



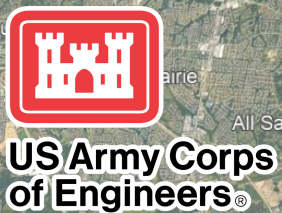
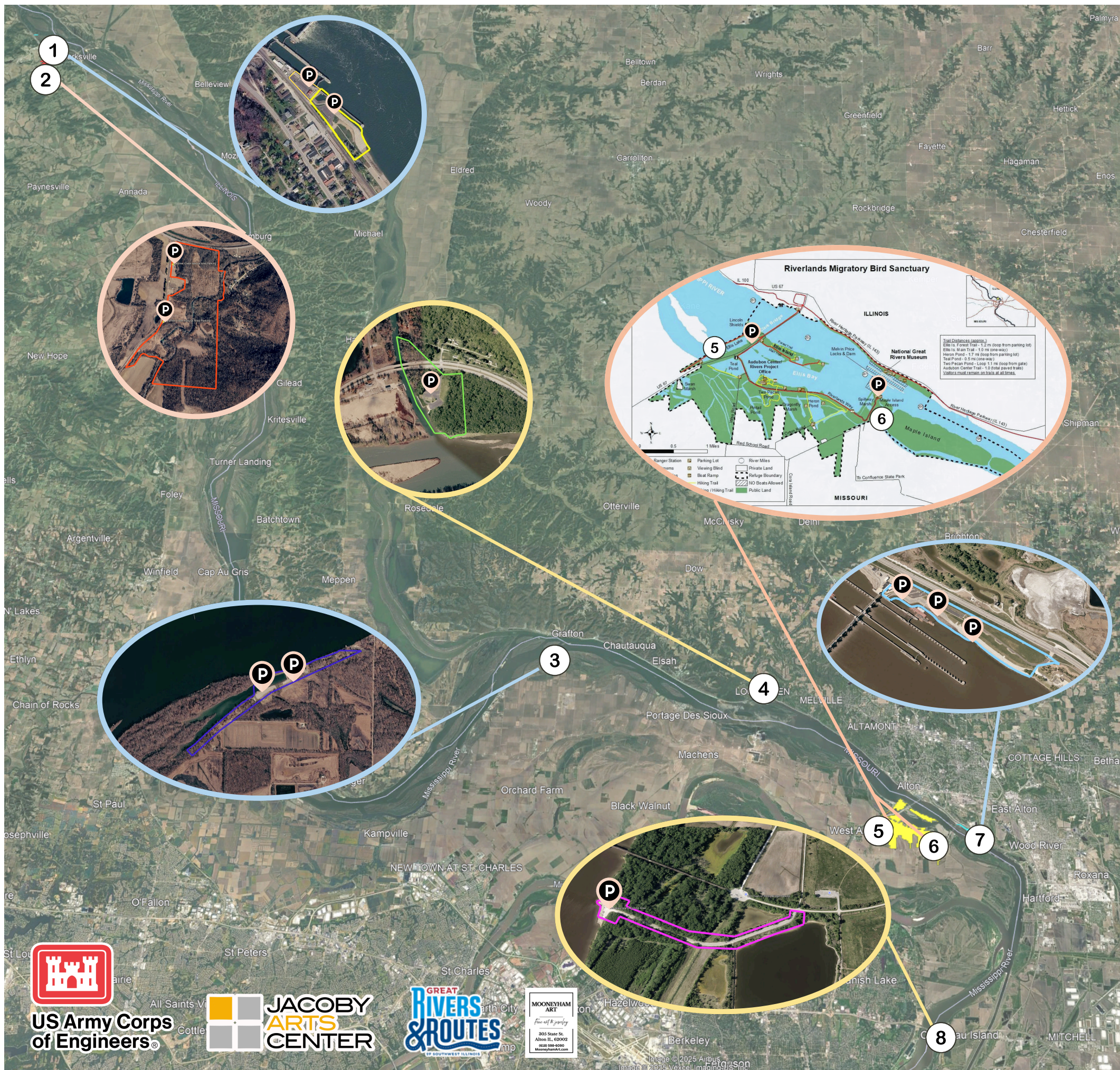
Mississippi Riverscapes:

The 2026 Rivers Project Plein Air Art Competition

Join this month-long celebration of art and public lands by exploring some of the beautiful recreation locations the USACE Rivers Project has to offer. Enter your painting or drawing, created at, and depicting, one or more of the following locations to have your artwork exhibited in the National Great Rivers Museum and participate in a juried art competition for regional prizes!

1	Clarksville Riverfront/Lock and Dam 24 Clarksville, MO
2	Calumet Creek Natural Area Pike County, MO
3	Sherwood Access Area Portage Des Sioux, MO
4	Piasa Creek Recreation Area Grafton, IL
5	Ellis Lake West Alton, MO
6	Maple Island Access/Spillway Marsh West Alton, MO
7	Illinois Esplanade/National Great Rivers Museum East Alton, IL
8	Low Water Access Area/Chain of Rocks Madison, IL

For location details and a link to the list of contest rules and regulations, see the other side of this map!





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The 2026 Rivers Project Plein Air
Art Competition

WHAT: An open-air painting and drawing competition, completed independently at any of eight designated Rivers Project locations. Draw or paint the scenery in-person at your location, then submit completed works (limit of one per person, per location) by 5:00 p.m. on May 31st to be included in a competition for regional prizes. All entries will also be displayed in an art exhibit in the National Great Rivers Museum!

WHO: All professional and amateur artists ages 16+

WHERE: Any of the listed Rivers Project locations located on the map side of this document. Paint/draw at one, two, or all eight locations for one entry fee!

WHEN: Work must be produced between May 1st and May 31st, 2026. Prizes will be awarded at a ceremony at the National Great Rivers Museum on June 14th, and works will be exhibited in the museum from June 15th to August 30th, 2026.

COST: The entry fee is a one-time, non-refundable fee of \$25 per artist. Each artist may submit up to one artwork per location for a total of 8 submissions.

MEET THE JUDGES:

This competition is held in partnership with Jacoby Arts Center and Mooneyham Art LLC. All work will be juried by the Jacoby Arts Center Exhibition Committee and guest judges including prominent artists, art educators, and gallery owners.

WHAT IS PLEIN AIR?

Plein Air, a French term meaning “in open air” is a method of painting in which the artist paints entirely outdoors, capturing the essence and lighting of the real-life scene in front of them. It first gained popularity in the 19th century with the availability of paints in tube form, which allowed artists to more easily work outdoors. Today it continues to be a popular art form, practiced by artists all over the world!

For registration, rules, and regulations, scan the QR code or visit the event landing page at mtrf.org/plein-air-art/



ABOUT THE LOCATIONS:

Clarksville Riverfront/Lock and Dam 24 Viewing Area

350 North First Street, Clarksville, MO

At Lock and Dam 24 in downtown Clarksville, an elevated wheelchair-accessible viewing platform offers views of the dam, close-ups of barges locking through, and scenic landscapes. A short walk downstream of the dam, the Clarksville Riverfront offers a paved walking path, covered picnic areas, and views of the river.

Calumet Creek Nature Area | Pike County, MO

9°22'21.6"N 90°56'05.6"W

Only a 5-minute drive from Lock and Dam 24, Calumet Creek Nature Area offers both paved, accessible trails and unpaved hiking trails with interpretive signage that cross Calumet Creek via a pedestrian bridge and wind through restored forest, wetland, and prairie ecosystems.

Sherwood Access Area

21 Sherwood Harbor Drive, Portage Des Sioux, MO

Less than a half-mile from the Grafton Ferry drop-off location in Missouri, Sherwood Access Area is a little-known recreation area with views of the Mississippi River and a short walking trail with interpretive signage, right on the edge of the water. Amenities are limited.

Piasa Creek Recreation Area

38°56'17.8"N 90°17'10.0"W

A 10-minute scenic drive north of Alton, IL along the Great River Road, Piasa Creek Recreation Area offers a paved parking lot, boat ramp, vault toilets, and beautiful views of a small cove of the Mississippi River.

Ellis Lake

38°52'40.8"N 90°11'18.8"W

Located near Lincoln Shields Recreation Area in Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Ellis lake offers laid-back fishing, paddling, and bird-watching opportunities.

Maple Island Access/Spillway Marsh

38°51'54.7"N 90°09'11.7"W

Another Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary site, Maple Island Access offers up-close views of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam tainter gates, as well as numerous shorebirds and shoreline fishing.

Illinois Esplanade/National Great Rivers Museum

2 Locks and Dam Way, East Alton, MO

Home of the National Great Rivers Museum, Illinois Esplanade features a covered picnic shelter, paved walking trails, and open views of the river, Melvin Price Locks and Dam, and barge traffic.

Low Water Access/Chain of Rocks

38°45'21.9"N 90°10'15.4"W

Known for its iconic pumphouses and churning water, Low Water Access Area (also known as Chouteau Island fishing area or Chain of Rocks) offers excellent shoreline fishing, as well as stunning views of the Mississippi River and the historic Chain of Rocks Bridge.