

Big Island e w s

An annual newsletter dedicated to the preservation of Big Island, Illinois

Spring 2015



Big Green Lands a Home on Big Island

Grant Funds Bring New Life to Canal Maintenance

The hum from a shiny big green tractor is music to Randy Wlaskolich's ears. The Milan/Big Island Local Flood Protection Project which lies in part within and protects the Hennepin Canal Parkway required maintenance and mowing from a 30 year old tractor. This tractor needed more and more maintenance itself, which took away precious time and resources that should be directed at improvements in flood control and the protection of Big Island's water resources.

So when the engine fires up and a new John Deere Tractor purchased by BISA WPA with Grant Funds from the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Development, Randy, is all smiles. The grant was sponsored by State Representative Patrick Verschoore who helped secure the \$70,000 in funds needed to make the purchase. The tractor and mowing implements are crucial to the maintenance of the Hennepin Canal and the Milan/Big Island Local Flood Protection Project (levee).

The tractor has a long 8' mower that will save many hours of volunteer time mowing in the growing season and a large clam bucket in front for removing large debris after flood events.

The hum from that tractor will see many hours maintaining the green jewel of the Hennepin Canal Parkway.

Your Help is Needed

But, this dynamic team could use some people power to make ready a section of bike/walk path from the west pump station on Big Island to the confluence of the Rock and Mississippi Rivers at

Lock 32. This is the most spectacular section of the Hennepin trail which has become overgrown and underutilized because of it. Dean Mathias, BISA WPA Director, is spearheading a plan to get the trail cleared of brush and trees. Dave Hahne, Site Superintendent for the Hennepin Canal and Doug House, Road

Commission for Blackhawk Township have committed to assisting with clean-up of the trail and upgrading the parking lot at Lock 32. Join forces with these partners, to make this beautiful section of the Hennepin Canal Parkway open for off-road bikers and hikers alike. If you are willing to clear trails and have fun while doing it, contact Dean Mathias.



New John Deere Tractor is ready for the growing season on the Hennepin Canal Parkway

Says Randy Wlaskolich, President of Big Island Soil & Water Preservation Association, "I am very optimistic about the future of our plans for our beautiful projects. We are continually researching for new ways to obtain funds. Partnering with service clubs, grants and receiving donations from memorial funds helps us achieve our goals. With your help and tax deductible contributions we can make it all a reality for everyone to enjoy."

"Thank you so much for your generosity and support. Together we will succeed in reaching our goals to make a more positive and beautiful area for all to enjoy."

Willing to clear trails and remove brush?

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