



AUGUST 25-27, 2026
MOLINE, ILLINOIS
QUAD CITIES REGION



LOCAL CO-HOST

* Schedule subject to change

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

NWC OFFICER AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DINNER *(by invitation only)*
Johnny's Italian Steakhouse

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

NWC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Vibrant Center, Room A-F

Light breakfast provided

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM

MOBILE TOUR SHUTTLE DEPARTURE

All shuttles will depart from and return to the Wyndham Moline.

Tour #1: Lock & Dam 14 Tour

8:00 AM - Bus loads

8:15 AM - Bus departs

11:30 AM - Bus returns

Tour #2: Nahant Marsh Restoration Tour

8:30 AM - Bus loads

8:45 AM - Bus departs

11:35 AM - Bus returns

Tour #3: Cinnamon Ridge Farms Tour

8:00 AM - Bus loads

8:15 AM - Bus departs

12:00 PM - Bus returns

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

SMALL GROUP MOBILE TOURS

(No fee, pre-registration required -- [register here](#))

#1 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Project Office and Lock and Dam 14 Tour

	<i>Get a behind-the-scenes look at the infrastructure, equipment and people that keep the Upper Mississippi River working. Participants will visit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi River Project Office in Pleasant Valley, Iowa, and nearby Lock and Dam 14, where they will learn about lock operations, navigation, maintenance and management of the river system. The tour will also highlight the recently completed 26,000-square-foot motor shop, which supports 12 lock and dam sites throughout the Rock Island District and includes space for welding, heavy-equipment repair and other specialized work.</i> <i>Note: Foreign Nationals (non-US citizens) registered for this tour will need to send a scan of your passport at least 3 weeks before the date of the tour for background checks to access the property.</i> #2 - Nahant Marsh Restoration Tour <i>Explore one of the largest urban wetlands on the Upper Mississippi River and a remarkable story of environmental recovery. Once the site of a trap and skeet range, Nahant Marsh became contaminated by decades of lead shot and was designated an EPA Superfund site. Following an extensive cleanup, the marsh was transformed into a thriving nature preserve that now encompasses 382 acres within a larger 513-acre wetland complex. The tour will highlight the partnerships behind the marsh's restoration, its diverse wetland, prairie and bottomland forest habitats, and USACE planning assistance supporting the preserve's continued conservation, restoration and resilience.</i> #3 - Cinnamon Ridge Farms – Robotic Dairy and Farmstead Cheese Tour <i>Go behind the scenes at Cinnamon Ridge Farms, a family-owned Iowa century farm where five generations of agricultural tradition meet modern technology. See the farm's nationally recognized Jersey herd use robotic milking systems and learn how data, animal care and regenerative farming practices come together across the operation. Jersey cows produce milk naturally rich in butterfat and protein, making it especially well suited for cheesemaking. The visit will also include a look at the farm's cheesemaking operation and a tasting of cheese made from the herd's milk.</i>
12:00 PM – 4:30 PM	REGISTRATION OPEN <i>Vibrant Center Foyer</i>
12:30 PM – 1:00 PM	WELCOME NETWORKING EVENT <i>Vibrant Center Foyer</i> <i>Supported by Iowa Corn</i> <i>An opportunity for attendees to connect before the general session.</i>

1:00 PM – 1:15 PM	WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> • Ms. Julie Minerva, NWC Chair (Partner, Carpi & Clay) • U.S. Representative Eric Sorensen (D-III.) (video remarks)
1:15 PM – 2:00 PM	REGIONAL REALITIES, NATIONAL LESSONS: USACE LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES FROM THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER WATERSHED <i>(CLOSED TO PRESS)</i> <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> Moderator: Ms. Julie Minerva , NWC Chair (Partner, Carpi & Clay) Speakers: • Mr. Jim Bodron, Programs Director SES, Mississippi Valley Division, USACE (confirmed) • Lt. Col. Matthew Fletcher, Deputy District Commander, Rock Island District, USACE (confirmed) • Mr. Karl Jansen, Deputy District Engineer, St. Paul District, USACE (confirmed) • Mr. Andrew Schimpf, Operations Chief, St. Louis District, USACE (confirmed)
2:00 PM – 2:45 PM	WHERE THINGS GET STUCK: DISTRICT AND DIVISION CIVILIAN PERSPECTIVES ON STUDIES, PROJECTS, AND PERMITS <i>(CLOSED TO PRESS)</i> <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>A panel discussion with USACE civilian division and district staff offering practical perspectives on studies, projects and permitting decisions, as well as approaches that can help move them forward.</i> Moderator: Mr. Mitch Mays , NWC Second Vice President; Secretary and Administrator, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterways Development Authority (confirmed) Speakers: • Mr. Pat Chambers, Chief of Operations, Mississippi Valley Division, USACE (confirmed) • Ms. Tonya Acuff, Mississippi Valley Division (confirmed) • Mr. Donny Davidson, Director of Engineering and Business (acting), Mississippi Valley Division, USACE (confirmed)
2:45 PM – 3:05 PM	NETWORKING BREAK <i>Supported by Iowa Corn</i>

3:05 PM – 4:25 PM	FIELDS, FREIGHT, FLOODPLAINS, AND THE FUTURE: THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI REGIONAL STORY <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>The Upper Mississippi region is more than a line on a map. It is a working system of rivers, farms, communities, ports, roads, rail, terminals, waterways, floodplains, ecosystems, and water resources infrastructure that helps move goods from field to market and supports the economic life of the region. This session brings to life the regional voices who experience that system from different angles, including agriculture, freight movement, local government, flood protection, infrastructure operations, ecosystem stewardship, and economic development. Panelists will discuss what it really takes to keep goods moving, communities protected, and the region competitive when high water, low water, aging infrastructure, environmental conditions, and market demands all intersect. Rather than looking at one mission area in isolation, this conversation will explore how the Upper Mississippi works as a connected regional system, where decisions in one place can ripple across farms, communities, supply chains, and the broader water resources landscape.</i> <u>Moderator:</u> Ms. Kirsten Wallace, Executive Director, Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (confirmed) <u>Speakers:</u> • Mr. Thomas Heinold, Operations Division Chief, Rock Island District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (confirmed) • Dr. Ellen Herbert, Director of Sustainability and Ecosystem Services, Ducks Unlimited (confirmed) • Mr. Todd Main, Director of Market Development, Illinois Soybean Association (confirmed) • Ms. Rainy Shorey, Product Compliance and Support, Caterpillar, Inc; former chair, America’s Watershed Initiative (confirmed) • Mr. Jim Tarmann, Illinois Corn (confirmed)
4:25 PM – 4:30 PM	DAY ONE WRAP-UP <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> • Ms. Julie Minerva, NWC Chair (Partner, Carpi & Clay)
4:45 PM – 9:30 PM	TAKE ME TO THE BALLGAME – RECEPTION AND GAME <i>Modern Woodmen Park Quad Cities River Bandits vs. Beloit Sky Carp First pitch at 6:30 PM</i> <i>Supported by Tributary Partner Tract</i>

	(No fee for full-conference registrants, \$100 fee for guests; Pre-registration required – register here) We're mixing things up for this year's opening night. Join NWC for a baseball game at Modern Woodmen Park as the Quad Cities River Bandits, a Minor League affiliate of the Kansas City Royals, take on the Beloit Sky Carp, a Minor League affiliate of the Miami Marlins. Buses will be provided. Expect a casual evening of baseball, hamburgers, hot dogs, and conversation with old and new friends, and maybe a chance to see the next generation of baseball talent in action. Timeline: • 4:45 PM – Shuttle begins loading at the Wyndham; first shuttle departs at 5:00 PM • 5:15 PM – 6:00 PM – Reception (beverages only; gates open for general attendance at 5:45 PM) • 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM – Buffet service • 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM – Game • 8:45 PM – Return shuttle service to hotel begins
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2026	
7:30 AM – 4:30 PM	REGISTRATION OPEN <i>Vibrant Center Foyer</i>
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST/PARTNER PRESENTATION <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>Supported by Confluence Partner IMEG</i>
8:30 AM – 8:45 AM	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> • Ms. Julie Minerva, NWC Chair (Partner, Carpi & Clay) • The Honorable Sangeetha Rayapati, Mayor, City of Moline, Ill. (confirmed)
8:45 AM – 9:15 AM	LOCAL HOST SPOTLIGHT: CORN BELT PORTS AND THE WATER RESOURCES FUTURE OF THE HEARTLAND <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>A featured session recognizing Corn Belt Ports as NWC's local host and lead annual meeting sponsor. This session will provide attendees with insight into Corn Belt Ports' work, regional partnerships, priorities, and role in supporting</i>

	<i>economic development, supply chain improvements, and water resources infrastructure in the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System.</i> Moderator: Mr. Robert Sinkler, Executive Coordinating Director, Corn Belt Ports (confirmed) Speakers: • Mr. Kirby Wagner, Boad Member, Illinois Waterway Ports Commission and Manager Government Relations, GROWMARK Inc. (confirmed) • Mr. Mike Norris, Vice Chair of Mid-America Port Commission and Executive Director, Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (confirmed) • Mr. Jim Irwin, Chair, Ports of Eastern Iowa Authority and Clinton County Board Supervisor (confirmed) • Mr. Bob Gollnik, Executive Director, La Crosse Area Planning Committee (Metropolitan Planning Organization) representing the Northern Grain Belt Ports (confirmed) • Dr. Deb Barnett, Executive Director, Southern Illinois Now (representing the Southern Illinois Regional Ports) (confirmed)
9:15 AM – 9:45 AM	WHEN RIVER MANAGEMENT CREATES LEGAL RIPPLES: LESSONS FROM IDEKER FARMS <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>Ideker Farms, Inc. v. United States began with recurring flooding along the Missouri River, but the questions raised by the case reach well beyond flood damage alone. At its core, the case asks what happens when federal water management decisions, made across multiple project purposes and legal obligations, create lasting impacts for private property owners and communities on the ground. This session will provide a plain-English overview of the case and explore its broader implications for water resources infrastructure leaders. The conversation will also look at what the case may mean for agencies, non-federal sponsors, landowners, and others working within complex water systems where every operational decision can create ripple effects.</i> Moderator: Mr. Steven Burns, NWC Counsel/Secretary; Partner, Balch & Bingham LLP Representing Alabama Power Company (confirmed) Speaker: • Mr. Scott L. Shapiro, Partner, Downey Brand LLP (confirmed)
9:45 AM – 10:00 AM	NETWORKING BREAK <i>Supported by Watershed Partner Port of Memphis</i>

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM	WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CORPS? <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> A candid conversation with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters leadership on Civil Works priorities, what's shifting inside the agency, and what it means for the people and projects in this room. <u>Moderator:</u> Mr. Chris Collins, NWC Vice Chair; Director, Waterways, Office of Multimodal Commerce, Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development (confirmed) <u>Speakers:</u> • Mr. Ryan Fisher, Executive Deputy for Civil and Emergency Operations and Deputy to the Deputy Commanding General, Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (confirmed) • Mr. Wes Coleman, Chief of Programs Integration Division, Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (confirmed)
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	IT'S NEVER JUST WATER: HOW OUTSIDE FORCES AFFECT PROJECTS, OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITIES <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>Water and waterways work does not happen in isolation. Wildfires can reshape flood-control and water-supply needs overnight. Drought and flooding on the Mississippi River can disrupt navigation, agriculture and the movement of goods nationwide. Tariffs, international conflict and supply-chain constraints can increase costs and limit access to equipment, materials and fertilizer. In the Pacific Northwest, Endangered Species Act requirements and proposals to remove dams raise questions that reach far beyond the river itself, affecting transportation, energy, agriculture and communities across the region. Through real examples from across the country, speakers will discuss how local, regional, national and international pressures are affecting their work, how they are adapting and what other leaders can learn from their experiences. The session is intended to help attendees look beyond traditional water and waterways boundaries and better understand the broader forces shaping their projects, operations and communities.</i> <u>Moderator:</u> Mr. Tom Chapman, Senior Project Manager, HDR (confirmed) <u>Speakers:</u> • The Honorable Linda Moore, Ph.D, Mayor, City of Quincy, Ill. (confirmed)

	• Mr. Sean Duffy, President and CEO, Big River Coalition, LLC (confirmed) • Mr. Scott Gregowske, Principle Engineer, Department of Public Works, Los Angeles County, Calif. (confirmed) • Mr. Ian Latham, Iowa Corn (confirmed) • Mr. Neil Maunu, Executive Director, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (confirmed) • Mr. Jonathan St. Romain, Partnerships and Programs Division Director, Harris County Flood Control District, Texas (confirmed)
12:00 PM – 1:45 PM	LUNCH – ACROSS ADMINISTRATIONS: LEADERSHIP, CHANGE AND THE FUTURE OF CIVIL WORKS <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>Supported by Confluence Partner Trinity River Authority</i> <i>Two former Assistant Secretaries of the Army for Civil Works (ASACW), representing different administrations and political perspectives, come together for a candid conversation about leading the nation’s Civil Works program. The discussion will explore how priorities shift across administrations, what remains constant, and how federal leaders balance national policy, congressional direction, local needs and the realities of project delivery. Drawing on their experiences at the highest levels of federal water resources leadership, the speakers will also reflect on lessons learned, the evolving federal partnership and the future of the Civil Works mission.</i> <u>Moderator:</u> Ms. Julie Minerva, NWC Chair (Carpi & Clay) <u>Speakers:</u> • The Honorable Michael L. Connor, Former Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), 2021–2024 (confirmed) • The Honorable John Paul Woodley Jr., Former Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), 2003–2009 (confirmed)
1:45 PM – 2:00 PM	NETWORKING BREAK <i>Supported by Watershed Partner Tetra Tech</i>
2:00 PM – 2:45 PM	WHEN THE SITE HAS A PAST: BROWNFIELD REUSE AND WATER RESOURCES INFRASTRUCTURE <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>What happens when a brownfield or Superfund site is approached not simply as a cleanup problem, but as a redevelopment opportunity? Using Nahant Marsh as a live case study, this session will move beyond the traditional panel format. After a brief presentation on the Marsh’s history, assets, cleanup and remaining</i>

	<i>contamination, Brian Ritter and Michael Studer will turn toward one another for an unscripted, problem-solving conversation. Studer will approach the Marsh as he would a potential client, asking the questions that help uncover risk, liability, cost, sequencing and opportunity. As Ritter responds, Studer will explain how a remediation and redevelopment commercial expert evaluates a site, why certain questions matter, and how cleanup and future use can be planned together rather than as separate processes. Their conversation will explore what public and non-profit entities can learn from commercial redevelopment practices, how different sequencing can reduce cost and liability, and which lessons from Nahant Marsh may be transferable to other brownfield, Superfund and water resources infrastructure projects nationally.</i> <u>Moderator:</u> Ms. Julie Ufner, NWC President and CEO, National Waterways Conference <u>Speakers:</u> • Mr. Brian Ritter, Executive Director, Nahant Marsh (confirmed) • Mr. Michael Studer, Founder, ENTACT (confirmed)
2:45 PM – 3:30 PM	PORTS AND CORRIDORS: CONNECTING PIDP AND AMERICA'S MARINE HIGHWAYS <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>MARAD will provide an update on the Port Infrastructure Development Program and the United States Marine Highway Program, including current priorities, funding opportunities, and lessons from recent projects. The discussion will focus on how port infrastructure investments and marine highway services can complement one another, strengthen connections across the freight system, and support more efficient movement between ports, inland transportation networks, and the communities they serve.</i> <u>Moderator:</u> Mr. William “Bill” Paape, Deputy Associate Administrator for Industry Support/ Maritime Administration, Maritime Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation (confirmed) <u>Speakers:</u> • Mr. Pat Chambers, Chief of Operations, Mississippi Valley Division, USACE (confirmed) • Mr. Ben Russo, IMPE, Executive Director, Central Louisiana Regional Port (confirmed)

	• Mr. Tim Pickering, Marine Highway Program Manager, Office of Ports & Waterways Planning, Maritime Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation (confirmed)
3:30 PM – 3:55 PM	FROM CAPITOL HILL TO COMMUNITIES: CONGRESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON WATER INFRASTRUCTURE <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>Congressional speakers will share their perspectives on the policies, partnerships, and investments needed to address the nation’s water resources infrastructure challenges. The conversation may include legislative priorities, federal funding, project delivery, and the long-term needs of communities and regional economies.</i> • U.S. Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-Iowa) (confirmed)
3:55 PM – 4:00 PM	DAY TWO WRAP-UP <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> • Ms. Julie Minerva, NWC Chair (Partner, Carpi & Clay)
4:00 PM – 4:30 PM	NWC ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i> <i>Notice to be sent via email in advance, with proxy</i>
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM	CONFERENCE-WIDE RECEPTION <i>Vibrant Center Foyer</i> <i>Supported by Tributary Partner Freese & Nichols</i>
4:45 PM – 5:15 PM	ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE 2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS <i>Vibrant Center, Room A-F</i>
THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2026	
7:30 AM – 2:00 PM	MOBILE TOUR: THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER STORY UP CLOSE <i>(\$25/person, pre-registration required – register here)</i> 7:30 AM – Shuttle departs the Wyndham Moline 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM – Guided tour by Museum staff 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM – Free time to explore the Museum & Aquarium campus 11:45 AM – Grab your boxed lunch for the ride back 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM – Shuttle returns to the Wyndham Moline

A visit to the [National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium](#) is uniquely compelling because it masterfully bridges the gap between a world-class aquarium, an interactive science center, and a rich regional history museum.

Key Highlights of a Visit:

- **Dynamic Wildlife Encounters:** The campus is home to a diverse biological collection featuring over 2,000 live animals and more than 250 different species including playful river otters, massive freshwater fish, an alligator, and a stingray touch tank.
- The **Mississippi River Center** focuses heavily on the natural habitats, wildlife, and early human history of the Mississippi River Watershed including numerous aquariums with river otters, wood ducks, golden eye ducks, turtles, catfish, trout and paddlefish.
- **The National Rivers Center** connects America's vast river systems to global oceans featuring a series of stunning aquariums housing over 100 marine species, including seahorses, coral reef fish, a giant Pacific octopus, and jellyfish.
- **Living History & Historic Vessels:** The museum features outdoor exhibits including a blacksmith shop, aviaries, a boatyard, and the historic William M. Black, a 1934 steam-powered side-wheel dredge boat.
- **The National Rivers Hall of Fame:** Located on-site in the National River Center, this institution and exhibit is dedicated to preserving the legacy of the women and men who have made significant contributions to America's rivers.