



# **Mississippi Earthtones Festival Modified For Social Distancing, Scheduled For Sept. 19**

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ALTON - The Mississippi Earthtones Festival, co-organized by Alton Main Street and the Sierra Club, is a celebration of the river through art, music, and conservation which is held on the 3rd Saturday in September. The 14th Annual event falls on September

19th, and due to Covid-19 precautions the festival will be presented through socially-distanced activities in lieu of the typical large gathering.

“While we will not be able to enjoy the big street festival atmosphere that everyone is used to, we are still committed to keeping the spirit of MEF alive in safe ways with the goal of helping our community celebrate Illinois watersheds through education, recreation and conservation,” said Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany, “For this year’s free and family-friendly event, we have pivoted to creative options that people can participate in at a distance, such as a GPS-based scavenger hunt, an art exhibit, an outdoor movie, and a litter clean-up near the river.”

That morning from 8:00 a.m. until Noon, you can view the Riverwork Project displayed at the Alton Farmers & Artisans’ Market. This is a textile art exhibit coordinated by Sun Smith-Foret which is a collaboration featuring the work of a number of regional artists. The large flowing fabric installation explores the relationship between our rivers, their environmental character and the arts.

From 3:00 until 7:00 p.m. a fun and free GPS-based scavenger hunt will be presented in partnership with [www.LetsRoam.com](http://www.LetsRoam.com). The hunt will lead participants across multiple stops throughout the Downtown area with multiple challenges at each stop. The hunt will take approximately two hours to complete, and the first 50 people to do so will receive a festival t-shirt. To receive a link to the app and a code for the hunt please register at [www.DowntownAlton.com](http://www.DowntownAlton.com).

That evening a Carpool Concert will be presented soon after dusk in the large parking lot at the corner of Landmarks Blvd. & Henry Street, which is the same parking lot used for the Alton Farmers' & Artisans' Market. Guests will enjoy an outdoor movie on a large inflatable screen from the comfort of their car, with audio through their car stereo. There was an online poll for the community to vote on which music-themed movie to show, and the majority of the votes cast were for Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music, which is Rated R with a runtime of 225 minutes. This Director's Cut of the Oscar-winning documentary about the three-day festival in 1969 includes performances by Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Joan Baez, Arlo Guthrie, Richie Havens, and Crosby, Stills and Nash. The movie is free and open to the public. Food & beverage vendors will not be available on site; guests are welcome to bring their own refreshments. In case of inclement weather, the movie will be rescheduled.

On the following Saturday, September 26th, at 9:00 a.m., join us for a socially distanced litter cleanup in partnership with National Public Lands Day. Please note that unlike years past snacks, water, or lunch will not be provided due to the enhanced safety measures. Bring your own gloves, water bottle and boots or sturdy shoes. The clean-up will take place rain or shine. Although other locations are listed, you must choose one of

the following sites in order to receive a MEF t-shirt after the cleanup: Lincoln Shields Recreation area, Clark Bridge, Piasa Park, or Clifton Terrace Park.

Over 43 tons of trash have been removed from the Mississippi River during MEF clean-ups to date, with more than 2,600 volunteer hours contributed. There will be a maximum number of volunteers allowed at each site for the safety of everyone, and participants may sign up at this link:

<https://www.greenwaynetwork.org/participate/national-public-lands-day-registration>

Volunteers are needed to help with logistics of the Carpool Concert, and those who pitch in will receive a free festival t-shirt. Sign up on the MEF page of [www.DowntownAlton.com](http://www.DowntownAlton.com), which is found under Events.

This festival is held annually as part of the State of Illinois' "It's Our River Day" initiative to celebrate Illinois watersheds through education, recreation and conservation. Alton's free community river celebration would not be possible without the generosity of its sponsors. Alton Main Street and the Sierra Club express their sincere appreciation to the following local businesses and organizations for supporting the event: Busey Bank, Meyer Jensen Law Firm, Chiro One, Madison County Planning and Development, Illinois Natural History Survey - Great Rivers Field Station, Illinois Environmental Council, Alton Parks & Recreation Department, The Telegraph, Riverbender.com, WBGZ Radio, and AdVantage.

To register for any of the activities or sign up to volunteer please visit [www.DowntownAlton.com](http://www.DowntownAlton.com). To stay up-to-date on announcements, please visit: [www.facebook.com/EarthtonesFestival](https://www.facebook.com/EarthtonesFestival).