

TOWER TIMES

November/December 2020

TIME IS TICKING TO A
NEW TUNE

ILLINOIS WATERWAY
OPERATING AGAIN

HABITAT REHABILITATION
HAPPENING

AROUND THE
DISTRICT



US Army Corps
of Engineers ®
Rock Island District

Mission

The Rock Island District's mission is to deliver vital engineering and water resource solutions in collaboration with our partners to secure our Nation, reduce disaster risk and enhance quality of life, providing value to the region and Nation.

Vision

A premier public service, engineering organization of trusted, talented professionals delivering innovative and sustainable solutions to the region and Nation.

Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Col. Steven M. Sattinger

Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Lt. Col. John Fernas

Chief, Corporate Communications
Allen Marshall

Editor
Kelcy Hanson

Editorial Contributors
Kelcy Hanson
Sam Heilig
Jim Finn

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US Army Corps of Engineers
Rock Island District
Clock Tower Building
P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004
Email: cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil
Phone: (309) 794-4200

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A close-up of the polished gears of the clock, located at the Rock Island District's Clock Tower Building. *Photo by Kelcy Hanson*

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

A Year of Unprecedented Challenges

As the year comes to an end, it is typically a time to reflect, a time to look back on successes and challenges while taking stock on how we've progressed from last year. But 2020 has been anything but a typical year, and COVID-19 has changed everything, from the way we live to the way we work. Yet the Rock Island District still managed to execute a record-breaking program that would have challenged any District working under normal conditions.

Our District completed the largest construction project in our organization's history. The Illinois Waterway Consolidated Lock Closures took place at five locks and included the major rehabilitation of the LaGrange lock. The closures were extensively coordinated for years and it was imperative that the work stay on schedule in order to reopen the locks to navigation on time.

When planning the closures and construction work, many risks and challenges were considered but no one could have foreseen the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, in the face of new safety protocols brought on by the pandemic, our teams adapted and kept this monumental undertaking on task. All the locks opened on time. It was an outstanding accomplishment that will continue to pay dividends for years to come.

The lock closures were the highlight of the year, but our District still had to carry out the rest of our missions and do our work in this new environment. Some, for the first time in their careers, were teleworking either some of the time or all the time. Others, who didn't have the ability to telework, were performing their jobs while having to consider new phrases like "social distancing." Adapting has been something that the Rock Island District team has always been proficient at but this year our workforce has taken it to a new level. Throughout the many challenges brought on by the pandemic, I can't think of any situation in which we didn't deliver on our promises.

Throughout the year, as the Rock Island District continued to meet or exceed all expectations, I often wondered – "How did we do it?" The answers are apparent: our people and teams. Our District instinctively knew how to overcome the challenges of COVID-19 by coming together and using the broad base of talent, leadership and expertise that is prevalent throughout the divisions and branches. When I took command nearly two and half years ago, I knew I was being handed the keys to a well-oiled machine. The District's reputation preceded it and each year I have been humbled to have a front row seat to watch what all of you accomplished. For this year, I haven't the words to describe how proud I have been to see our District perform at such a high level in such an unprecedented environment.

Our people and teams are certainly "how we did it." The question is now "how will we continue to do it?" As a nation, we are nowhere near out of the woods regarding COVID-19. Progress is being made and there is hope on the horizon. As we start the new year, it seems evident that we will still be operating as we have been since this pandemic began. I urge all of us to continue caring for one another. For almost nine months, we have all been operating virtually or distanced, as we should be. I worry that the personal connections we once took for granted may get lost. For those in a telework environment, I hope you will consider being





Col. Steven M. Sattinger
District Commander

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COMMANDER COMMENTS (Cont.)

available to your teammates via the many different virtual platforms we have implemented. I think it is important for us to talk and see each other, even through video, as much as possible to maintain the human aspect of the work we do. We are all in this together.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge like none other in my lifetime. It has changed me as a commander, a Soldier, a husband, a father, a friend and as a human. As we look forward to 2021, my hope for our District is that we continue the togetherness that has helped us succeed in 2020. I hope each and every one of you have a wonderful, blessed holiday season, and that you come back recharged and refreshed for another heavy workload to deliver in 2021. As always, thanks for all you do each and every day and congratulations for an outstanding performance during an unprecedented year. Please stay safe and healthy and CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG! 



STEVEN M. SATTINGER
COL, EN
Commanding

PREPARATION AND TEAMWORK KEYS SUCCESS FOR CONSOLIDATED CLOSURES PROJECT

By Sam Heilig, Public Affairs Specialist

In a year when many have come to expect the unexpected, one would almost assume a plan to close five Illinois Waterway locks simultaneously for repairs might be the craziest thing the Rock Island District has ever attempted. Thanks to years of planning and preparations, and a massive team of skilled Corps employees and contractors, the Rock Island District successfully completed the Illinois Waterway 2020 Consolidated Closures project and reopened the river to navigation on time.

The Illinois Waterway, which provides a navigable connection between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River, includes eight lock and dam sites which were long overdue for significant repairs. To address concerns at five of these sites, the Rock Island District collaborated with navigation industry

partners and developed a consolidated repair schedule, which effectively closed the waterway to commercial navigation for 120 days starting in July of 2020. Coordination was key during the planning stages as the closures would significantly impact the use of the river as a commercial highway.

“Advanced planning was critical to the overall success of this project,” said Matt Coffelt, Project Manager for the Illinois Waterway Consolidated Closures. “We started nearly three years before the closures were scheduled to ensure our stakeholders would be properly prepared.”

Normally, navigation on the Illinois Waterway operates year round but to properly repair the aging lock structures, full closures were needed so the locks could be dewatered. “It took a tremendous amount of coordination

*All five lock sites
resumed operation
on the days they
were scheduled to
reopen.*

and communication to keep this project on track,” said Coffelt. “Not only with our internal Corps team, but also with our contractors and stakeholders.”

Because of the complexity and scale of the effort, hundreds of people were involved with planning and executing this project. This team included employees from every office within the Rock Island District, maintenance crews from other Corps districts including St. Louis and St. Paul, as well as multiple

contractors and subcontractors who performed work and provided materials and supplies.

“At the LaGrange Lock site alone, more than 250 people were working onsite during the height of the closures,” said Adam Ziegler, Project Manager for the LaGrange Lock Major Rehabilitation Project. “It took extensive coordination to ensure people and equipment were moved around safely.”

Over the course of the year, challenges were anticipated but no one was ready for all that 2020 had to offer.

“Our teams faced an unbelievable number of obstacles this year,” said Operations Division Chief, Tom Heinold. “From flooding in the early spring, to mass quantities of Asian carp clogging pumps in a lock chamber, to a hurricane-force derecho storm passing through the Midwest in late summer. And of course, we can’t forget about COVID-19 and the impact it made throughout the year.”

Despite the hurdles, the project continued and all five lock sites resumed operation on schedule.


“It was an amazing feat,” said Heinold. “And it’s all thanks to the dedication and hard work of the individuals who kept going, even when things didn’t go as planned.”

During the closures, each of the lock sites received a varying degree of maintenance and repairs. LaGrange Lock received the largest amount of work and was scheduled for full rehabilitation. This process involved dewatering

the chamber to install 128 pre-cast concrete panels on the walls and a complete replacement of the hydraulic system and miter gate machinery.

The lock chambers at Peoria, Starved Rock and Marseilles were also dewatered. Peoria’s dewatering was to facilitate installation of a new bubbler system and miter gate hydraulic cylinders, while Starved Rock and Marseilles had new miter gates, sills

and anchorages installed. The work at Dresden Island Lock was a little less intense as it only involved installation of bulkhead recesses on the upstream end of the lock. This work was done in preparation for more significant repairs which are scheduled in 2023.

Although an enormous amount of work was accomplished during the 2020 closures and the locks have reopened to navigation, the overall project is far from complete. Major rehabilitation work at LaGrange Lock and Dam is still underway and will continue, as planned, well into 2021. A second round of lock closures is also scheduled in 2023 to finish repairs at Dresden Island, Marseilles and Starved Rock locks. In addition, repairs at Brandon Road Lock will be added to the list. Similar to the 2020 closures, this effort is being planned well in advance and coordination with navigation partners and river industry is ongoing. 

For more information about the completed and upcoming closures, visit: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Navigation-Status/>.



A look inside the dewatered lock chamber at LaGrange Lock and Dam while rehabilitation work took place during the Illinois Waterway Closures earlier this year. Photo by Jim Finn

BUSY YEAR FOR RIVER RESTORATION PROJECTS

By Jim Finn, Public Affairs Specialist

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program had a banner year in 2020. First authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, UMRR was the first environmental restoration and monitoring program undertaken on a large river system in the United States. Today it is recognized as the single most important effort committed to ensuring the viability and vitality of the Upper Mississippi River System's fish and wildlife resources.

In 2020 alone, progress was made at 13 separate UMRR Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project (HREP) locations. While no two HREP sites are the same, the process that goes into planning, constructing, and monitoring an HREP is very similar. The planning teams for the HREPs are interdisciplinary and include the Corps, the project sponsor, and other resource agencies. The partnership fosters collaborative planning for the projects and the UMRR Program, which benefits the river and its users at local and regional scales.

"To begin, a UMRR HREP project must first go through the process of obtaining an approved feasibility report," said UMRR Project Manager Julie Millhollin.

The process of obtaining an approved feasibility report can take one to three years and includes a number of steps.

"First, a site visit and kickoff workshop must take place," said Millhollin. "From there, the project objectives are developed and the project delivery team (PDT), including the project sponsor, identifies and assesses the existing conditions of the area."

Once those steps are complete, according to Millhollin, project features can be developed, as well as the establishment of alternative plans. During this step, an open house is held to invite input from the public, the main users of the project. Preliminary costs are then established and a cost/benefit analysis is completed.

Following this cooperative effort between the Corps and its partners, as well as the public, a tentatively selected plan (TSP) is chosen and is once again released for public comment.

"Once a TSP is established by the PDT, a progress review takes place with our peers at the Mississippi Valley Division," said Rachel Perrine, Water Resource Planner for UMRR. "The PDT then continues developing the Draft Feasibility Report, which goes through several levels of review before it is approved by the Mississippi Valley Division Commander and signed by the District Commander."

Current HREPs in the feasibility stage include Lower Pool 13, located between Whiteside County, Illinois, and Clinton County, Iowa; Green Island in Pool 13, in Jackson County, Iowa; and Steamboat Island, in Pool 14 between Clinton/Scott Counties, Iowa, and Rock Island County, Illinois.

After a feasibility report is approved, Perrine said the HREP moves into the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) phase. In this phase, the project is "scoped", and information gathered during the scoping process is sent to the District's Contracting Office for a contract to be written. Information gathered during scoping includes detailed information about project goals, outcomes, milestones, specific tasks, costs and a timeline for project completion.

"A final review of the project design and scope takes place and then the project goes out for bid," said Perrine. "Under normal circumstances, the project is out for bid for 30 days and then the contract is awarded."

Millhollin stated that Stage II of the Keithsburg Division HREP is currently in the PED phase but has not yet been put out for bid.

Step three of the process, the Construction Phase, is the phase that seems to get the most attention because physical changes to the site begin to take place. During this phase, a preconstruction meeting takes place between



Rock Island District employees, along with staff from the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, plant aquatic vegetation in Pool 18 of the Mississippi River for the Huron Island Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project near Oakville, Iowa. Photo by Jim Finn

Davies County, Illinois.

The final two phases of a UMRR HREP are the Operations and Maintenance Phase and the Performance Monitoring Phase. During the Operations and Maintenance Phase, the project is turned over to the project sponsor and they perform any necessary maintenance on the project. While no projects were turned over to the sponsor this year, Millhollin said there are several projects in the Rock Island District that are currently in the Operations and Maintenance Phase.

During the Performance Monitoring Phase, you get exactly what the name suggests. The features of the project are monitored to ensure they are working as planned.

“Recently a site visit was made to the Fox Island HREP in Pool 20 near Clark County, Missouri, to ensure all of the project features are functioning as they should,” said Millhollin. “I am happy to report that everything looks great!”

Performance and water quality monitoring are also taking place in Pool 12 and at Huron Island and the Brown’s Lake HREP, which is in Pool 13 near Jackson County, Iowa.

While the process for every project is similar, the UMRR Program itself is very unique. The program was described by Millhollin as an unparalleled partnership between a multitude of federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations and the public. 

To learn more about the UMRR program, visit: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/UMRR/>

the government and its partners, the contractor and the project sponsor. Next, the contractor submits their pre-construction submittals for construction and engineering to review. Once all the pre-construction submittals are approved, the contractor then mobilizes to the site and construction begins.

“Communication is huge during the whole process, but it is vitally important during the construction phase,” said Millhollin. “Preparatory meetings regularly take place before major construction actions and a quality assurance liaison is on site during construction of major features to ensure all items are built correctly.”

Once construction is complete, Corps personnel, along with the project sponsor and partners, perform their final inspections and accept the work. The contract is then closed out and the project moves on to the final phases.

“Currently, Beaver Island HREP, Huron Island HREP and the Pool 12 Overwintering HREP are all in different stages of the construction phase,” Perrine said.

Beaver Island is in Pool 14 near Clinton County, Iowa, Huron Island is in Pool 18 near Des Moines County, Iowa, and Pool 12 is in Jo

TIME TO START

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

The Rock Island District's Clock Tower is one of the most recognized buildings in the Quad Cities. Able to be seen from both sides of the Mississippi River, the tower stands tall on the west end of Arsenal Island. The clock and bell have been a focal point for over 150 years but recently the clock and bell have not been working. This downturn in operations led the District to seek substantial restoration for the aging clock.

The clock has had several minor repairs done on it over the years, most recently in 2018, when the Rock Island District hired George Georgiadis, retired clock master, to get the clock in working condition. Despite a magnitude of efforts, the clock began working again but still not keeping time as it should, losing seconds every minute.

Brian Lane, District Facility Manager, initiated the project again, saying, "It's so unique in our industry, we need to keep this historical clock and do not want restorations to include alterations to its original operation."

An inspection contract was awarded in April 2019 to begin the process of restoring the clock. Having a complete inspection done on the clock and bell, gave a better idea of the scope of work needed and provided a starting point to begin a restoration contract.

"Over the years, modifications had been made to the clock that needed to be removed," said Lane. "Bearings were worn out and because of unneeded oil added to the clock, friction was causing it to not keep correct time."

John Kraft Building Services, which has worked on the clock and bell for several years and worked closely with Georgiadis during the last repair effort, played a vital role in helping the District find a qualified subcontractor to renovate the clock and bell to its prime condition. Phil Wright with The Tower Clock Company out of South Charleston, Ohio, was awarded the contract and came to Rock Island in the Spring

Pictured top to bottom, L to R: Disassembly of the clock pieces, photo by Sam Heilig; John Kraft working on the clock, photo by Sam Heilig; Col. Sattinger discussing the clock with sub-contractor, Phil Wright, photo by Kelcy Hanson; Mason Kraft winding the clock for the first time manually, photo by Kelcy Hanson

TICKING TO A NEW TUNE

of 2020 to begin disassembly of the clock.

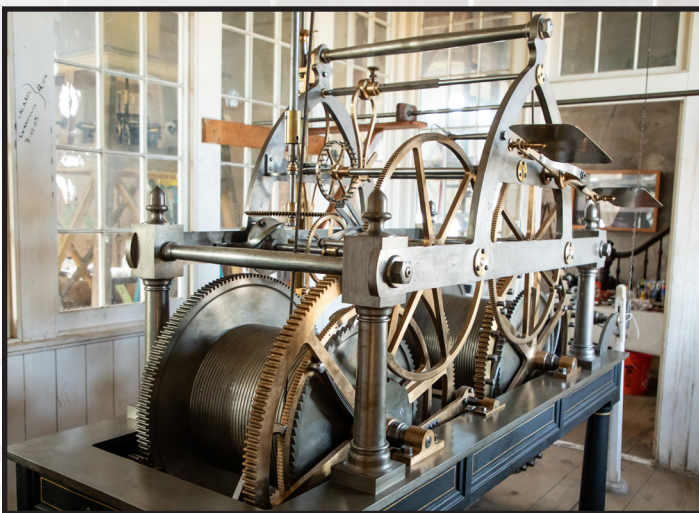
Over the span of several months, Wright meticulously worked to bring the clock back to its original glory. Every piece of the clock had to be dismantled so all the existing oil could be cleaned off and each piece was then polished to bring back the original aesthetics.

"The design of the clock was intended to be simple and require minimal maintenance," said Wright. "It is the last known clock of its kind, in working condition, and it's important to uphold its historical integrity."

While Wright was mainly focused on rehabilitation of the clock mechanism, other work was being completed by John Kraft and his team. Their focus was more on the exterior features and the bell which sits outside on the top of the tower.

All eight hands were removed from the 12-foot clock faces on the outside of the tower and were replaced with new hands cut out of sugar pine wood. The Kraft team also worked on the weights which create the tension needed for the clock's operation. These weights, which hang down through three stories of the tower and are suspended by wire ropes, weigh a total of 2,200 pounds and must be able to move freely up and down the tower when the clock is wound each week.

Oct. 30, John Kraft, along with his son, Jake and grandson, Mason, were able to wind the clock for the first-time following renovations to the mechanism and



The last known, working A.S. Hotchkiss Model 1 tower clock from 1867 sits inside a glass and wooden enclosure atop the clock tower. Photo by Kelcy Hanson

“ It’s so unique in our industry, we need to keep this historical clock...”

reinstallation of the clock hands and weights. Although the clock has been wound using electric motors for years, the Kraft family chose to wind the clock by hand to be sure the newly repaired system was operating as planned. The three generations of Krafts took turns for approximately 20 minutes to get the clock fully wound. Moving forward, the clock will be wound, using small electric motors, once a week by employees from the Rock Island District's Logistics Office.

The bell, which was originally manufactured and brought to the Rock Island Arsenal from New York, weighs over 3,500 pounds, had shifted gradually over the years because of deterioration of its wooden base.


“The weight of the bell had caused it to sink into the wood,” said Kraft. “The only way to fix it was to bring in a crane to lift the bell and replace the wood with a composite material.”

After leveling of the material was complete, rods were put in place to support the beams ensuring the bell would be stable and secure for years to come.

“I am one-thousand percent positive the framework of the bell was original to when the bell was brought to the Rock Island Arsenal,” said John Kraft. “It is amazing how great the overall condition of the bell is today.”

John was also confident that the bell was constructed of 56 percent pure silver based on the shiny silver appearance of the area where the hammer strikes the bell each time it rings.

The bell rang for the first time at 3 p.m. on Nov. 13 signifying the clock was keeping time as it was intended to do. It was a moment the contractors had been waiting for although some fine tuning may still be done as the clock operations are monitored.

Minimal maintenance is expected in the future and it is anticipated that it should be at least 50-60 years before major restoration is needed on the clock again. This beautiful piece of history, which the Rock Island District has been committed to preserve, can now be enjoyed by all for many years to come. 

For more information visit: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/About/History/Historic-Clock-Tower/>

GREENBELT PROGRAM EXPANDS RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES ALONG DES MOINES RIVER

By Jim Finn, Public Affairs Specialist

Two projects completed this year as part of the Des Moines Recreational River and Greenbelt Program have added four miles of multi-use trail to the extensive network of recreational pathways that exist along the Des Moines River.

The trail segments, which included the Fort Dodge Stage II Riverfront and Trails project and the Red Rock Volksweg Trail Segment 4B project, were created through a partnership among local and federal governments as well as private interests, dedicated to developing recreational opportunities and ecosystem improvements along the Des Moines River corridor.

Although these improvements directly impact the Des Moines area, the influence of these projects goes well beyond that footprint, said Rock Island District Greenbelt Program Manager Jim Homann.

“The ultimate goal would be to have a continuous network of trail systems that connect Fort Dodge, Iowa, to Pella, Iowa, that also integrate with other trail systems throughout the region,” said Homann. “The program creates a backbone for other recreational opportunities and gives local residents as well as new destination recreationalists a space to enjoy.”

The Fort Dodge Stage II Riverfront and Trails project, which was completed through a cost-share agreement with the city of Fort Dodge, added an additional 1.25 miles of trail to the Stage I trail that was completed in 2013.

“The unique aspect of the Fort Dodge trail is that it begins in an urban setting with Phase I and by the time you reach the end of Phase II you feel like you have completely left the city,” said Homann.

In comparison to the Fort Dodge trail, which was on city-owned property, the Volksweg Trail Segment 4B exists completely on federally-owned land near Rock Island District’s Lake Red Rock, Iowa’s largest lake.

The newly completed Volksweg Trail extension adds 2.75 miles to the trail which

extends from Lake Red Rock’s North Overlook Campground to Marion County’s Cordova Park.


Homann said Construction was completed on a portion of the Volksweg 4B Trail in Spring 2014 as mitigation for the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project. The completion of the 4B segment now makes the full length of the Volksweg Trail over 17 miles long.

With these two projects complete, the Greenbelt Advisory Committee has started looking ahead to new opportunities, with two new projects identified for development.

The first project is the Marion County Cordova Trail Segment which would add to the recently completed Volksweg 4B trail segment. The second is the Fort Dodge Riverfront Phase II, which would extend from the end of the Stage II trail to a point near U.S. Hwy 20.

Each of these potential projects would require an Engineering Design Report (EDR) which can only begin if additional funding for the Greenbelt Program is received.

“An EDR is a feasibility-level document that would identify design features and budget estimates for design and construction,” said Homann. “However, as funding is received through recreational construction funds, it is not a Presidential budget item and can only receive funds through a work plan increase.”

While funding has not yet been approved for these projects, the Greenbelt Advisory Committee is hopeful the appropriations will come through and are positioning themselves to be ready to start work if funds are received. 

For more information and a detailed map of the Volksweg Trail visit: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Lake-Red-Rock/Recreation/Trails/>.

COMMITTED PARTNERSHIPS YIELD MAJOR PROGRESS

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the city of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, have been aggressively working together for two years to design and build a functional flood control system along the Cedar River in downtown Cedar Rapids. The design plan includes nine separate projects, with four contracts having been awarded thus far through a cooperative effort between the Corps and the city. Three of the contracts have been awarded by the city of Cedar Rapids and the fourth contract has been awarded by the Corps.

According to Flood Risk Management Program Manager, Jason Smith, construction is fully underway for three of the four awarded projects and one is fully complete. The 16th Avenue closure project, which the Corps broke ground on in October of 2019, is substantially complete. The structure, which includes a massive rolling gate that ties two sections of levee together, will prevent downtown areas from flooding in the future and protect many business owners when river levels rise. The 16th Avenue closure only needs minor landscaping and a few finishing touches to be officially complete.

Smith said each of the awarded contracts include multiple features that will work together to provide a unified protection system for the city.

"We anticipate advancing an additional four project features to construction in calendar year 2021," said Smith. "Those projects include the 1st Avenue road closure, McCloud Run lower channel, Hoth flood wall, and 3rd Ave pump station."

Smith also said, "We are blessed to be working with such an engaged partner. The city of Cedar Rapids and the Corps are both very committed to building this flood control system."

Throughout the process, both parties have worked together to analyze features and determine who will be best fit to execute the contracts. As of December 2020, Smith foresees no delays with contract progress and anticipates a transition from design phase into the real estate acquisition phase over the winter months.

"The real estate acquisition process has been very time consuming thus far," said Smith. "But is a crucial aspect of the flood control system."

As the contracts continue to transition closer to construction phase, the Corps is continuing to work closely with the city to ensure timely completion of this extensive effort. With roughly 20 percent of the project already complete, the team is well on track to meet their anticipated goal of full completion by 2024. 🇺🇸



The 16th Avenue closure, shown here, is the first of several structures being built by the Corps as part of the Cedar Rapids Flood Risk Management Project. Photo by 1st Lt. Christian Gray

EMPLOYEES ADAPT TO UNIQUE RECREATION SEASON

By Jim Finn, Public Affairs Specialist

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way people navigate the world these days and those changes affected how recreational sites throughout the Rock Island District operated on a day-to-day basis for the 2020 recreation season.

Typically, most recreation areas at Coralville Lake, Saylorville Lake, Lake Red Rock, the Mississippi River Project and the Illinois Waterway Project open May 1. However, this year, in accordance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers guidance for the safety of employees, volunteers and visitors, openings were delayed until June 1 at most sites.

During a normal year, in the months leading up to opening day, park rangers and natural resource specialists are very busy doing any number of tasks from cleanup, to site preparation, to summer program scheduling. This year was a different story. Due to COVID-19 precautions, many natural resource management employees spent the spring teleworking and were not able to have “boots on the ground” at the recreation areas to prepare for site openings.

“As one of the rangers who was placed in a telework status, it was an extremely weird season,” said Shawn Polen, Park Ranger at Coralville Lake. “It was a mixed bag of ups and downs. While I was working from home, I was able to clear a ton of backlogged



Fee attendants assist campers as they check-in while wearing masks from behind newly install plexi-glass panels. Photo provided by Lake Red Rock staff

paperwork from my desk, but I wasn't able to enjoy the face-to-face interaction I normally have with the public.”

Those face-to-face interactions Ranger Polen described were very limited this year. All Rock Island District Visitor Centers remained closed throughout the recreation season and even the check-in procedures for campsites changed.

“The campsite check-in process was via phone,” said Emma Aalbers, Park Ranger at Saylorville Lake. “And fee booths were modified to have sliding windows with plexi-glass and openings at the bottom to limit contact.”

Other changes this season included a shift to requiring advanced reservations for all campsites using the Recreation.gov system, and cash was not accepted at any Corps projects throughout the District.

While change is sometimes hard to accept, some of this year's modifications have turned out beneficial for the District and its guests.

“While most campers make reservations ahead of their stay, it was a bit difficult for visitors who wanted to get walk-up sites like they were able to in past years,” said Tracy Spry, Park Ranger at Lake Red Rock. “Some people also wanted to pay with cash, and the cash-less sales were a bit hard on those visitors who didn't have credit cards. However, I do think visitors liked the ability to get real-time site reservations versus the 2-day minimum required in previous seasons.”

While change is sometimes hard to accept, some of this year's modifications have turned out beneficial for the District and its guests.

“We’ve all improved our communication and coordination and we worked to make sure all of



Natural Resource Specialist, Angela Rodgers, demonstrates how to make a craft during a Facebook live educational program.

Photo provided by Saylorville Lake staff

our methods were cohesive and logical,” said Bailey Anderegg, Park Ranger with the Mississippi River Project. “We developed a new way of working with field stations that had operated very self-sufficiently for a long time. One station may not have been aware of how another station was planning

an event or a project, but with the new communication methods, we were all on the same page.”

In addition to the procedural changes that took place this season, COVID-19 precautions prohibited typical summer programming at District project sites. This new, limited interaction world allowed rangers to think outside the box and create some fun and innovative ways of engaging with the public.

“We worked to see how we could develop online programming and educational resources for people to use without having to physically visit our sites,” Anderegg said.

Ranger Aalbers agreed stating that, “While there were no on-site programs or events, we increased our Facebook presence and implemented a new ‘Nature Tales’

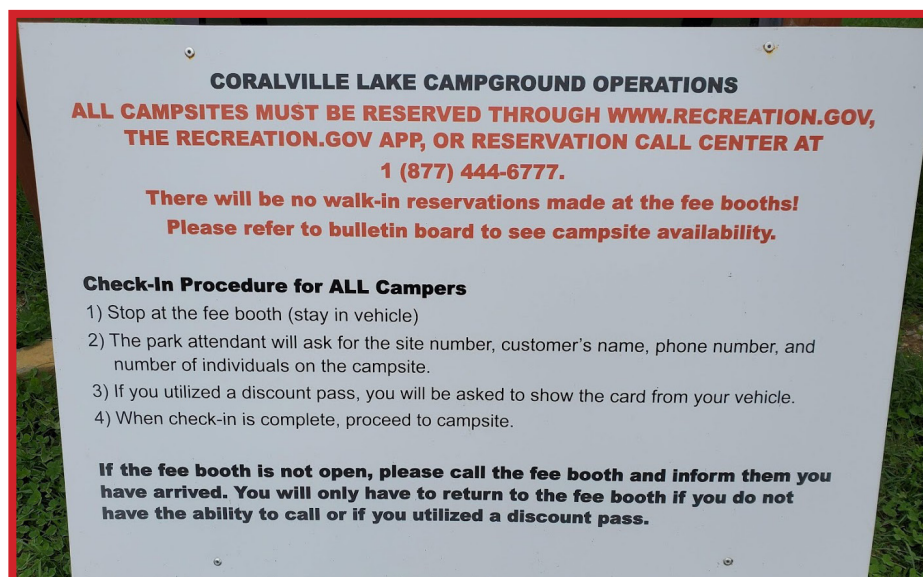
segment on Facebook Live this summer.

“One of our Rangers would read a nature related book,” she said, “and then they would create a craft afterwards that related to the story that our followers could make at home!”

The Corps’ national Interpretive Services and Outreach Program staff also developed a social media segment with the moniker #USACEeducates. This detailed social media campaign shared a new theme each week ranging from Water Safety Week to Career Week to Back to School Week and allowed all Rock Island District social media accounts to educate the public in a meaningful way, while adhering to today’s social distancing guidelines.

While most recreation areas are now closed for the season, some day-use and primitive sites remain open for use throughout the winter. Updated information on COVID-19 changes and area statuses can be found on the District’s website at: www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/.

For up-to-date information on all that’s happening in the Rock Island District and its recreational sites, be sure and follow the District on Facebook @RockIslandDistrictUSACE, @coralvillelake, @lakeredrock, and @SaylorvilleLake. 📺



Signs installed at campgrounds across the District inform visitors of new campground check-in procedures. *Photo provided by Coralville Lake staff*

AROUND THE DISTRICT

RETIREMENTS

Joseph Griesinger, Towboat Operator for the Mississippi River Project, retired March 25, after dedicating 16 years of service to the federal government.

Michael Scudder, Engineering Technician for Technical Services Branch, retired April 30, after dedicating over 10 years of service to the federal government.

James Tryon Jr., Assistant Lockmaster for Lock and Dam 19, retired July 31, after dedicating nearly 14 years of service to the federal government.

Michael Ouellette, Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanic for Lock and Dam 13, retired Aug. 1, after dedicating over 43 years of service to the federal government.

Douglas Hulvey, Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanic for the Illinois Waterway, retired Aug. 28, after dedicating over 22 years of service to the federal government.

Jodi Bausman, Construction Control Representative, retired Aug. 29, after dedicating over 33 years of service to the federal government.

Rebecca Landwehr, Attorney for the Office of Counsel, retired September 30, after dedicating over 22 years of service to the federal government.

Larry Hibler, Lockmaster for the Dresden Island Lock and Dam, retired Oct. 31, after dedicating nearly 19 years of service to the federal government.



Can you name where this photo was taken?

If so, send your answer to Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil to be featured in the next issue of the Tower Times.

CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Paul and Laura St Louis on the birth of their son, James (Jimmy) St Louis, on April 30 at 8:07 a.m. James was born a few weeks early, weighing 6 pounds at birth.



Congratulations to Matt and Kait Zehr on the birth of their son, Seager William Zehr on July 8 at 7:57 p.m. Seager weighed in at 7 pounds, 2 ounces and 20 inches long.



Congratulations to Matthew and Sarah Quinn on the birth of their son, Loren Quinn, on April 17. Loren weighed in at 7 pounds, 1 ounce and 19 inches long.



Congratulations to Jimmy and Melissa Maher on the birth of their son, Aidan Jack Maher, on July 27 at 6:44 p.m. Aidan weighed in at 9 pounds, 2 ounces and 21 inches long.



Congratulations to Trevor and Bre Popkin on the birth of their twins. Piper Nesteby Popkin and Lincoln Nesteby Popkin were born November 30 at 9:50 pm and 9:58 p.m., weighing in at 6 pounds 8 ounces and 7 pounds, 15 ounces respectively.

SYMPATHY



Marion Roy Miller, 73, of New London, passed away April 15. Miller retired from the Corps of Engineers at Lock 22. He had also worked at two locks in the St. Louis District and at Lock 21.



Nick Heleg-Greza, 73, of Moline passed away Oct. 4. Heleg-Greza came to the Rock Island District and served as a Safety and Occupational Health Specialist in the Military Munitions Support Section, Technical Services Branch, Engineering and Construction Division, until he retired in 2011.



Nancy J. Berg, 87, of Rock Island, passed away Oct. 10. Berg worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a Contract Specialist until retiring in 1994.



Richard B. Sharp, 88, of Grain Valley, Missouri, passed away on Oct. 17. Sharp retired with over 30 years service with Rock Island District. For 23 years, he was Chief of Project Operations Branch in charge of the District's navigations structures.



John P. Adamski, 88, of East Moline, passed away Nov. 23. Adamski worked as a landscape architect for U.S. Forest Service and Corps of Engineers at the Rock Island Arsenal Clock Tower.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, ROCK ISLAND
CLOCK TOWER BLDG. - P.O. BOX 2004
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61204-2004

