Big River

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31 Ways to Enjoy the River this Summer

The Upper Mississippi is a big, complicated river offering myriad opportunities for fun and exploration. How about trying something new this summer? The list below should offer a few fresh ideas for even the most experienced river romper. By the way, many of these activities are more fun with kids.

1. Explore the river close-up. Borrow or buy a microscope, and use it to examine algae, plants, insects, nymphs and the little unidentified things you find in or along the river.

2. Collect shells. While freshwater mussel shells are a pretty drab lot compared to sea shells, you should be able to collect at least a dozen different species with a little work. Pamphlets, field guides or library books can help you identify them. Be careful not to disturb living mussels; some are endangered.

3. Clean up a beach or island. Organized river cleanups often include refreshments, music and a fair amount of goofing around. However, you can clean up trash anytime, anywhere. Use gloves and watch out for poison ivy.

4. Adopt a beach. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's adopt-a-beach program will get you cool key rings, a certificate and trips back to your beach at least once a month during the warm months. It's a good way to get to know more about a place.

5. Find some otters. It's not easy to spot otters, but once you do, you may be able to watch them repeatedly at the same spot. They often return to a favorite place to collect and eat mussels. Bring binoculars.

6. Watch a towboat move through a lock. Many of the locks and dams have elevated observation platforms with roofs. Breaking a tow in two and tying it back together

Scrappy Eagles on a Blue Water Day

March 21, 1999, was one of the days Bob and I have come to call "Blue Water Days" on the Mississippi. Blue sky, a few tiny puffy white clouds, the water appears dark blue, the distant hills look purple and the scene is so incredibly beautiful that it makes you want to cry or pray. The leaves have begun to bud on the trees, giving everything a soft fuzzy look. The ice is almost entirely gone, just a plug left at the mouth of our little bay.

The eagles are back in force! We have a nesting pair — we call them Ozzie and Harriet — less than a mile away from our home. They come to our little bay nearly every day to fish. This morning we watched as the female (females are (Eagles continues on page 4)
gether is a lot of work. Some crews pride themselves in their speed and efficiency.

7. Watch birds. Eagles, ospreys, pileated woodpeckers, pelicans, plovers, warblers, herons, egrets, kingfishers — take your choice and take your binoculars.

8. Put up wood duck boxes. Many local outdoor groups make and put out nesting boxes for wood ducks.

9. Spend an afternoon on a fishing float. Below many locks and dams fishing floats sell bait, refreshments and a comfortable place to sit and fish in the deep water. They are a good spot to watch river traffic and practice some comfortable, relaxed fishing.

10. Identify flow­
ers and plants. Bring a field guide to your favorite place on the river ...

11. Camp out on an island. The islands get pretty busy in the summer and on weekends. If you’re near a highway, railroad track or lock and dam, be prepared for a night of traffic noise. If you want some solitude, try September or early October, especially during the week.

12. Find wild foods. Swamp white oak acorns, cattail pollen and arrowroot tubers are easy to find in season. Check local park or refuge rules that might limit your harvest and always check a reliable guidebook for edible plants.

13. Visit overlooks on the bluffs. Have you ever visited the Effigy Mounds National Monument, Barn Bluff, Brady’s Bluff or either Eagle Point Park? Bring a topographical map, river charts or a road map to help identify features.

14. Find good spots to watch the sunrise or sunset. Of course, a great spot for watching the sun set in June may not be as good in September, so you’ll need to collect great spots for different times of the year. (Make a list. Send it to Big River.)

15. Visit historical places. Read about Black Hawk, Julien Dubuque, Father Marquette, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Fort Crawford and the Oneota Cul-

16. Spot towboats. Write down the name, time and place. Were they headed upstream or downstream? Learn to recognize some of them.

17. Bike along the river. Every spring there are more miles of bike trails along the Mississippi and its tributaries. It’s also fun to explore some of the river bottoms and dikes on a bike.

18. Listen in on the towboat pilots and lock workers on a marine band radio. Learn the jargon and routines.

19. Explore the backwaters on a type of boat you have never used before. Have you ever used a canoe, kayak, paddleboat or rowboat on the river?

20. Explore the river in an airplane. Most people don’t know that it’s easy and less expensive than you think to arrange a private flight. Call your local airport and ask. Most pilots charge by the hour. They need to fly a minimum number of hours to keep their license current. If you’re lucky you might find one who will fly for the cost of the fuel or the fuel plus the rental fee. You might be able to split the cost among a few friends. Bring a camera and binoculars.

21. Learn more about the tributaries you cross often. Where do they begin? Are there trail systems along them? How have they changed since the locks and dams were built? How did they get their names?

22. Count houseboats, johnboats, cigarette boats, bass boats, pontoon boats...

23. Collect books about the river. Many antique stores and used book stores in river towns include a section of river books.

24. Cruise in an excursion boat. If you’re familiar with the local excursion boats, visit another river town and take a cruise. Many boats offer cruises with meals, music or both.

25. Keep a river journal. Get down to the river when you can and record what you see, hear, smell and think. When you can’t get
down to the river, read your journal. Eventually, you will be able to compare entries from the same time of year from previous years. Then in conversations you can offer observations like "last year in early May the river was a foot higher," or "Boy, the cormorants are back early this year."

26. Fish for carp. Put canned corn on a big hook and fish near a place where they load corn onto barges. Use heavy line and stout gear. Be prepared for a struggle. Find a good carp recipe.

27. Become a Mississippi River bridge expert. See how many places you can walk across the river. Collect postcards of old bridges.

28. Go to a river festival that you haven't been to before. Eat a catfish sandwich. Help a kid enter a fishing contest. Go to a nighttime concert on the river.

29. Just sit and watch the river. Some river gurus claim this so-called activity has therapeutic and/or spiritual benefits. Critics claim it's a waste of time. Find out for yourself.

30. Eat at a restaurant on the river that you haven't been to before. Many of these restaurants have outdoor decks where afterwards, you can sit back with a cool beverage and watch the river go by.

31. Discover a new way to enjoy the river. Then use it to enjoy the river. Tell us about it.

Resources for enjoying the river
Department of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Service and tourism offices often offer free maps, fact sheets and other information about the river.

Correction
Eleven months a year we work hard to make sure that everything in Big River is as accurate as we can make it. Then last year in April we decided to have a little fun with the Winona County Courthouse. We floated the five-story, stone building on 32,008 barrels in the Mississippi. We were surprised at how many people believed us. A couple of folks who called to check on the story got angry at us when we explained the April Fool gag.

So this year we spiked our April spoof with abundant clues, as if the title, "What a Croc," wasn't sufficient warning. There is no Wyandotte, Iowa, and there are no Queensland river crocodiles in the Mississippi or anywhere else that we know of.

Our apologies to all of you who bought yellow outfits to repel the 24-foot monsters. The only croc you'll need to watch out for around here will be in the April 2000 newsletter. Meanwhile, we'll behave ourselves for the next 10 months.

Big River Catalog
Stuff to help you enjoy the river...

- Big River Turtle T-shirt
  $14.95 (+$2.75 shipping)

- Big River Turtle Sweatshirt
  $26.80 (+$2.75 shipping)

- Wetland Plants and Plant Communities of Minnesota & Wisconsin
  $19.95 (+$1.75 shipping)

- Big River Reader
  $15.95 (+$1.50 shipping)

  $8.50 (+$1.21 shipping)

- Native Fish of the Upper Mississippi River poster
  $11.00 (+$1.50 shipping)

- Upper Mississippi River Navigation Charts
  $15.00 (+$2.00 shipping)

- Henry Bosse Photo Notecards
  Twin Cities Scenes or Scenes from Twin Cities to St. Louis
  $10.00 for one set of 10 (+$1.50 shipping)

- Big River Mug
  $5.00 (+$2.00 shipping)
  $28.00 set of six (+$5.00 shipping)

- A Postcard Journey Along the Upper Mississippi
  $16.95 (+$2.00 shipping)

TERMS
- Minnesota residents add 6.5% tax and Winona residents add 7%, except on clothing.
- $6.00 maximum shipping charge.
- Please pay by check, VISA or Mastercard.

TO ORDER
write: Big River, PO Box 204
Winona, MN 55987
fax: (507) 454-2133
call: 1-800-303-8201
a third bigger so you can tell at a distance) got thoroughly wet and had to flap mightily to pull herself out of the river after trying to catch a fish. She was sitting on a root above the water, her mate in a tree on the other side of the bay entrance.

Everything looked quiet and serene, a picture we see daily. Then the young eagles arrived. Some are starting to show white feathers, so they must be about three years old, but others are still entirely mottled and dark, so must be only two or so. The youngsters made a few low, hazing passes at the mature eagles. Soon more and more young eagles appeared.

The hunt for fish became intense. A small, young one caught something in the river and appeared to be in trouble, sinking deeper and flapping wildly while dragging the fish (or being dragged) through the water. It moved on and another young one immediately flew down to capture the dropped fish. So it went through several eagles, until finally one was strong enough to drag what turned out to be a very large fish over to the ice plug, where it simply sat on it.

And now the fun really began. Harriet left her low perch and threatened the youngster as other eagles gathered around and hazed as well. The mature female finally scared off the youngster, and then stood on the fish. In moments there were more than fifteen eagles hopping around or standing and making threatening motions. The large female managed to eat. Her mate came over and simply stood by, standing close to youngsters who were threatening, as if to say "Leave her alone. She has a nest." We watched as the female ate a fair amount before conceding the fish to a very large, aggressive young eagle.

The youngsters really got excited by that and started behaving like a bunch of preteens playing sand-lot soccer. They threatened each other and grabbed for the fish and leapt about in an amazing way. Finally one of the youngsters managed to grab the fish and fly off — with a dozen huge eagles chasing. It flew over the water and dropped the fish, which was promptly picked up by another. They flew faster than we normally see, around and around the little island, sometimes trying to get back to the ice patch where it had all started and sometimes aiming at a tree limb. The eagle carrying the fish tried for a tree, was bumped by another and we could see the fish fly in a long arc back into the water. Other eagles managed to grab the fish and fly off with it. Cars stopped all along the highway to watch this pack of rowdy eagles.

Ozzie and Harriet settled down on their favorite fishing perches at opposite sides of the bay mouth. The young eagles stayed a while, fighting with each other, but eventually left. It is again the image of serenity with Ozzie and Harriet perched in a stately manner on either side of the bay. As we sit here enjoying this magnificent show, we feel so blessed to be able to look out from our home and enjoy the ever-changing spectacle of the magnificent Mississippi.

From the river-facing desk of Sally Sloan, Winona State University professor (just riding the rhythms of the river).
Festivals on the River

Spring and Summer 1999

Minneapolis
- Stone Arch Festival of the Arts, June 19-20;
- Showboat Days, July 9-11
- Taste of Minnesota, July 1-4
- Minnesota R.

Hastings, Rivertown Days, July 17-19

St. Paul
- St. Anthony Park Arts Festival, June 5;
- South St. Paul Kaposia Days, June 24-27
- Good Old Nelson Days, August 14-15

Winona, Art & River Festival, June 12-13;
- Steamboat Days, June 29-July 4
- Great River Jazz Fest, Aug. 5-8

Dakota
- Onalaska, Sunfish Days, May 28-31
- La Crescent, Riverfest, June 30-July 4;
- Twin-O-Rama, July 17-18

St. Cloud
- Spass Tag Festival, June 14-18;
- Wheels, Wings, and Water Festival, June 24-27
- Fourth of July Celebration, July 4

Elk River

Wisconsin
Tourism Info 1-800-372-2737

St. Croix R.

Sacramento Days, June 4-6; •

North River, Bay Days, June 30-June 5

Duluth, Lake Festival, July 4-6


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Prairie du Chien, Rendezvous, June 17-20;•
- Prairie Dog Blues Festival, July 30-31
- Bagley, Free Fishing Weekend, June 5-6
- Cassville, Independence Day, July 3;
- Twin-O-Rama, July 17-18

Bettendorf, Old Fashioned Fourth, July 4
- East Dubuque
- Galena, Tour of Historic Homes, June 12-13

Dubuque, Dubuquefest, May 14-16
- Catfish Festival, June 24-27;
- Swingfest, July 10;
- Dragon Boat Festival, Aug. 20-22

Bellevue, Heritage Days, July 3-4;
- John Henry Weber Buckskinner's Rendezvous, July 24-25
- Sebula, Summerfest, July 10
- Thomson

Clinton, Art in the Park, June 19;
- Riverboat Days, July 2-5
- Fulton
- Le Claire, Tug Fest, Aug. 14-16
- Port Byron, Tug Fest, Aug. 14-15
- Savanna, Summerfest, July 10

Davenport, Mississippi Valley Blues Fest, July 2-4;
- Bix Beiderbecke Jazz Fest, July 29-Aug. 1
- Rock Island, Summerfest, July 8-10

Wabasha, Riverboat Days, Aug. 30-31
- Nelson, Good Old Nelson Days, August 14-15

Kellogg, Watermelon Fest, Sept. 10-12
- Alma
- Cochrane-Buffalo City, Fourth of July, July 4
- Fountain City, Fall Festival, Aug. 14-15
- Trempealeau, Catfish Days, July 9-11

Black R.

La Crescent, Riverfest, June 30-July 4;
- Great River Jazz Fest, Aug. 5-8

Stoddard, Labor Day Celebration, Sept. 4-6
- Genoa, Catfish Dinner, July 25-26

Brownsville, Sesquicentennial Celebration, June 25-27
- Cochrane-Buffalo City, Fourth of July, July 4
- Fountain City, Fall Festival, Aug. 14-15
- Trempealeau, Catfish Days, July 9-11

Minneapolis

Tourism Info 1-800-657-3700

May 1999

Big River
Records and Radios

**Minnesota** — Two shovelnose sturgeons and a walleye-sauger hybrid, all caught in the Mississippi River, broke big-fish records in 1998. On February 16, 1998, Jerry Bambenek of Rollingstone caught a five-pound, four-ounce shovelnose sturgeon near Winona, but another shovelnose weighing five pounds, five ounces, taken by Joseph Yankovec of Maplewood, broke Bambenek’s record about a month later. Yankovec was fishing below the Red Wing Dam.

A nine-pound, 1.5-ounce walleye-sauger hybrid caught near Red Wing by William Stahnke of Rochester set a new record on March 7, 1998. The hybrid, known as “saugeye,” is unusual and can be hard to identify, according to Bob Gibson, who manages big fish records for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Saugeyes occur naturally, comprising one to five percent of the population where both species inhabit the waters.

Sauger and walleye longing to hybridize in Lake Pepin may be under the watchful eye of the University of Minnesota graduate student Brian Ickes, who is trying to find out why these species have declined there since the mid-1980s. Ickes has studied walleye and sauger in Lake Pepin since the fall of 1997, when he implanted 20 fish of both species with radio transmitters in hopes of discovering their habitat requirements and distribution in the lake. To spawn, Ickes’ tagged walleyes swim into the Mississippi through a side channel that enters Lake Pepin from the Pierce Islands State Wildlife Area. This side channel has no wing dams and is shallower than the Main Channel.

Ickes also tracked 14 sauger to Wacouta Bay, downstream of Red Wing, late last year. They stayed in the Main Channel by day but retreated to side channels at night, and at spawning time they swam upstream through the main channel at the same time as the walleyes. To spawn, four sauger chose a site right below Lock and Dam 3, another on a rock curtain and three on wing dams below the lock and dam (La Crosse Tribune 3-18-99).

**River Crossings**

**Iowa and Wisconsin** — The busiest bridge in the Quad Cities could become a historic structure, which might slow or even halt plans to expand it.

The Interstate 74 bridge, which connects Bettendorf, Iowa, and Moline, Ill., hosts more traffic than it was designed for — over 65,000 vehicles daily. A Moline City Council committee was exploring expanding the bridge when it was told that Iowa nominated it for the National Register of Historic Places.

A Moline official said she does not yet know how this nomination might affect expansion projects, but it is very difficult to change the structure of something with historic designation (KZEG-KCLN News 4-8-99).

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) is looking into replacing the aging Merrimac Ferry with either a new boat or bridge across the Wisconsin River. The Ferry’s future will be discussed at a May 3 public hearing in Sauk City.

This ferry began operation this year on April 5, but two days later it shut down for two hours because of a faulty bearing. Over the winter the 36-year-old ferry received a new diesel engine, new cables, and a hydraulic system overhaul. Meanwhile, only vehicles under four tons can travel the ferry this year because of fatigue cracks in the boat’s hull (La Crosse Tribune 4-8-99).

**Pool 8 Drawdown**

A draft report of the proposed drawdown of Mississippi River Pool 8 (between Genoa, Wis., and Dresbach, Minn.) is now available for public review from the Army Corps of Engineers.

The drawdown, if approved, will lower the river by 0.5 to 1.5 feet in Pool 8 from June 15 to Sept. 15, 2000. Designed to stimulate the growth of aquatic perennial plants that provide food and shelter to wildlife, such as cattails, bulrushes and arrowhead, this would be the largest drawdown attempted by the Corps’ St. Paul District.

A task force with members from the Corps, the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have studied the proposed drawdown for 22 months and held 12 public meetings. Some folks, including boaters and shoreline property owners, worry that lower water levels might hinder access to boat docks and shallow areas (La Crosse Tribune 4-4-99).

Based on public support for the drawdown, Palesh, project manager for the Corps, expects final approval for the project from the Corps in September. To obtain a copy of “Definite Project Report/Environmental Assessment for the Pilot Pool Drawdown,” contact Gary Palesh at (651) 290-5282 or email him at gary.d.palesh@mvp02.usace.army.mil.
River Bill End Run
Washington, D.C. — A bill that would authorize $1.2 billion to expand five locks on the Upper Mississippi River is coming under heavy fire.

MARC 2000, a lobbying association for the tow industry, proposed the Export Facilitation Act at a Congressional hearing on March 18, and Reps. Kenney Hulshof (R-Mo.), Jim Nussle (R-Iowa) and Leonard Boswell (D-Iowa) showed support for the measure.

“It takes unprecedented hubris for some of the wealthiest companies in the world to ask taxpayers to fund a boondoggle that even the Corps of Engineers won’t support,” said Tim Searchinger, senior attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund, referring to the Corps’ $51-million study to see whether barge traffic justifies doubling the current lock length from 600 to 1,200 feet. Preliminary results suggest there is no economic reason to lengthen the locks until at least 2020 (MRBA Newsletter, Spring 1999).

Barge traffic pushes sediment into backwaters and side channels, critical habitat for river wildlife.

“More barges will compound the problems already facing the river,” said Jonathan Ela, a spokesman for the Sierra Club. Federal restoration programs are attempting to relieve the sedimentation problems, but as Ela notes, “We’re not able to replace those important habitats as quickly as they’re being lost. More barges will only accelerate the loss of side channels and marsh plants.”

Muck Raking
Arcadia, Wis. — Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource (DNR) officials were surprised recently by a provision in governor Tommy Thompson’s budget bill to allow a furniture company to fill in wetlands to expand a factory.

Under the bill, Ashley Furniture Industries of Arcadia could fill in 15 acres of wetlands near the Trempealeau River. The Trempealeau is a tributary of the Mississippi.

Ashley executives have donated over $40,000 to Thompson’s campaign, according to State Rep. Spencer Black, who opposes the bill.

“This is one of the most blatant examples I have seen of decisions about our outdoors being based on political influence instead of sound science,” said Black.

The proposed expansion would add 300 jobs, said State Senator Rodney Moen, whose district includes the factory. Moen contends the expansion site is not a wetland but a floodway. The DNR disagrees, claiming that the area’s value to wildlife and storage for Trempealeau River floodwater is well within the definition of a wetland.

The DNR has not taken an official position on the proposal, but Moen expects a fight from the agency. A decade ago, when Ashley was allowed to fill 13 acres of wetland for expansion, DNR officials warned that that was all the company would get, says Moen.

Thompson spokesman Kevin Keane said the governor has a strong record on wetlands preservation, and that the wetlands would not be destroyed under the provision (La Crosse Tribune 3-12-99).

Billion-Dollar Plan
Winona, Minn. — Researchers at St. Mary’s University (SMU) are asking Congress for $1.1 billion to reduce pollution washing into the Upper Mississippi River.

The Mississippi River Stewardship Initiative would identify pollution sources and implement preventative solutions in the Upper Mississippi Basin, covering 189,000 square miles of land in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and Missouri. Farming, construction and land-use practices in both rural and urban areas are major factors in the deterioration of the Mississippi.

Barry Drazkowski, codirector of SMU’s Resource Studies Center, said the initiative will be introduced to all congressmen in the Upper Mississippi River states in May, with hopes that funding will start next year.

Drazkowski said the $1.1 billion price tag is a modest commitment, and that “the costs of doing nothing are much greater.” According to the Resource Studies Center, up to one quarter of all farm fertilizer applied in the Upper Mississippi basin washes into the river, wasting over $320 million annually (Winona Daily News, 4-22-99).

Wisconsin Rep. Ron Kind (D-La Crosse, Wis.) warned that the proposal is far from becoming a reality. The cochairman of Congress’ Upper Mississippi River Task Force says the states in the watershed must promise funding before the proposal will get much support in Congress.
Special Events & Festivals

May

4-20 Bird walks, 6:30 a.m. - 7:45 a.m., first three Tuesdays and Thursdays, Hixon Forest Nature Center, La Crosse, Wis., (608) 788-8831.

5 Bird walks, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Marquette, Iowa, (319) 873-3491.

5 Cinco De Mayo Fiesta, St. Paul, Minn., (651) 222-6347.

8 International Migratory Bird Day celebration, Myrick Park, La Crosse, Wis., (608) 783-8405.

8-9 Take a Mom Fishing Weekend, Minnesota State Parks, 1-800-657-3929.

15 Reggae Sunsplash, 2 p.m. - 11 p.m., Trempealeau, Wis., (608) 534-6898.

15 Mississippi River migratory bird count, Greening Project and St. Paul Audubon Society, St. Paul, Minn., (615) 224-9885 or (615) 291-2596.

15 River cleanup, Wabasha, Minn., (507) 767-4481.

23 First Annual Pepin Steamboat Saga, Pepin, Wis., (715) 442-2248.

28-31 Sunfish Days, Onalaska, Wis., 1-800-657-0539.

30 Home Sweet Nest

June

5-11 Mermaid Festival, Bellevue, Iowa, (319) 872-5830.

5-Aug. 29 Tours of Lock & Dam 15, 11 a.m. - 12 noon, Saturdays and Sundays, (309) 794-5338.


6 Minnesota State Parks Open House, 1-800-657-3929.

10 Swingfest, Dubuque, Iowa, (319) 557-9200.

Meetings & Hearings

May

13 Lower Wis. Riverway Board, 5 p.m., Tuffley Center, Boscobel, Wis., 1-800-221-3792 or (608) 739-3188.

22-23 Mississippi River Research Consortium Annual Meeting, Yacht Club Resorts, La Crosse, Wis., (309) 298-1553.

June

10 Lower Wis. Riverway Board, Black Hawk Unit, Mazomanie, Wis., 1-800-221-3729.

Workshops & Conferences

May

6 Habitat Restoration and Protection of the Upper Mississippi River System, Dakota Co. History Center, South St. Paul, Minn., 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Open House; 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Meeting, (309) 793-5800 or (651) 290-1695.

13-14 Bridging the River, Fillmore Mississippi Heritage Conference, RiverCentre, St. Paul, Minn., (612) 625-0347.

Almanac

By Kenny Salwey

May fulfills dreams of winter and promises of early spring. Near a dead elm tree with its bark just beginning to crack you might find morels. Their succulent, roasted almond flavor is second to none.

It's the wildflower month, so take up the walking stick and field guide and walk a bit. Or simply sit, drink in their beauty, breathe deeply and savor the sweet air. Bright yellow buttercups, wood violets, squawroot, lady slipper, wild oats and dutchman’s breeches. Wildflowers are one of nature’s most wonderful gifts.

Bird nests are filled to the brim with demanding youngsters. Mom and Dad are too busy to admire them. But it’s happy work, so they tell us in their songs.

Possum, coon, beaver, muskrat, squirrels, fox, coyote, rabbits and mice are raising families, too. A glimpse of these young'uns is pure delight. There's something about all babies that touches the heart. Baby skeeters and deerflies? I guess they touch the heart in a different manner, yet they, too, are vital for the well being of all.

Enjoy a wildlife walk along the mighty Mississippi with the warm springtime sun in your face, surrounded by wildflowers, followed by a meal of fresh bluegill, morels and wild asparagus.