

# Big Island e w s

[www.bisawpa.org](http://www.bisawpa.org)

*A newsletter dedicated to the preservation of Big Island, Illinois*



*Fall 2017*

## Hennepin Hoopla

The weather was perfect for more than two hundred families that participated in the first ever Hennepin Hoopla, organized by the Big Island Soil and Water Preservation Association, along with the Village of Milan and University of Illinois Extension on August 12, 2017.

There was something for everyone to do at each lock, whether learning about the history of the canal from river historian, John Vize, eating ice cream from the cool Vibrant Credit Union bus, learning about QC Trails and Be Healthy QC, or looking for clouds during River Action's Scavenger Hunt at Lock 30. Participants were also spotted playing games at the University of Illinois Extension's SNAP-Ed booth and pedaling the blender bike to make a smoothie, learning about pollinators from Master Gardeners and exploring the newly planted pollinator prairie garden, and eating healthy snacks from the Hy-Vee Healthy You mobile truck at Lock 31. Families also discovered mus-

sels ecology and shells from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, explored bugs with Rock Island County 4-H kids, or took a photo at the historic confluence of the Mississippi and Rock River at Lock 32. Over 100 kids also learned to fish from members of the Quad Cities In-Fisherman Club at the fishing clinic. Whatever participants decided to do that day, it was a fun, family day of getting outside to exercise and explore nature on the historic Hennepin Canal. The event was a great way to enjoy a historic natural treasure located right in our own back yard, Big Island and Milan.

A big thank you to Johannes Bus Service for providing free transportation between the locks and to all of the BISA WPA members who donated and/or volunteered their time to make this event a huge success!



4-H Member Olivia Heick checking to make sure all of her bugs are intact at the 4-H entomology display and bug activities table at Lock 32. Photo credit: Kelly Bryant.

*Big Island News*



These kids learned how to "Eat Right and Move More" at the Be Healthy QC and QC Trails table at Lock 30. Photo credit: QC Trails.

## Xstream Cleanup

**October 28, 2017**

Our Xstream Cleanup team will be getting some extra help this year at the October 28th cleanup thanks to Kirsten Brown, Assistant Wolf Den Leader from Boy Scout Moline Pack 119. These energetic scouts will be removing invasive species and cleaning up the overgrowth on the primitive trail to Lock 32. We're excited they will be involved in the cleanup.



Volunteer and BISA WPA Member, Ray Bender, trimming trees along the primitive trail during last year's Xstream Cleanup.



This couple took advantage of the beautiful weather for the Hennepin Hoopla to get out on their recumbent bikes. Photo credit: QC Trails.

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## BISAWPA Nominates Blackhawk Township for River Action's EDDY Award for Stewardship

When asked to partner with the Big Island Soil & Water Preservation Association NFP, Inc. to renovate Lock 32, Blackhawk Township readily agreed to help. And help they did with extensive vegetation removal, grading and laying 300 tons of gravel in the parking lot, installing 3 new directional signs, refurbishing the "Hennepin Canal" park sign and replacing one rusted trash container with 4 new ones. The work did not stop there. They also replaced the deteriorated wooden decking on the Lock 32 walk bridge and at Lock 31 partnered with us

to install the bike/walk ramps connecting the Picnic Shelter to the Bike/Walk Trail on top of the levee.

As columnist, Bob Groene, stated in his November 17, 2015, Argus/Dispatch article regarding the improvements to Lock 32, "The area was transformed from a community liability into a community asset, at a place many folks say has one of the best views in the Quad Cities – the confluence of the Mississippi and Rock Rivers and the Hennepin Canal." We heartily agree, thanks to all the effort put forth by Blackhawk Township!



*Blackhawk Township Directors & Employees showing off their award.*

## Lock 31 Pollinator Prairie Garden

On a cool spring morning lots of nice folks planted our Pollinator Prairie Garden at Lock 31. Grant money from Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District and Big Island Soil & Water Preservation Association made this positive project a reality. These 32 varieties of native plants (forbes & grasses) will provide shelter and food for pollinators. The garden was designed and plants selected to attract pollinators and blossom from spring to fall with assistance from Martha Smith, University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator, Rich Stewart and Sarah Fitzgerald of Rock Island Soil and Water and Marilyn Andress of Guardians of the Prairie and Forest.



## Directional Signs on Trail Completed

The directional signs have been installed along the walk/bike trail beginning at the Veterans Memorial Bridge at Carr's Crossing in Milan to Lock 32 at the confluence of the Mississippi & Rock Rivers and Hennepin Canal on Big Island. Randy Wlaskolich, President, said "These important signs will help both locals and out of town guests navigate along the trail. It is important that trail users have access to information regarding trail distances to enhance their experience, and increase comfort and confidence in navigating the Hennepin Canal Parkway Trail." Numerous favorable comments have been received as a result of this project which could not have come to fruition without our volunteers and generous donations. Thank you!



**BIG ISLAND**  
Soil & Water  
Preservation Association, NFP, Inc.  
*Connecting Communities, Conservation & Amenities*