



“Rec Fest” Spring Festival Coming To The National Great Rivers Museum

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ALTON – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rivers Project Office, is celebrating the beginning of the outdoor recreation season with its new, free spring festival R.E.C. Fest on Saturday, May 21st at the National Great Rivers Museum.



“The entire premise of R.E.C. Fest is to kick off the recreation season by giving our community an opportunity to learn about the many ways in which someone can recreate outdoors in our region, both on public lands and off,” said Museum Director Allison Rhanor. “We’ll have over 20 booths and activity stations on-site to showcase the where and how for sports like hiking, fishing, and hunting, as well as to teach safety techniques like what to do when you’re caught outdoors in bad weather and how to properly fit a helmet or life jacket.”

R.E.C. (Recreation, Education, and Conservation) Fest, which runs from 10 am – 4 pm, will host organizations such as the Illinois Department of National Resources, Alton

Parks and Rec, the Ozark Trail Association, and the Missouri Department of Conservation and will feature booths and activities that teach about outdoor recreation and safety through equipment demonstrations, live wildlife displays, and more. Bass Pro will be on-site to talk about gun safety while giving visitors some target practice in their inflatable b.b. gun range, and the National Weather Service will have their lightning simulator running while they teach how to practice weather safety when enjoying outdoor activities.

The event occurs on the first day of Boater Safety Week, and as such will have a heavy safety focus. Emergency vehicles and a K9 unit from Alton Police and Fire Departments will be on display giving families a chance to “touch a truck”, while the U.S. Coast Guard will cover boating safety alongside their large responder boat. Arch Medical Service will display their medical helicopter, and Barnes Jewish Hospital will have supplies for kids to make their own first aid kits that they can then take home with them.

May 21st is also Kids to Parks Day 2022, and R.E.C. Fest is a nationally registered Kids to Parks event, meaning fourth graders can receive a free America The Beautiful National Park Pass for attending the event and participating in its activities, while supplies last. “When families arrive, they can pick up passports for their kids at the Army Corps booth. After visiting a certain number of stations, they can turn in their passport for a goody bag of free prizes. This is for children of all ages, but families of fourth graders will also be issued a free park pass in exchange for a completed passport, which is normally an \$80.00 cost” said Travis Smith, the Ranger who oversees the Park Pass Fee Program for the museum.

In addition to the festival’s activities, the museum will be running a Bobber the Water Safety Dog cartoon marathon in its commercial theater and will also feature a new exhibit in collaboration with the Missouri History Museum that focuses on floods, droughts, and levee safety. The Meeting of the Rivers Foundation will be selling hotdogs to fundraise for its organization, which supports the museum and its educational programs. And of course, no trip to the National Great Rivers Museum would be complete without a tour of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam. Free open tours will be offered throughout the event.

The National Great Rivers Museum is located at 2 Locks and Dam Way in Alton, Illinois, and is open from 9 am – 5 pm seven days a week. For more information, please call the museum at 618-462-6979.