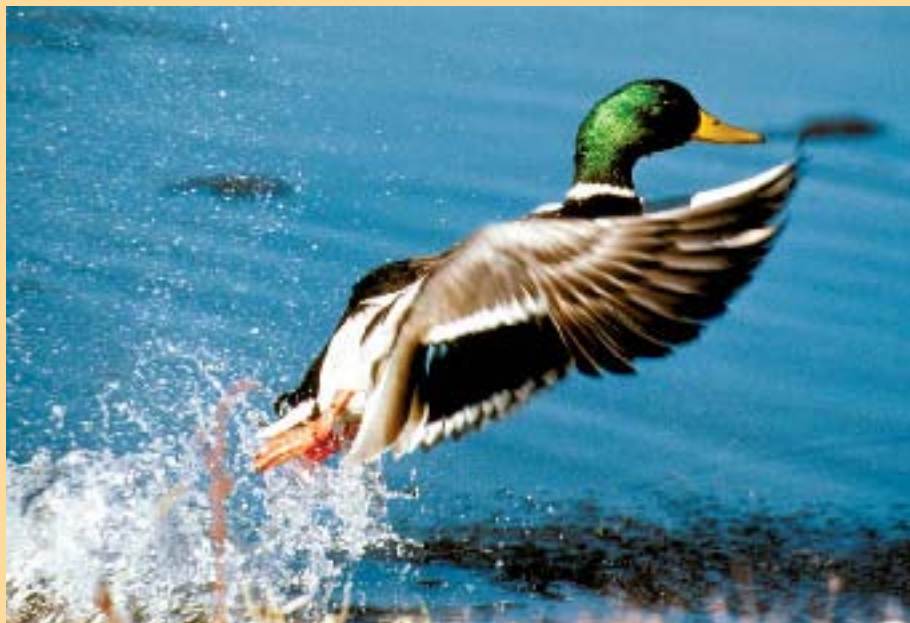
So when the difference is most important, it is the most obvious, but a measure of anonymity is apparently more useful for community life. (You may pause here to contemplate parallels with human behavior.)



The green-winged teal is the smallest dabbling duck in North America. (Charles and Marsha Kessler)

Green-Winged Teal

Green-winged teals don't stay long in the Upper Mississippi River Valley because they're on their way to nesting grounds in northern Minnesota and Canada, but they're vivid while they're here. Drakes sport red heads, emerald eye masks and white epaulettes on their wings during the breeding season, and they sound something like the frogs called spring peepers. After the season is over, they camouflage themselves in speckled brown feathers, much like their mates.



The wings of the mallard whistle in flight. (Dave Menke, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Mallard

Drake mallards continue to wear emerald green heads and high-contrast tuxedo-style plumage until the end of summer, partly because hens continue to mate and raise as many broods as the season allows. Then — just before hunting season — the drakes molt and grow new mottled brown feathers, like the females wear all year.

Northern Shoveler

Northern shoveler drakes change plumage three times during the year. From December through May, they have bright green heads, rufous red flanks and white breasts, and their wings rattle loudly when they take off. Their two other sets of feathers



This northern shoveler drake is in full breeding plumage in the spring of the year. (Charles and Marsha Kessler)

are both paler and duller. They nest in western Canada and northwestern United States, spending winters on the Gulf Coast and Mexico.

Greater Scaup

As they migrate through the Mississippi River Valley on their way to nest in the northern reaches of Canada and Alaska, greater scaup drakes are bright and bracing to see, but you probably won't hear them unless you're a hen — *Sibley's Guide to Birds* describes their call as a "soft, hollow, bubbling hoot." At the end of breeding season, the drakes lose their stark, high-contrast, black and white look and molt into a streaked brown that's more drab than their mates. Females have bright white cheek patches all year.



This northern shoveler drake look a disheveled mess because he is in the midst of molting, when his spring feathers fall out and are replaced by inconspicuous, autumnal wear. (Charles and Marsha Kessler)



The greater scaup is very easy to spot on the river, thanks to its high-contrast plumage. (Dave Menke, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Pied-billed Grebe

Pied-billed grebes aren't ducks at all, and they don't really look like ducks. With their long necks and stubby tails, they look more like loons. The drakes spruce up a bit during the mating season, with white rings around their eyes, a dark patch under their chins and a striking, pale bill with a broad black band. But they compensate for this subtlety with loud calls described as "far-carrying, vibrant, throaty barks." After breeding season, they quiet down and lose these contrasting touches.

Canvasback

The canvasback drake is a striking bird, indeed, in the mating season, with its white coat, black vest and ruddy red head. To attract attention from potential mates, he gives an "eerie hooting goh-WOOO-o-o-o-o, with weird squeaky overtones," according to *Sibley's Guide to Birds*. Vast numbers of canvasbacks traditionally migrate



Pied-billed grebe drakes are subtle, but still distinctive in the spring, with bright eye rings and a dark band crossing its beak. (Charles and Marsha Kessler)



After breeding season, the pied-billed grebe drake molts to become an even more subtle bird. (Charles and Marsha Kessler)



The drake canvasback at left is showing off his spring costume. (Charles and Marsha Kessler)

through the Upper Mississippi River Valley to nest in the prairie pothole regions and farther north into Canada.

Wood Ducks

During breeding season, wood duck drakes are one of the most vivid and ornate ducks on the continent. They sport vivid yellow flanks, rufous red breasts, bright white "chin straps" and emerald green manes that sweep down the backs of their necks like Prussian soldiers' helmets. Later in the season they tone down, although they are always readily told apart from their mates. Wood ducks, like their name implies, prefer wooded areas and nest in holes in trees or in special boxes mounted on trees or poles. They nest in the Upper Mississippi. 🌳



This pair of wood ducks is in breeding plumage. Note the female's wide eye ring, and the male's red eye ring. (Dave Menke, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

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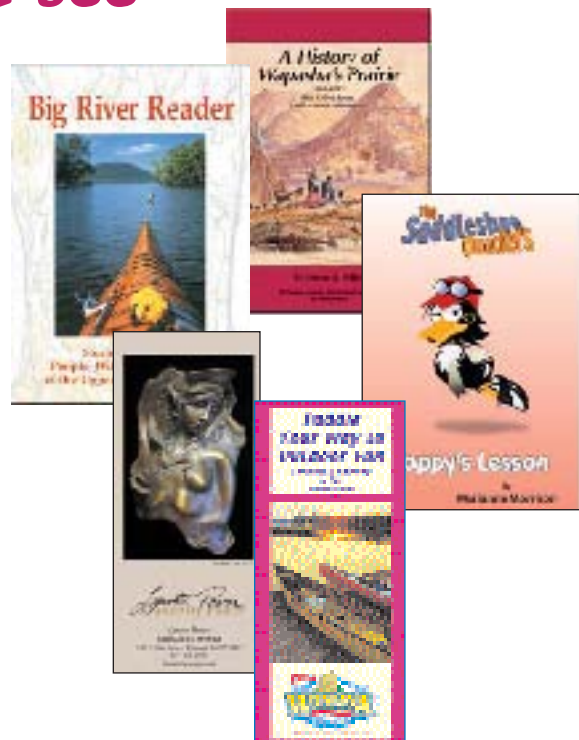
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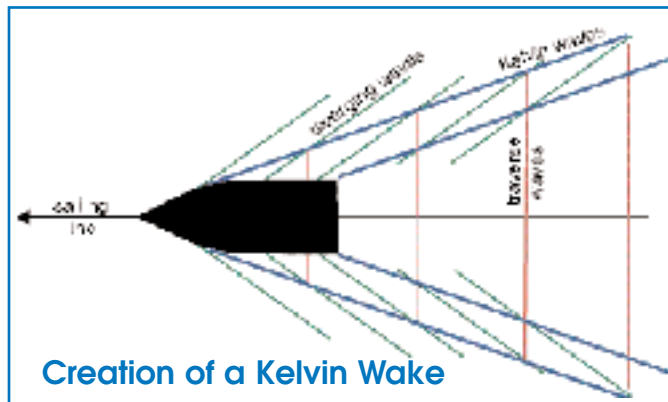
Photo by Ann Reber

Wake Up!

By Reggie McLeod

One of the best places to study wakes is in a canoe or kayak on the Main Channel of the Mississippi River on a nice summer day. From this vantage point, you can easily compare the wakes of houseboats, tows and cruisers. You'll also learn about rocking and rolling.

Waves are created by any disturbance in or on the water: wind, a rock, a shift in the earth or a passing boat. Wakes are one kind of wave that is created by something



moving through the water — like a boat or a duck — or by water moving past something — like a buoy or a bridge footing.

Much of the energy that goes into moving a boat is transferred to the water in the form of a wake. Ocean-going ship wakes are clearly visible from space shuttles.

Some of the most powerful wakes on the river are "Kelvin wakes," which spread out in a wide V behind a boat. The Kelvin wake is named after Lord Kelvin, who, in addition to studying wakes and tides, was the electrical engineer in charge of laying the first successful transatlantic cable in 1866.

The Kelvin wake is generated by two other waves.

(Wake Up continues on page 37)

Watch Your Wake

By John Heddle

Three years ago two men were fishing a wing dam in Pool 5a, above Winona. A large cruiser threw a wake large enough to swamp the fishing boat and put the fishermen in the river.

The fishermen were okay. A boater who witnessed the incident radioed the lockmaster, who held the cruiser in the lock until the sheriff came. According to the sheriff, the cruiser operator was very angry he got a ticket. After all, what was such a small boat doing on the Main Channel?

Of course, it's not just big boats that create damaging wakes. (See "Wake Up!")

Boat owners are legally responsible for the damage caused by their boat wakes, but many are oblivious to what they leave in their wake. A May 2004 study by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources found that: "Shorelines exposed to significant recreational boat traffic are eroding at an average rate of 2-3 feet/year." ("Shoreline and Water Quality Impacts from Recreational Boating on the Mississippi River")

What's the answer?

Posting a no-wake or speed-limit sign won't be effective unless it is accompanied by visible enforcement. Consider that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife has just four game wardens to enforce regulations for 10 river pools.

The Power Squadron does an excellent job of educating new boat operators, but its seamanship course is voluntary and taken by only a small percentage of new boat operators.

Perhaps someday we will have to pass a test to get a boat operators license, much like automobile drivers have to pass driving tests to get a drivers license.

This isn't a new problem, but it is a problem that's getting bigger. ☹

John Heddle is a Winona writer. His last story for Big River was "Amphicars!" May-June 2005.



Boats leave little or no wake when they travel at "displacement speed."



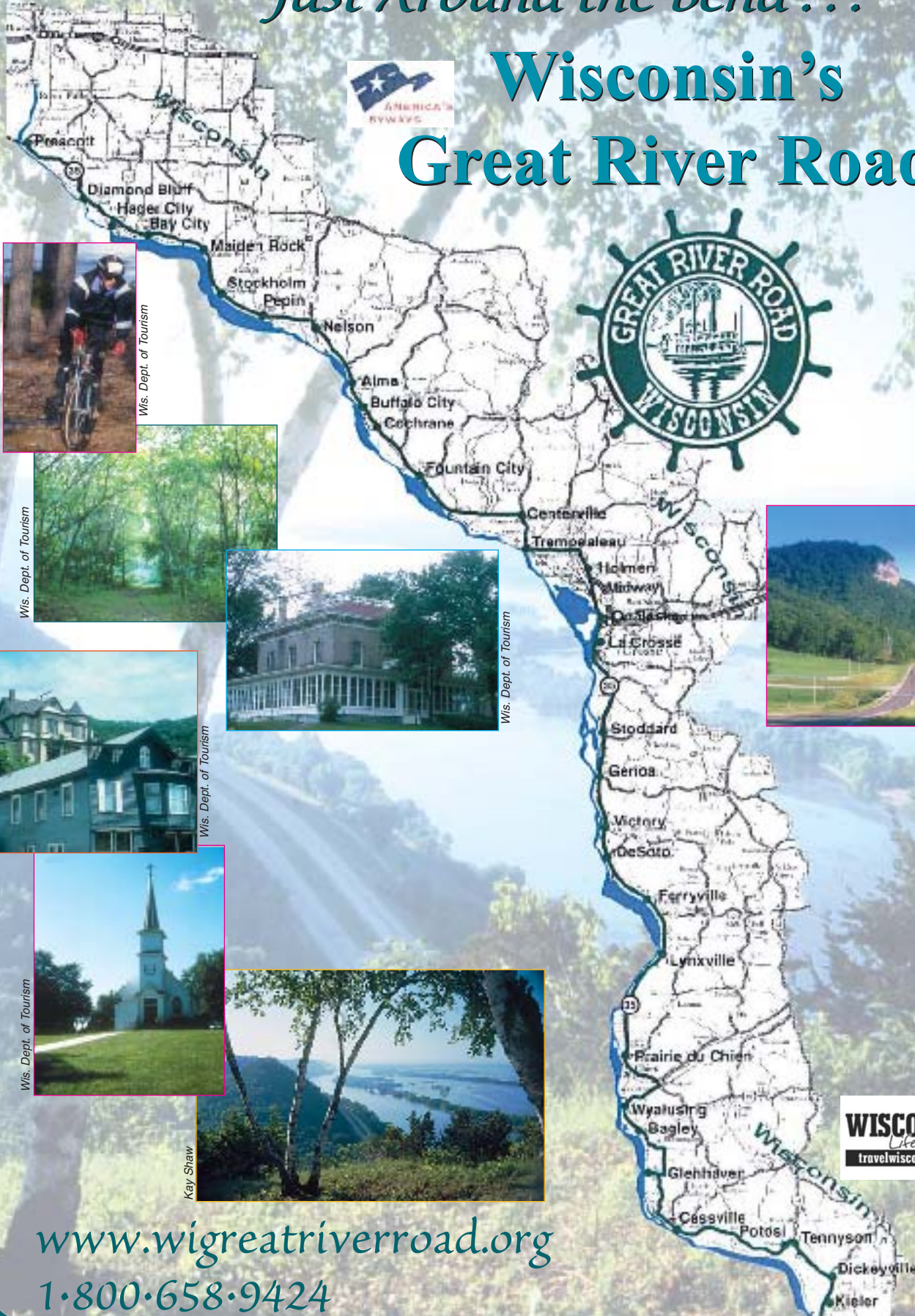
This speedboat pulling a skier travels at "transitional speed." Notice the Kelvin wake behind the boat. The skier leaves a complex wake, too.



A jet ski quickly attains "planing speed."

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The cutterhead carves out dredge spoils that are then sent through hundreds of feet of pipes. (Winona Country Historical Society)

The Thompson houses a small community of dredge workers. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



environmentally-thoughtful way. Chris Lennon of the Army Corps of Engineers is our guide throughout.

The videotape includes an interview with the last remaining deckhand from the *Thompson's* 1937 maiden voyage from the yards in Pittsburgh, up the Ohio River and then the Mississippi. He recalls the onlookers lining the

Another remembers working the midnight shift under a full moon, calling it the most romantic job he ever had.

river to witness the big boat heading upstream to its home in Fountain City, Wis.

One crew member recalls visiting the boat when he was 14 and his father worked on the boat, and how it smelled like diesel.

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The *Thompson's* size on the river makes it act like a sailboat in a heavy wind. In October 1996 the 1,370-ton boat was caught in a storm on Lake Pepin for 36 hours, and was protected by commercial towboats nuzzling alongside it. You get the idea that not only is the *Thompson* respected on the river, but it's sometimes thought of as

a big ol' buddy.

It's evident that the workers interviewed here are fond of the big yellow boat. They speak naturally and eagerly about their job and how the boat works. One man uses his arms and legs to demonstrate how the boat steps forward as it pumps its way through the water. Another remembers working the midnight shift under a full moon, calling it the most romantic job he ever had.

The work of dredging will continue on the river. As Chris Lennon says in the closing, the crew will step onto the new boat with the same excitement the crew had when they stepped onto the *Thompson* more than 68 years ago.

Viewers of *Dredging Up Memories* will learn about this boat and the river, from trivia to larger themes of what it takes to keep the channel open for shipping, and how using the river primarily for shipping affects it for other uses. When you watch it, be sure to stick around for the credits, when you will be treated to Eddie Allen and Clay Riness singing the title song, a tune sure to evoke nostalgia for the big yellow boat. 🌊

Molly McGuire is managing editor of Big River.

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Prairie du Chien from Pikes Peak photo by Eric Frydenlund

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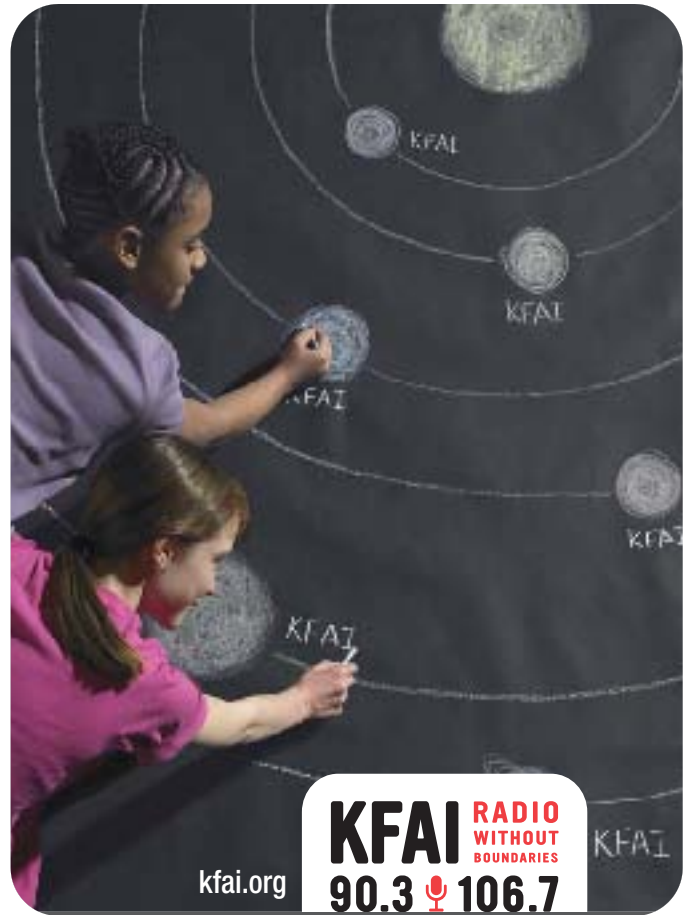
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(Savanna continued from page 15)

"The river is why we live here," Brown said. "I mean, most of us enjoy the Mississippi. That's why we stayed here. Most of us have mixed emotions about the development of the river. I don't want a barge terminal staring me in the face like a smoke stack."

Flack is open to new industry. He's helping court the Sac and Fox Indian Nation into building a lodge the state promised him 45 years ago. He's stubbornly optimistic, rebounding from his litany of disappointments. "We can't keep going back all the time," he says. "I'm sure the tide has to turn sometime."

Flack says this might be his final whirl at economic development. Then he admits that if another opportunity presents itself like bait, he'd bite.

Locals say they're willing to do all they can, but they're still trying to define a vision of their new identity. 🌊

Abbie Reese is a writer and photographer who lives in Galena, Ill.

(Havlik continued from page 44)

and then declined for unknown reasons. In 2004 the numbers seemed to be up again, Havlik said, but zebra

"Climbing into and out of boats isn't as easy as it was, but I'm not retiring yet. I'll keep doing this as long as I can crawl into the boat," Havlik laughed.

mussels don't seem to be as dramatic a threat anymore.

"Yes, they have seriously impacted some populations, but the native mussels are doing better than anyone thought they would."

In 2003 Havlik was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society. But her achievements aren't over. Rumors of her retirement are premature. She already has field

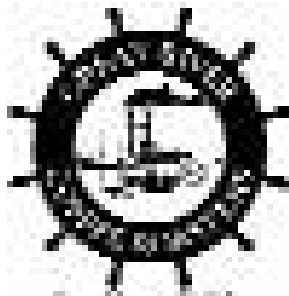
work scheduled for this summer.

"Climbing into and out of boats isn't as easy as it was, but I'm not retiring yet. I'll keep doing this as long as I can crawl into the boat," Havlik laughed.

Her work is a labor of love.

"She has never tried to separate her labor of love from her business," Welke said. "She does what she does because ethically and philosophically it's something she feels strongly about. I respect and admire her long-term commitment." 🐭 🌊

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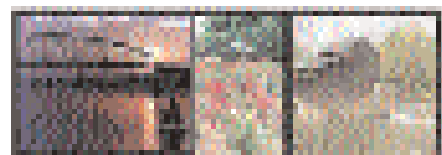
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For more information about the 2006 season call Villa Louis at (608) 326-2721 or toll free (866) 944-7483

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Email villaouis@whi.wisc.edu

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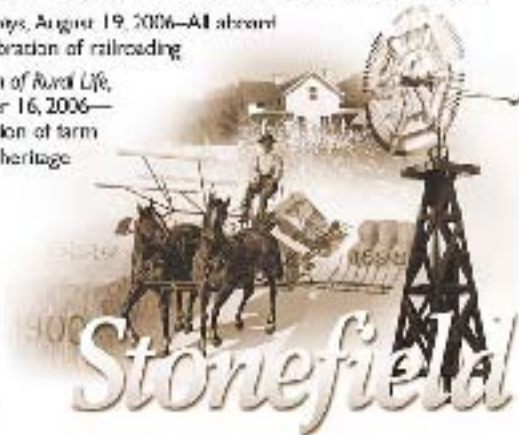


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- **Saturday & Sunday, September 23 & 24 Don't Forget Zeb Pike Cruises**, depart Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, at 2 p.m.
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- Attend or schedule one of Duke's presentations at the Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul and view the captive eagles with him there. (612-624-4745)
- Select an eagle-watching location and meet Duke there with your group or make Duke's presentation part of your community or organization's eagle-watching events and environmental education programs.

Duke also tells Tales about American Indians, Fur Traders, Explorers, Ghosts, and More!

For more information about Duke and his wide variety of River Tales presentations, and to view his schedule:

www.DukeAddicksStoryteller.com (651) 643-0622 dukeaddicks@earthlink.net

(Wake Up continued from page 25)

When the bow of a boat pushes through the water, it creates “diverging waves” that spread out at a 35.25-degree angle to the “sailing line,” which is the direction that the boat is pointed. Meanwhile, “traverse waves” spread out behind the boat at right angles to the sailing line. Where the crests and troughs of these two waves meet, they create the Kelvin wake, which is larger than the other two waves and spreads at a 19.5-degree angle from the sailing line.

If the light and the wind are right, you can clearly see all three waves behind a duck, a row boat or a runabout.

The height of a wake depends on many things — speed; the shape of the hull (or duck); the weight of the craft and cargo; the water depth; and the distance from the sailing line. Generally, the faster the boat goes, the bigger its wake, but it’s not that simple. For example, a bass boat blasting through shallow water at 40 mph will create less of a wake than a big cruiser tooling down the channel at 25 mph or a tow moving along at 12 mph.

Boats travel through the water three different ways, depending on their speed and design. Speedboats in a no-wake zone move at “displacement speed” or “hull speed.” They are about as level as when they are standing still, and they are basically pushing the water aside with just enough energy to move, at about 7 mph or less. They produce a very small wake, like a canoe or a duck.

“Transition speed” produces the biggest wake. This is when the boat speeds up so the bow tips up and the stern dips down. You see a lot of this when boats leave a lock, in a hurry to get away. If it takes off when other boats are nearby, a big high-powered

Maximum Wake Heights of Recreational Boats

	distance from sailing line		
	0 to 100 ft	100 to 300 ft	300 to 500 ft
jet skis	3 in	2 in	0 in
fishing boats	6	3	2
pontoon boats	3	2	2
medium power boats	9	8	4
large cruisers	20	16	8
houseboats	3	2	2

Information from “Effects of Recreational Boating on the Upper Mississippi River System,” St. Paul District, Army Corps of Engineers

cruiser can swamp a smaller boat or tip a houseboat enough that its propellers spin in the air. Flat-bottomed boats and many larger boats cannot go faster than transition speed, so operators need to be especially aware of their wakes.

The third way is “planing speed,” when the boat hull lifts mostly out of the water and levels out at high speeds. Bass boats, jet skis, speed boats and some other craft are designed to operate at “planing speed,” which creates less of a wake than at transition speed, but more than at displacement speed.

No-wake zones and speed limits are usually created for the safety and benefit of boaters in crowded areas or near docks, but they have been imposed in some areas to protect plants and eroding shorelines, because when a wave hits the shoreline, some of its energy washes away or stirs up the soil. A five-inch wake doesn’t cause much damage to either docks or shorelines, but a 10-inch wake is five times as destructive, and a 25-inch wake is 30 times as destructive as a five-inch wake! The energy of these waves destroys plants, trees and property.

The wave we see on the water’s surface is a simple part of much more complex interactions happening underwater. Even though humans have been making waves for thousands of years, scientists are still working to unravel their secrets. 🌊

Reggie McLeod is editor and publisher of Big River magazine.



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as building underwater structures that attract and shelter fish, they should have a positive effect on the big river, by improving water quality and cutting erosion.

Like the highly successful North American Waterfowl Plan, which elicits cooperation from agencies and partners all over North America to protect habitat and flyways for migratory waterfowl throughout their range, NFHI is supported by many partners, including anglers, industry, government agencies, tribes, academic and conservation groups, and individuals. Some of the partners along the Mississippi include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy and the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association.

Visit the **Big River Home page** (www.big-river.com) for links to information about stories marked with the mouse .

NFHI's draft Fish Habitat Action Plan identifies some of the factors that have caused widespread and alarming destruction of aquatic habitat — barriers along migration routes; inhospitable stream conditions; direct alteration of important spawning and nursery areas; coastal anoxic ("dead") zones; and wetland loss. 

Cleaner Water

Des Moines, Iowa — The Iowa Environmental Protection Commission voted in January to approve new pollution rules that would put stringent limits on levels of bacteria, ammonia and other pollutants in streams. The move would bring Iowa into compliance with the federal Clean Water Act, which says that waterways must be inhabitable by fish and wildlife.

The new rules would force 334 Iowa cities to improve their sewage treatment plants, at a cost of nearly one billion dollars over the next ten or 20 years.

Missing Time

La Crosse, Wis. — La Crosse Police have suspended their investigation of two incidents in January that resulted in two young men passing out in the lobby of a hospital on the same night. One, a 25-year old, said his truck was missing. He couldn't remember how he got to the hospital. Police later found the truck parked near surveillance cameras that showed a man resembling the owner using keys to enter the truck at about 3 a.m.

The other young man, a 21-year-old, was soaking wet, but couldn't remember how he'd gotten that way. Police reported that his blood-alcohol content would have been about 0.163 at bar closing time. They later found some of his belongings near the river and concluded that that's how he'd gotten wet.

Both incidents struck a nerve in town. In recent years, seven young men have died from drowning in the Mississippi near the downtown bar district late at night.

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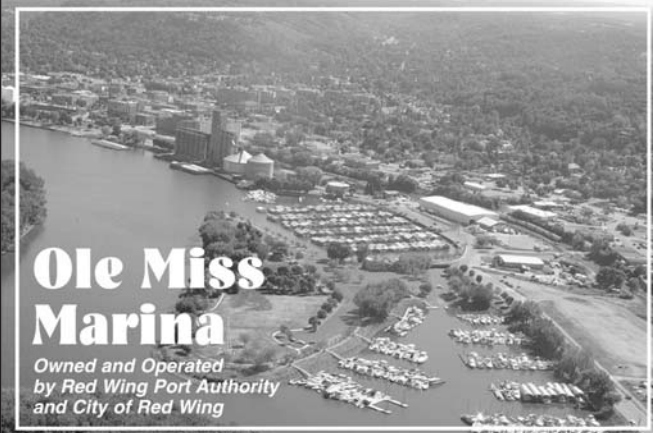
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Nav Study Snagged

Washington, D.C. — The Army Corps of Engineers' proposal to expand the lock-and-dam system on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers suffered setback in January from the Army's assistant secretary for civil works.

A letter from John Paul Woodley, Jr., to the Office of Management and Budget points to "flaws serious enough to limit the credibility and value of the study within the policy-making process" especially in the Navigation Study's economic analysis, according to the *Washington Post* (2-8-2006).

Despite the steady decline in river shipping in the last 15 years, the study had predicted big increases for the next 50 years.

A Safer L&D 3

Red Wing, Minn. — Of the 13 locks and dams on the Mississippi River within the Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District, Lock and Dam 3 has the highest frequency of navigation accidents, according to the Corps.

During high water a strong outdraft pulls tows headed downstream away from the lock and toward the dam.

The Corps has proposed extending the upstream guidewall of the lock and modifying the channel to make it safer. It has also proposed strengthening low, weak embankments on the Wisconsin side of the lock and dam.

A report and Environmental Impact Statement on the proposal will be available for review in May. Construction could begin next year.

Real River Fare

Ouacachita, Iowa — A steady succession of new restaurants have provided diners with the opportunity to enjoy fine dining by the river. A new restaurant is finally giving diners a unique opportunity to dine of the river.

Scales, the new bistro in tiny downtown Ouacachita, boasts a menu featuring fresh ingredients from the same river that diners can gaze at through ample picture windows that line the river side of the

main dining room. All the old standard river entrees are there — Snapping Turtle Stew; Broiled Sheepshead Stuffed with Muskrat Livers; Baked Carp in a Marsh Marigold Sauce with Cattail Tubers; Garlic Chestnut Eel on Angel-hair Pasta — but Scales goes a step further with more creative fare. Probably the most exotic dish is the Zebra Mussel on the Half Shell appetizer.

You can wash it all down with one of the two varieties of duckweed beer on tap (see "Floating Pastures" *Big River*, July-August 2005) or with wild grape wine from Fox Grape Winery, in nearby West Ouacachita.

Most unusual, perhaps, are Scales' desserts, which are created with native ingredients that are also organic. So, if you still have room, you may as well indulge in a slice of Swamp White Oak Acorn Pie or Cottonwood Catkin Torte with a Lotus Blossom Glaze.

I'd think twice, though, before ordering the Mississippi Mud Pie. ☹



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Advertiser Index

American Boating Centers	16
American House Inn	29
Beno's Deli	28
Best Western Quiet House & Suites	46
Bird Song	2
Blooming Grounds Coffee House	28
Blue Heron Coffeehouse	39
Blufflands Alliance	43
BNOX Gold & Iron	9
Braschler's Bakery & Coffee Shop	38
Cassville, Wis.	30
Celebration Belle	14
Deer Tracks Log Cabin Community	10
Dredging Up Memories	27
Duke Addicks	36
Eagles Landing B&B and Winery	29
Edina Realty	10
Franciscan Spirituality Center	43
Galena Cellars	2
Great River Café	35
Gregory's Gifts & Greetings	28
Harbor View Restaurant	9
Hawks View Cottages & Lodge	27
Historic Bluff Country	14
Island City Harbor	2
John Deere Pavilion	34
Julia Belle Swain	0
KFAI	34
Lake City Tourism	24
Lansing, Iowa	32
Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum	8
Magnolias	28
McGregor - Marquette Chamber of Commerce	29
McGregor/Marquette, Iowa	29
McGregor Lodging	29
Minnesota Fossils and Fossiliferous Rocks	39
Muscatine Convention & Visitors Bureau	35
National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium	37
Nola's Flowers	28
Northern Breezes Sailing School	8
Northwest Sportshow	6
Ole Miss Marina	38
Otter Side of Nature, The	29
Pepin Valley Realtors	45
Pepper Sprout	43
Piccadilly Gallery	4
Pieces of the Past	28
Pocket City Pub	29
Prairie du Chien, Wis.	31
Prairie Funland	15
Pretty Things on Third	28
River Log House	15
Riverfront Centre	4
Riverwise	23
Signatures Restaurant	11
Smith Brothers Landing	39
Stoney Creek Inn	45
Touch of Class Interiors	34
Twisted Chicken, The	4
Villa Louis & Stonefield Village	36
Waterways Journal	6
We-no-nah Canoe	4
Wildrose Timberworks	45
Willows, The	24
Winona County Historical Society/Visit Winona	7
Winona, Minn.	28
Wisconsin Great River Road	26

BIG RIVER CALENDAR

Eagles Eagles Eagles!

March

- First three weekends: Eagle Spotting, 1-3 p.m., Colvill Park, (Hwy 61), Red Wing, Minn., volunteers and scopes, (800) 498-3444.
- 11 Bus Tour, 8 am - noon, Eagle Nature Foundation, leave from the Stoney Creek Inn, Galena, Ill., \$50, register, (815) 594-2306.
- 11 Eagle Field Trip, guided tour in own car, National Eagle Center, Wabasha, Minn. (651) 565-4989.

March 17 - 19

Soar with the Eagles

National Eagle Center, Wabasha, Minn.
(651) 565-4989

Friday: 7 p.m. Dinner

Saturday:

8:30 a.m., Eagle watching car caravan, \$3, register.
4 p.m., Waterfowl identification

Saturday and Sunday:

1-hour houseboat tours, \$20, register.

Sunday

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Brunch With the Eagles, Slippery's Kenny Salwey and Duke Addicks telling stories.
Reservations, (877) 332-4537 or (651) 565-4989.

- 12 Bird Banding and Identification, 1 p.m., Mines of Spain, Dubuque, Iowa, (563) 556-0620.
- 14 Moonlight Snowshoeing, Whitewater State Park, Elba, Minn., (507) 932-3007.
- 17-19 Mississippi Valley Fishing Expo, Onalaska Omni-Center, Onalaska, Wis.
- 18 St. Patrick's Day Parade, 11:30 a.m., downtown Rock Island, Ill., across the Mississippi River to downtown Davenport, Iowa, (309) 788-2341.
- 18 Lansing Loop, tri-state birding caravan, 7 a.m., 80 miles along the Mississippi in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. Meet at Goose Island County Park, Hwy 35, south of La Crosse, Wis., (608) 783-1149.
- 19 Clock Tower tour, 2 p.m., Mississippi River Visitors Center, Rock Island, Ill., res., (309) 794-5338.
- 24 Minnesota Starwatch, 7 - 9 p.m., Carpenter Nature Center, Hastings, Minn., res., (651) 437-4359.
- 28 Eagles in the Gorge, 6:30 - 8 p.m., Mississippi River Gorge Stewards Open House, St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Community, Franklin Avenue just East of the Mississippi, Minneapolis, (651) 222-2193.
- 28-April 2 Northwest Sportshow, Minneapolis Convention Center, (312) 946-6291.

April

- 1-2 Traders Jubilee, McGregor, Iowa, (563) 873-2387.
- 1-9 Log Jam, daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, Dubuque, Iowa, (800) 226-3369.
- 8 Waterfowl Watch, 3 - 5 p.m., Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Bloomington, Minn., registration, (651) 222-2193.
- 8 Waterfowl Watch, 10 a.m., Fort Snelling State Park, St. Paul, (612) 725-2389 or (612) 725-2724.
- 17-23 National Parks Week, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Harpers Ferry, Iowa, (563) 873-3491.
- 22 Midwest Crane Count, 5:30 a.m., (608) 356-9462.
- 22 Earth Day Celebration, Winona (Minn.) State University.
- 23 Earth Day Celebration, Clinton, Iowa, (563) 242-4771 or (563) 244-7050.
- 28-30 Midwest Mountaineering Spring Expo, Minneapolis, (888) 999-1077 or (612) 339-3433.
- 29 In-Fisherman Swap Meet, QCC Expo Center, Rock Island, Ill., (309) 788-0559.
- 29-30 Bluff Country Studio Art Tour, SE Minn. and NE Iowa, brochure, (800) 428-2030.
- 30 Mississippi Music Fest, Riverside Park, St. Cloud, Minn.
- 30 Open House, Fort Crawford Museum, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Prairie du Chien, Wis., (608) 326-6960.

River Action

Quad Cities, (563) 322-2969

- March 25 Rain Barrel Sale, 826 E. River Dr., Davenport, Iowa, (563) 322-2969
- April 22 Fish & Fire and Eddy Awards, Credit Island Park, 2 p.m. cleanup and planting; 6:30 p.m., dinner and Eddy Awards.
- June 18 Ride the River

Looking Ahead

- May 12-14 Great River Birding and Nature Festival, Mississippi Valley Partners, both sides of the river, Red Wing, Minn., to Winona, Minn.
- June 2-4 & 9-22 Alexis Bailly Vineyard Open House, wine tasting & tours, Hastings, Minn., (651) 437-1413.
- June 24 One River Mississippi, simultaneous dance at the Mississippi in seven communities from Lake Itasca to Louisiana.

Meetings and Conferences

March

- 9 Audubon Society, 7 p.m., E. B. Lyons Nature Center, Mines of Spain State Park, Dubuque, Iowa.
- 11 A Gathering in the Blufflands, Prairie Enthusiasts, Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, Lanesboro, Minn. Sessions on invasive species such as buckthorn and reed canarygrass, (507) 292-0063.
- 14 Lake Pepin TMDL (total max. daily load) technical conference, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Thunderbird Hotel, Bloomington, Minn., Minn. Pollution Control Agency, (651) 297-5754 or (507) 280-3592.
- 14-16 Managing the River: A Collaboration of Management and Science, Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee, Hannibal, Mo., (573) 522-4115.
- 29-April 1 American Society for Environmental History, "A River Runs Through Them: Landscapes in Environmental History," Radisson Hotel, St. Paul.

April

- 13 Audubon Society, 7 p.m., E. B. Lyons Nature Center, Mines of Spain State Park, Dubuque, Iowa.
- 20 Connecting North Minneapolis to the Mississippi, 3:30-5:30 p.m., College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Rapson Hall, 89 Church St., Minneapolis, (612) 624-3739.

June

- 25-28 International Conference on Rivers and Civilization: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Major River Basins, La Crosse, Wis. 🌊

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Check the **Big River calendar** on our website for event updates, links and additional contact information.

The Book and the River

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March

- 1 A Barge-Load of Books: Writing & the Mississippi, 7 p.m., John Anfinson, National Park Service, Science Lab Bldg. Auditorium.
- 2 Writing the River, 7 p.m., panel includes John Anfinson, Cal Fremling, Reggie McLeod & Richie Swanson, Winona County Historical Society.
- 8 Reading the River: How Science Gauges the Mississippi, 7 p.m., scientists from USGS, NOAA, Army Corps & WSU, Science Lab Bldg.

Special Events

March

- All month: Ice spearfishing exhibit, Onalaska Area Historical Museum, Onalaska (Wis.) Public Library, 741 Oak Ave. S.
- Through 27: Film Festival, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Harpers Ferry, Iowa, (563) 873-3491.
- 3-5 Festival of Owls, Houston (Minn.) Nature Center and High School, (507) 896-4668.
- 10-12 Canoecopia, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wis.
- 11 St. Patrick's Day Parade, 10 a.m., Prairie du Chien, Wis., (800) 732-1673.

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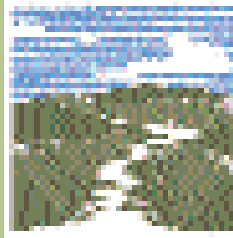
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Marian Havlik

The Clam Lady

By Pamela Eyden



Havlik identified mussels retrieved during the Goose Island Mussel Rescue project south of La Crosse in July of 2001.

When Marian Havlik stepped in to help her daughter with a science project years ago, she had no idea it would change her life. A busy mother, wife and registered nurse, she thought she was just helping her child find information about freshwater mussels that live in the Upper Mississippi.

They couldn't find any, and that was a turning point for Havlik. Historically, 51 species of mussels lived in the Upper Mississippi River system — in such great quantities in some areas that they supported large pearl

“She has forced people to elevate their own expertise. She has advanced our understanding.”

and mother-of-pearl button industries — but these unglamorous, sediment-dwelling mollusks hadn't attracted much research attention.

Havlik went back to school; she won a Bush Foundation grant to study with Ohio State University professor David Stansberry and became a professional malacologist. She started her own business in 1977. For the next 29 years, Havlik has spent her summers in a boat on the Upper Mississippi or other rivers, working with scuba divers to survey populations of mussels and sometimes to relocate them out of harm's way. Her primary

clients are state and federal agencies, construction companies and industries. She spends winters writing up her field notes, writing professional papers, giving presentations and answering calls to testify in court — a role she relishes.

Known widely as “the clam lady,” Havlik's expertise and dedication has changed how people think of freshwater mussels and their habitats. (Actually most of the bivalves on the Upper Mississippi are mussels, but calling her the “mussel lady” would probably give people the wrong impression.)

“The Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies, too, used to laugh at the idea of protecting mussels. They have done an about-face, and I like to think I've had something to do with that,” Havlik said. “They can't ignore the Endangered Species Act.”

Colleagues agree.

“Marian has been a ‘conscience’ speaking for the mussels,” said Pam Thiel, project leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife La Crosse Fishery Resource Office.

“When the Higgins eye pearly mussel was first listed as endangered, Marian was on the forefront. She let agencies know about their plight. She probably knows more and has handled more Higgins eyes than anyone else.”

Havlik has used her independent position to her advantage.

“Marian is her own boss. She can be frank and forthright and truthful without fear of retaliation, and she has done that routinely. She scrutinizes everything. She writes letters to anyone who will listen, she gives papers at professional meetings, and over time she has compelled agencies to say, ‘Okay!’” said Kurt Welke, fish biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

“If you're going to be in the same room talking about these things with Marian, you had better know your stuff, because she knows hers, and she's not the least bit shy about calling you on the carpet. She has forced people to elevate their own expertise. She has advanced our understanding.”


Havlik continues to be endlessly curious about mussels. Back in August 1993, when a story featuring Havlik appeared in *Big River*, zebra mussels were seen as an overwhelming threat to the survival of native mussels in the river. Since then, the zebra mussel population increased

(Havlik continues on page 35)

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