

# Residents celebrate the area's waterways at annual Great Rivers Festival

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June 18 2016 8:00 PM



**ALTON** – Sometimes, living next to one of the country’s natural marvels is taken for granted.

Luckily for residents of the Riverbend and its surrounding areas, they had the opportunity to celebrate our mighty Mississippi River and its surrounding waterways in the annual **Great Rivers Festival**.

Beginning at noon this **Saturday**, the **National Great Rivers Museum** flourished with activities, food, educational exhibits and more that was perfect for any member of the family.

**Annette Walsh**, one of the volunteers with the National Great Rivers Museum, said that meeting the people and spreading the word about the museum is some of the best parts about this festival.



“Meeting the people, seeing the children happy and seeing the family come out is great,” she said. “It’s a great learning experience about what they have available in our area with our vendors and everything.”

Live educational shows by folks from **TreeHouse Wildlife Center**’s rescued birds and **Serengeti Steve**’s reptiles was sure to get anyone interested in conserving some of our area’s feathery or scaly inhabitants. Whisky Drive got the party going with live music throughout the day.

**Mountain Springs Hatchery** set up their festival-favorite Catch and Release Fishing Pond. For some, this was the first time some of the children had ever fished, but it was sure that some of them really “caught” the knack for it.

**St. Louis Archery Club** sparked love for shooting in their target practice course. The **Missouri Department of Conservation** served up some fried Asian Carp for those who were interested in “eating aliens,” as the workers put it. Arts and crafts by **Blair’s Lair Studio**, a photo booth, birdhouse building courtesy of **Fischer Lumber** and several other vendors lined the lot, allowing plenty for families and children of all ages to partake in.

“There is also a project with the National Parks where every kid in the fourth grade and three family members can visit any public land for free. Today, they’ll visit five stations, log what they did and turn in their card at the museum’s front desk for a free pass. This will get kids in more national parks and they can also get up in the Arch with this,” Walsh also mentioned.

The festival concluded at 7 Saturday evening.