

PRESS RELEASE

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SRA Encourages Safe Boating During Periods of Low Lake Levels

(Orange, TX) The Sabine River Authority of Texas encourages all boaters to use good judgment and practice safe boating at all times. With rivers and reservoirs throughout the State experiencing record low water levels, safe boating is especially important. Weather records for 2005 and 2006 have been the driest recorded since 1957 due to high temperatures and lower than average rainfall levels. Although in many reservoirs there are hazards at any elevation, current drought conditions result in lower water levels which expose even more underwater obstructions. A boater very familiar with a specific lake may find new hazards during lower water levels. Boaters also need to be cautious of floating logs or other objects that may show up in a previously open water space.

SRA wants everyone to be able to enjoy safe recreation on the waters of Texas and are committed to do our part. For many years, SRA has placed warning signs at all public boat ramps in an effort to inform boaters of the risks associated with underwater obstructions. SRA also maintains navigational aides on Lake Fork and Toledo Bend Reservoir in an effort to assist boaters in navigating around the reservoirs. This navigational system is not fool proof. Many times the navigational aides move due to lower lake elevations or they are damaged or missing. SRA is currently reviewing Geographic Information System (GIS) data associated with the aides to reconcile their locations on the reservoirs. Citizens can assist SRA by informing us when they observe a sign or navigational guide that is missing or damaged.

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Boaters must take responsibility for their own safety while on the waters of Texas. Just as automobiles must slow down when rain and ice covers the roadways, boaters must slow down during drought conditions to avoid potentially damaging impacts with underwater obstructions. As lake levels decline, so should boat speeds.

During times of lower lake levels, safe access to the reservoirs is also important. To assist boaters in these efforts SRA will provide weekly updates on accessibility points on Lake Tawakoni, Lake Fork and the Toledo Bend Reservoir. The current lake level and public and commercial boat ramps with good to fair accessibility to the reservoirs are listed below. These will be updated on a weekly basis on SRA’s website: www.sra.dst.tx.us

Lake Tawakoni Lake Level: 428.12 m.s.l.

Accessible Public / Commercial Boat Ramps
(Listed North to South)

- Two Mile Bridge (East End)
- Whites Causeway
- Lake Tawakoni State Park
- Holiday Marina

Lake Fork Lake Level: 398.79 m.s.l.

All public boat ramps maintained by SRA should be usable at this lake level

Toledo Bend Lake Level: 162.95 m.s.l.

Accessible Public / Commercial Boat Ramps
(Listed North to South)

Upper Toledo Bend

- SRA Recreation Site 1
- Huxley Bay Marina
- Haley’s Ferry
- Ragtown
- East Hamilton
- Holly Park
- Newell’s Fishing World

Lower Toledo Bend

- Alpine Marina
- Mid Lake Campground
- Indian Mounds
- Indian Mounds Camping
- Six Mile
- Paradise Point
- SRA Recreation Site 7

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“SRA will provide updates of accessible boat ramp sites on Lake Tawakoni and Lake Fork and on the Texas side of the Toledo Bend Reservoir to ensure safe access to these reservoirs during current drought conditions,” stated Donnie Henson, Operations Manager for SRA-Texas. “We encourage boaters to use caution when accessing and navigating around the reservoirs at all times,” added Henson.

During low lake levels, the public is very tempted to search for archeological “treasures” on the banks of rivers and reservoirs throughout the State. SRA wants to advise everyone that, according to the Antiquities Code of Texas, removal of any artifacts such as arrowheads, bones or pottery on public property is against the law. For more information on the code, contact the Texas Historical Commission at 512-463-6096 or access their website at: www.thc.state.tx.us/rulesregs/rrstate.html

“We want to remind everyone that these reservoirs are renewable and will fill up during normal rainfall conditions,” stated Henson. “In the meantime, we appreciate the cooperation of everyone practicing safe boating, using the accessible boat ramps and not removing artifacts from public property during these drought conditions,” added Henson. “More information on lake levels and weekly boat ramp accessibility updates will be listed on SRA’s website (www.sra.dst.tx.us) for your convenience.” For more information on conditions of Lake Tawakoni, Lake Fork or Toledo Bend Reservoir, contact Donnie Henson, SRA-Texas Operations Manager at 409-746-2192 or email: dhenson@sra.dst.tx.us

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