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**Kathy Wine**

# Protect Our Parks

## Our Parks Need Protections

**M**y background gave me a particular view of the value of natural resources. First of all, I was lucky. I grew up on a farm in north central Iowa where we revered the land and took vacations to national parks. Being landlocked, we were also drawn to water on those trips. So when I moved to the Quad Cities, I brought my love of land, water, and parks with me. I read a lot, and I have been fortunate in the past 40 years to have attended conferences that opened my eyes to what potential waterfronts hold for recreation and economic development. What other cities have done has always inspired.

Recently, I began asking what parks mean to cities? Between 65 and 55 BC, Ancient Rome built the first public park with pools, fountains, and plants of all kinds intended to make a space for people to walk, relax, and enjoy leisure activities.

Today, our public parks are created with the same mindset — to help bring communities and families together, improve public health through biking, walking, hiking, holding sporting or arts events, and, also, festivals. River Action's mission 'To foster the environmental, economic, and cultural vitality of the Mississippi River and its riverfront in the Quad City Region' led us in the early 2000's to create 10 RiverWay Art Projects in public riverfront parks.

Recently, two parks have fallen into disrepair due to vandalism. The presence of graffiti on Sylvan Island, the defacing and destructing of the "Sunday Afternoon in the Park" statues on Credit Island (four times this summer alone), and the presence of litter in both portrays an image of danger and repels both residents and potential visitors from using these island parks.

If we want to preserve our quality of life and maintain property values, then we must take action to prevent and halt vandalism. Because parks attract vandals, we need to establish some iron-clad deterrence. The best course of action might be to utilize ways other cities have combatted it:

- Have crime deterrent cameras in place; just the presence of a camera and surveillance sign can benefit cities. I might also add, the cost of cameras is less than the repairs.
- Install security gates when parks are closed. In the case of an island, that is one entrance.
- Take a look at opening views where vegetation can obstruct the viewing of criminal activity.
- Consider more police surveillance or hire park security to deter gangs and other vandals.

These are not expensive redesigns, but, taken incrementally, could protect our parks from vandalism and assure beautiful, safe places for park users. ☺

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 3 UMRC: Raise the Grade**  
by Virginia Smith
- 4 First Bridge Update**  
by Kathy Wine
- 6 Quad Cities Environmental Film Series: Sustainable Nation**  
by Virginia Smith
- 8 New Home for Purple Martins**  
by Virginia Smith
- 9 Marine Debris Tracker**  
by Virginia Smith
- 9 Meet Our Intern**  
by Kathy Wine
- 10 Save the Dates for 2021-22**  
by Kathy Wine
- 11 Finding Natural Solutions to Mississippi Flooding**  
by Kathy Wine
- 10 Sylvan Island Floreciente Trail Project**  
by Kathy Wine
- 13 Eddy Calendar: November, December, January**



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#### Our Mission:

*River Action strives to foster the environmental, economic, and cultural vitality of the Mississippi River and its riverfront in the Quad City region.*

Cover photo: Virginia Smith, River Action

# Pooling Our Efforts to Raise the Grade

— by Virginia Smith

In early October, the Upper Mississippi River Conference addressed all things Mississippi, including flood management, water quality, transportation, and economic development. A primary focus was the changes seen in the health of the entire watershed between 2015 and 2020, when data was collected to create a snapshot, or Report Card, of the health of the watershed. Kim Lutz, Executive Director of America's Watershed Initiative addressed this issue and gave an in-depth look at, and comparison of, the two report cards and provided multi-pronged goals to further raise the grade for the Upper Mississippi River.

America's Watershed Initiative (AWI) formed in 2009 as a collaborative group of over 400 businesses, government, academic and civic organizations to find solutions to the management challenges facing the Mississippi River and its watershed. AWI conducted an assessment in 2015 and a follow-up in 2020. The overall grade of C- in 2020 is only slightly improved from the D+ grade in 2015. The Report Card Looks at 6 major areas: Water Quality and Ecosystems,

Flood Control and Risk Management, Recreation, Transportation, Economy, and Water Supply.

To address the Mississippi's poor water quality and aging infrastructure, it recommends actions include addressing nutrient loads from agriculture, urban stormwater, and point sources, such as water treatment plants. Most relevant to the Midwest, shifting agricultural practices (currently on a voluntary basis) and land use change to dramatically decrease the loss of nitrogen and phosphorus into the river. Water quality conditions have seen decreases in suspended solids and phosphorous, but nitrogen concentrations remain elevated. Lead concentrations have increased, but the cause of this is not clear.

Green infrastructure to better direct urban storm water and stabilize the banks of waterways needs improvement, as does the operation of sewage treatment plants and industrial plants.

For more information: <https://americaswatershed.org/>

*We can raise the grade by:*

- Investing \$2 billion in annual funding to address critical needs in agriculture, ecosystem, navigation, and water management
- Establishing a science agenda, improving data systems and reporting progress
- Educating community members for data-informed decision making
- Acting to improve collaboration among all stakeholders

**UMRC participants' eco-tour to Beaver Island led by Kara Mitvalsky, Environmental Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District and Ed Britton, Refuge Manager for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge.**



# First Bridge Update

— By Kathy Wine

Advancing sustainability  
without compromising performance



ARCONIC

A surveyor inspects elevations from the top of the bridge touchdown mound, October 15, 2021, Phase I.



**D**riving along River Drive in Davenport east of downtown, you may notice some construction activity at River Heritage Park. Phase I of the mound for the touchdown of First Bridge and an extension of the riverfront trail to it are both underway. While in 1856 the first bridge crossed the Mississippi River, the replica span of 255' will cross the four-lane U.S.-67 /River Drive and the Canadian-Pacific rail line to connect to the Mississippi River Trail and American Discovery Trail in River Heritage Park. Rail cuts excavated from the original rail in the embankment have been made into book-ends. See page 15 for ordering information.

The Davenport Family YMCA and Republic Electric have agreed to allow the connecting trails from the north end of First Bridge along a shared property line up to Federal and Farnam Streets. The YMCA will build the trail. The City of Davenport also committed to marking Federal and Farnam Streets with sharrows to 6th Street bicycle boulevard once the trail is in place.

Recently, River Action graded the north berm in order to seed it with annuals and perennials. As you can see, the American Cruise Lines have begun docking at the park and will continue through November. Viking Cruises will begin docking in 2022 bringing both cruise lines and visitors to the park.

If you would like more information on how you can help with this project, please contact River Action at [kwine@riveraction.org](mailto:kwine@riveraction.org) or call 563-322-2969. ©

*River Action has received support from the City of Davenport by developing River Heritage Park along the river so named for all the historic events of national importance that took place there.*

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# ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE DRINKING WATER PROJECT IN UGANDA √ √ √



## Quad Cities Environmental Film Series

# Sustainable Nation to be shown November 14th

— by Virginia Smith

**S**ustainable Nation premiered digitally in May 2020 with over 16,000 viewers from 15 countries. In this hour-long documentary, three innovators are applying lessons learned from the water shortage in Israel to other areas in need. Globally, one in ten people lacks access to safe drinking water. This documentary was recommended and sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Quad Cities due to its global environmental message and presence in water-insecure locations, such as India, Uganda, and California.

River Action staff had the opportunity to sit down with Allan Ross, who is now in his 20th year as the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of the Quad Cities. Ross stated that “In a macro sense, Israel is one of the leaders throughout the world that really care about the environment” with a presence in many countries including African nations. It has a higher use of recycled water than any country in the world — by a factor of 4. Israel recycles nearly 90% of its wastewater. Much of this recycled water is used for agricultural irrigation, 10% goes toward environmental projects (increasing river flow volume, fire suppression) and only 5% is discharged into the ocean. When asked why a small country



like Israel would be leading the world in water use technology, Ross cited necessity (chronic water shortages, challenging relationships with neighboring countries, and the lack of a large manufacturing industry) as leading to a reliance on “brain power instead of manual power to get ahead in the world.”

While mainstream media has been focusing on conflict, this small country has been solving its water crisis through recycling water, de-salination plants, and the development of an atmospheric water generator to filter and extract water vapor from the air. The latter technology has improved access to running water for the Navajo Nation in Arizona through a

partnership with the Israeli company Watergen.

On a more regional level, Iowa’s Governor Kim Reynolds has visited Israel twice in recent years, with one of her objectives being to observe first-hand the Israeli technology and innovations that may be applied to Iowa’s agricultural issues.

Join us on November 14th at the Figge Art Museum at 2:00 p.m. for Sustainable Nation, followed by a Q & A with producer/writer Rebecca Shore. 🌀

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Expertise & labor provided by: Allison Nodurft, Nahant Marsh Naturalist; Jody Millar, QC Audubon Society President; Kory Darnall, Davenport City Cemetery Partnership; Jimmy Wiebler, Nahant Marsh Naturalist



## New Home for Purple Martins in Davenport City Cemetery

— by Virginia Smith

Purple martins nesting in Davenport have a new home along West River Drive. The Davenport City Cemetery Partnership, with funding from River Action and additional support from the Quad Cities Audubon Society and the City of Davenport Parks and Recreation Department recently installed a purple martin colony home in the cemetery. The Nahant Marsh Education Center staff supplied the expertise and muscle for the installation, which was completed in early October.

East of the Rockies, purple martins nest almost exclusively in manmade structures and consume large quantities of flying insects, such as mosquitoes. The design of the multi-gourd home was recommended by the Purple Martin Conservation Association, with the half-moon openings designed to exclude other bird species such as European Starlings.

Future plans for the site include educational activities and the planting of low-maintenance prairie grasses surrounding the colony house. In the meantime, Kory Darnall, who spearheaded this project, will bring the gourd “condos” inside until spring, ready for the return of the purple martins. ☺

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Nine area mayors launch the Marine Debris Tracker, October 15, 2021.

## Marine Debris Tracker

— by Virginia Smith

**M**ake a difference while enjoying the outdoors! Before your next bike or walk, download the Marine Debris Tracker mobile app through the Apple app store or Google Play to start tracking the quantity and type of debris found in our community. This citizen science project is part of a nationwide effort to quantify and qualify the litter that potentially harms ecosystems, wildlife, and humans. The app records the debris location through your phone's GPS, allows you to select the debris items, and even add descriptions and photos of the debris to be submitted and added to a nationwide database.

Regionally, the Mayors of the Mississippi River, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Program, National Geographic Society and the University of Georgia, have launched an initiative to increase our understanding of the state of plastic pollution to combat this growing problem along one of the world's greatest waterways.

Working with volunteer citizen scientists, the initiative records data on the state of plastic pollution at key sites along the river and watershed. This data will be used to generate a 'plastic pollution map' that will help policy makers, business and citizens take appropriate action to improve the health of our waters locally, nationally, and globally.

For more information or if extra app help is needed, see <https://www.unep.org/regions/north-america/regional-initiatives/mississippi-river-plastic-pollution-initiative>. How-to videos may also be found on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and <http://xstreamcleanup.org/citizenscience>. ©



## Meet Our Intern

— by Kathy Wine

**R**obert Dunn is a senior at Augustana College majoring in Geography and Environmental Studies with the hope of going into either forestry or the National Parks Service. At Augustana, Robert participates in the Concert Band and the percussion ensemble and been a part of the college's geography club. He has also participated in both club Rugby and baseball.

"I started at River Action in June of 2021, and I took over for the Summer Education programs Explore the River Series, assisted in scheduling volunteers for Floatzilla, and have occasionally helped with the grant writing process. My work with the Summer Ed program has given me experience in getting logistical information to the Channel Cat Talk and Riverine Walk participants and speakers. In my work with Floatzilla and the Explore the River Series, I also gained significant experience in scheduling volunteers to help whenever and wherever they may be needed."

We are fortunate that River Action is part of Robert's student career, and we hope we are enriching it as much as he is ours. ©

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# 2022 Events Save the Date!

January – May



April 22 Awards



June 19



August 20



September 1 – 2

September 17



October 19 – 20



Upper Mississippi River Conference

Memorial Day  
through Labor Day



# Finding Natural Solutions to Mississippi Flooding

— By Kathy Wine

**D**uring a Nuts and Bolts of Floodplain Management session at the recent UMRC meeting, Colin Welenkamp, Executive Director of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative that represents 104 mayors reported on a unique collaboration just formed, “Mayors advocate for better flood storage; why don’t we collaborate with those who flood areas for ducks?” And that brought about a unique collaboration with Ducks Unlimited; both organizations saw the benefit immediately. The goal is to restore thousands of acres of wetlands at key points along the river to hold floodwaters and reduce by 10% the chances that a future, higher flood would result in levees being overtopped.

After the 2019 flood, mayors along the river said they needed new solutions. A study by the environmental consulting firm Two Degrees Adapt said the only way to prepare for the future is to find ways to give the rivers more room by turning natural areas into wetlands -- move back levees. Following the 2019 flood, the U.S. Department of Agriculture sought to turn 3,600 acres of farmland in Iowa into wetlands. Farms, frustrated by working lands that flood more often, offered 26,000 acres — more than the USDA could buy.



Enter the Memorandum of Common Purpose just signed by Ducks Unlimited and MRCTI which intends to:

- Absorb floodwater
- Promote public recreation and tourism
- Increase Habitat
- Improve water quality
- Provide carbon sequestration

The group announced the goal of restoring 60,000 acres and converting them to floodplain in the next five to seven years. At the confluence of the Rock River and the Mississippi in the Quad Cities, 7,000 acres have been identified. Other sites are in St. Louis and Cairo, IL; those would be enough to cut by 10% the chances a flood will overtop levees in those cities for a flood that has a 1% chance of hitting in 2030. The total cost is estimated to be \$150 million. Ducks Unlimited has taken on the job of raising the funds; organizers report that the fundraising among duck hunters is going well! Kudos to these two non-profit organizations for forming this unique collaboration for this important work. ©

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# Sylvan Island Floreciente Trail Project Underway

— By Kathy Wine

**P**ublic meetings, preliminary design, fundraising, and presentations have begun on a trail from the Floreciente neighborhood to Sylvan Island. Currently there are not safe ways to walk or bike across River Drive and the active rail line to get to the island park.

In June, wanting a trail that not only builds community, connects neighborhoods, promotes safety, and fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion, River Action began discussions with the Friends of Floreciente, Renew Moline, Mercado on Fifth, and Friends of Sylvan Island to learn what was most important for residents in the Mexican American community in connecting to Sylvan Island. We learned that parents worried about the safety issues for their families, and that leaders wanted to see an increase in promotion of business in the district, so that trail users might also come to the neighborhood for food and drink. All agreed that an attractive and inviting trail with proper landscaping and lighting was central.

Last month, the preliminary design was presented to Moline's Project Management Team and received its endorsement. Additional presentations to Moline City Council are planned as River Action seeks funding for Phase I: a survey, design, engineering, permits, and construction documents. Humanities Iowa provided funding for the preliminary design; partial funding for Phase I has come from the Moline Foundation and the Illinois Arts Council. Because this trail will also connect Rock Island's Keystone Neighborhood, presentations are planned there as well.

After signing the seven trails on Sylvan Island, providing Mariachis on Channel Cat Talks, providing the history of the island industries during Riverine Walks this summer, River Action hopes to build an inclusive community by celebrating more of our Mexican culture in the near future.

If you would like to become part of this program or project, contact River Action, 563-322-2969, or [kwine@riveraction.org](mailto:kwine@riveraction.org). ©



# eddy Calendar

\*\*\* Please check program websites for possible changes in schedule \*\*\*

## November



### Nahant Marsh: Breakfast Nature Club – Boundary Waters

Nov 5, 8-9 am, Nahant Marsh  
Education Center, 4220  
Wapello Ave, Davenport,  
nahantmarsh.org

Discuss the past, present,  
and future of the Boundary  
Waters Canoe Area and  
the National Wilderness  
Preservation Center. \$10.

### Nahant Marsh: Nature Hike

Nov 6, 9-10 am, Nahant Marsh Education Center, 4220  
Wapello Ave, Davenport, nahantmarsh.org

Join a naturalist for an interpretive trail walk through  
the Marsh. Hikes are offered year-round on the first  
Saturday of the month and give visitors an opportunity  
to learn more about the diverse flora and fauna of this  
unique natural area. Free, donations received will aid  
Nahant Marsh's public education programs.

### Quad Cities Environmental Film Series – Sustainable Nation

Nov 14, 2 pm, Figge Art  
Museum, 225 W. 2nd St,  
Davenport, riveraction.org

International award-winning  
film follows three innovators  
who are taking lessons  
learned from Israel's water  
shortage to the rest of the  
world. The work of this  
visionary trio highlights the nexus between food,  
energy and water and underscores how solving these  
enormous challenges can help free women, and the  
world, from life-threatening poverty, illness, and lack of  
opportunity.



### Quad City Audubon Society's Field Trip

Nov 14, 7 am, quadcityaudubon.org  
Spring Lake and Lock & Dam 13. Meet at Shuler's Shady  
Grove Park/1st Ave Boat Ramp Parking Lot, Rapids City,  
for carpooling/caravan. Free.

### River Action's Environmental Book Club

Nov 23, 7 pm, River Action Office, 822 E. River Dr,  
Davenport, 563-322-2969, riveraction.org  
Discuss *The Souls of Animals* by Gary Kowalski. The book  
combines heartwarming stories with solid science to  
show that other creatures are not insensitive objects  
devoid of feeling and intellect but thinking, sentient  
beings with emotions and spirits similar to our own.  
Free and open to the public.

**SMALL BUSINESS  
SATURDAY**  
November 27th

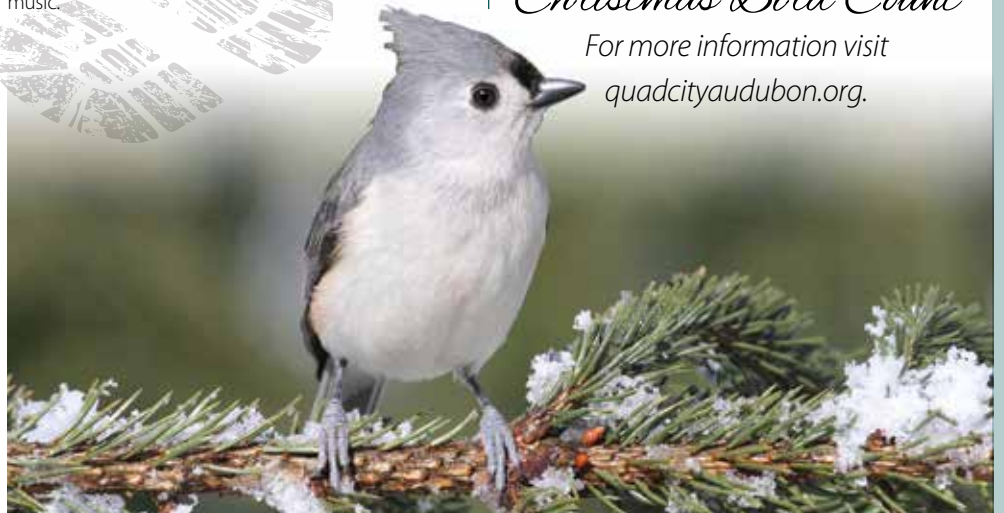
## December

### Nahant Marsh: Breakfast Nature Club – Life in the Cold

Dec 3, 8-9 am, Nahant Marsh Education Center, 4220  
Wapello Ave, Davenport, nahantmarsh.org  
Learn how animals prepare for hibernation and tolerate  
the harsh elements of the winter. \$10.

### Christmas at the Village

Dec 3-4, 6-9 pm, Village of East Davenport,  
villageofeastdavenport.com  
Santa Claus, Scrooge, Carolers and Musicians  
throughout the Village of East Davenport. Trolley rides,  
Kid's Crafting Center, Nativity with Animals and live  
music.



*Giving Tuesday*  
November 30th

## Quad City Arts Festival of Trees

Nov 20-28, [qcfestivaloftrees.com](http://qcfestivaloftrees.com)

Featuring over 150 designer  
displays, fun-filled attractions,  
special events and the largest  
helium balloon parade  
in the Midwest. Several  
ticketed special events held  
throughout the 10-day holiday  
extravaganza.

Calendar continued on page 14 >

## Christmas Bird Count

For more information visit  
[quadcityaudubon.org](http://quadcityaudubon.org).

< Calendar continued from page 13



**Nahant Marsh: Nature Hike**

*Dec 4, 9-10 am, Nahant Marsh Education Center, 4220 Wapello Ave, Davenport, nahantmarsh.org*  
Join a naturalist for an interpretive trail walk through the Marsh. Hikes are offered year-round on the first Saturday of the month and give visitors an opportunity to learn more about the diverse flora and fauna of this unique natural area. Free, donations received will aid Nahant Marsh's public education programs.



**Quad City Audubon Society Monthly Meeting**

*Dec. 9, 7 pm, Butterworth Center, 1105 8th St, Moline, quadcityaudubon.org*  
Pie Night! A brief program on environmental issues affecting birds in our community, followed by pie and refreshments with additional discussions. Bring a pie if desired. Free.



**January**



**Bald Eagle Days**

*Jan 7-9, QCCA Expo Center, 2621 4th Ave, Rock Island, qccaexpoctr.com*  
This three-day event includes live eagle, hawk, owl, and vulture flying demonstrations along with educational programs and over 200 fun and informative exhibits. Be sure to stop by River Action's booth! Adults \$6. Children age 6-15 \$1.

**Quad Cities Farm Show**

*Jan 16-18, QCCA Expo Center, 2621 4th Ave, Rock Island, quadcitiesfarmshow.com*  
The only Ag show in the Quad Cities featuring over 200 Ag companies. Free admission.



**River Action's Environmental Book Club**

*Jan 25, 7 pm, River Action Office, 822 E. River Dr, Davenport, 563-322-2969, riveraction.org*  
River Action and Sierra Club host a monthly environmental book club. The book for January will be announced on River Action's website once selected. The book discussions are free and open to the public.

**Send us your suggestion for the 2022 Reading List:**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Connect with Us



For over 30 years River Action has been dedicated to connecting people to the river. Our supporters help us to improve the quality of water that flows down the river. They help us instill a love of the river through encouraging participation in many activities that involve the river. Plus, River Action encourages educational programs that help our residents better understand river issues.



## OWN A PIECE OF HISTORY!

Salvaged from the 1856 berm grading in 2019 was a rail dating to the first railroad bridge to cross the Mississippi. These historic bookends will be given to donors who make contributions of \$150 or more.

To donate, go to [riveraction.org](http://riveraction.org).



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### Please indicate membership level

**\$130 Action Membership**

Includes benefits of individual membership, Riverine Walks (Up to two heads of household and dependent children under the age of 18), and 2 tickets to a River Action event. Choose one: Ride the River, Taming of the Slough, Floatzilla, Golf Cart Tour, or Channel Cat Talks.

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**\$45 Individual Membership**

Includes membership card, eddy Magazine and Riverine Walks.

**\$20 Student Membership**

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Please check here if you would like to be involved as a volunteer.

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