



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mobile District

News Release

Release No. 08-31

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For Immediate Release:
June 23, 2008

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News Release: www.sam.usace.army.mil/pa/

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers encourage visitors at recreation projects to use caution when boating, swimming

MOBILE, Ala. - The drought in the Southeastern United States continues to impact U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District-managed lakes in Alabama, Mississippi, Florida and Georgia.

The lakes are experiencing lower than normal summer depths, and this affects recreation activities for swimmers and boaters.

"Lakeside swimmers and boaters are encouraged to wear their personal flotation device (PFD) and to take extra special precautions when lower than normal water levels occur," said E. Patrick Robbins, Chief Public Affairs Officer, Mobile District.

Swimmers are tempted to go out further into cooler waters which are unsafe. Many of the designated swim areas are high and dry. This is why the designated swim area buoys are not moved. The undesignated swim areas do not provide a level, even beach surface. These hazardous areas may have unseen drop offs, rocks, stumps, limbs or other hidden hazards.

The extended dry conditions will impact boaters also. Some boat ramps will

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2-2-2-2 Corps encourages visitors to use caution

have limited use and may be closed later in the summer if the drought continues.

The low water levels also present boating challenges as navigation hazards begin to surface.

“The shallower water conditions could expose sandbars or stumps to those swimming or boating,” Robbins said. “Boaters should be cautious as declining levels may reduce clearance over underwater obstructions. Swimmers and boaters should always take precautions on the water even in the best conditions.”

As the drought continues, visitors may see signs at beaches and boat ramps warning them of low water conditions. Park rangers will monitor swim areas for emerging hazards and floating debris.

The lakes will experience additional impacts to recreation. The remainder of the summer will depend on the weather and rainfall to the entire river system.

The lake level forecast can be found at the Mobile District Water Management Section's homepage at <http://water.sam.usace.army.mil>. The Corps also has a toll-free interactive voice phone system that provides daily readings for selected lakes and gauges at 1-888-771-4601.

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3-3-3-3 Use caution -- Sidebar safety tips

SAFETY TIPS SIDEBAR

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers encourages lake visitors to wear their PFD and take precautions while recreating on the water

Beach and Swimming safety tips

Learn how to swim, but be aware that even good swimmers can drown -- Know your limits.

Swim with a buddy.

Swim in designated areas only.

Use your head and go feet first into the water.

Leave the water at the first sign of bad weather.

Watch your children – no reading, no phone, no nap.

Safe Boating Tips

Always wear a life jacket when you are on a boat.

Most drowning victims knew how to swim, but did not intend to get in the water and could not reach their lifejackets in time.

Always boat sober.

Always boat with a friend

Use your running lights from dusk until dawn when you are on the water.

Always let someone on shore know where you plan to take the boat.

Check the weather before you put the boat in the water.

Know and follow the water “rules of the road.”

Learn how to swim.

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4-4-4-4 Use caution -- Sidebar safety tips

Wear a life jacket, it could save your life.

