



For Immediate Release: NR11-033
June 29, 2011

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosts area lake outreach events to encourage water safety during Fourth of July weekend and throughout the year

FORT WORTH, Texas – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, in its ongoing initiatives to decrease accidents and fatalities on its area lakes, will host two water safety outreach events on July, 2, 2011, at Lewisville Lake, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and at Waco Lake, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The Lewisville Lake event will take place at the Westlake Park area and will have a water safety trailer and shade structure set up. Featured activities include ‘Fatal Vision’ where goggles recreate different levels of intoxication; ‘Sinking Boat Exercise’ which demonstrates how to safely enter and exit vessels; ‘Type IV PFD Toss’ that reinforces safety guidance to reach, throw, row – Don’t Go; and a hypothermia exercise ‘Cool Hand Luke.’

The Waco Lake event – ‘Water Safety for Life’ will take place in the Airport Beach Park area and is being held in cooperation with SAFE KIDS Coalition and Scott and White Hospital. Featured activities include a life jacket relay, water safety trivia, type IV Personal Flotation Device Toss Exercise, CPR dummy demonstrations, and Waco Fire and Rescue will have actual drags on-hand and explain how they are used in search and rescue operations.

Fort Worth District lakes have experienced 20 fatalities this year, which is only a few less than the 28 that occurred for the entire year in 2010. Although boating incidents were the leading cause of fatalities at Corps lakes two years ago; swim related incidents are historically more common. So far this year 13 of the 20 incidents have been swim related involving males 15 to 30 years old. While one fatality is one too many, the Fort Worth District is increasing its initiatives and efforts to lessen those incidents by at least 50%.

“Even if you consider yourself a proficient swimmer, it’s really difficult to judge the distance from one side of the lake to the other,” said Col. Richard J. Muraski, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District. “This can lead to drowning because the person literally doesn’t have the stamina to make it to the other side.”

With this weekend’s water safety outreach events, the Corps’ goal is to not only show the public that the lakes are a fun and inexpensive means of recreation, but also to educate them on following water safety rules and avoiding risky behavior in and around the water. The Corps anticipates these efforts will help to prevent a fun outing from turning into a tragic accident.

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About the Fort Worth District: The Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was established in 1950. The District is responsible for water resources development in two-thirds of Texas, and design and construction at military installations in Texas and parts of Louisiana and New Mexico. Visit the Fort Worth District Web site at:

www.swf.usace.army.mil.