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## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to co-host water safety events to promote boating and water safety

*FORT WORTH, Texas* – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Belton and Stillhouse Hollow Lake offices will host water safety events during the months of April and May to increase public awareness on safe water and boating practices.

With the recent end to the drought in central Texas, there has been a noticed increase in the number of visitors to the areas lakes and parks. The water safety events are intended to bring awareness to lake and park visitors which will decrease the potential for water fatalities.

"We have already seen an increase in the number of visitors over last year and we're also seeing a lot of water safety issues," said Corps park ranger, Murray W. McCarley. "We had a near drowning off Temple Park last Friday when two individuals with no lifejacket were in an overloaded canoe that capsized. Luckily a nearby boater came over and rescued them and brought them to shore."

The Corps and its partners conduct annual water safety events with activities that target every age group. Upcoming events include the following:

On Saturday, April 21, a Water safety event will take place at Temple Lake Park on Belton Lake from 10a.m. to 2p.m. The event is sponsored by USACE Park Rangers, Safe-Kids Coalition, Marine Outlet, Coast Guard Auxiliary, and Morgan's Point Search and Recovery dive team. The Coast Guard Auxiliary will conduct free boat inspections. The Corps will have its water safety boat on display and will conduct a drawing for life jackets. The Point of contact is Rob Giacomozzi Sr. at 254-939-2461.

On Saturday, April 28, park rangers from Belton and Stillhouse lakes will participate in the 5th Annual Turtle Festival at Yettie Polk Park, Belton, Texas, from 10a.m. to 4p.m. The Corps' water safety display boat will be exhibited with water safety discussions with visitors. Points of contact are USACE, Rob Giacomozzi Sr. at 254-939-2461 and Steven Kirkpatrick, Belton Kiwanis Club, 254-258-6844.

On Thursday, May 17, Belton Safety Day will take place at the Bell Co. Expo Center from 9:30a.am to 2:30p.m. The Corps' park rangers from Belton and Stillhouse lakes will participate in the event hosted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 4-H and Youth Development, Bell County. This event is for approximately 1,000 middle school students from around the county. The points of contact are USACE, Rob Giacomozzi Sr. at 254-939-2461 and Micah Holcombe at 254-721-8741.