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# News Release

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Contacts: E. Patrick Robbins 251-690-2512  
[erin.p.robbins@sam.usace.army.mil](mailto:erin.p.robbins@sam.usace.army.mil)

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Marilyn Phipps 251-690-2506  
[marilyn.j.phipps@sam.usace.army.mil](mailto:marilyn.j.phipps@sam.usace.army.mil)

News Release: [www.sam.usace.army.mil/ps/](http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/ps/)

## PUBLIC WILL SEE MORE RANGERS ON THE BEACH AND IN THE BOATS

**Lake Sidney Lanier, GA.** – Visitors to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lake Lanier project will notice more rangers patrolling the beaches and lake to promote water safety.

“The inviting cool lake water and the Georgia summer heat make the lake more inviting to visitors. They are willing to take the risk of playing in the lake outside the designated swim areas and boating without life jackets. This deadly combination has led to 10 water related deaths this year,” said Jonathan Davis, Operations Project Manager, Lake Sidney Lanier.

The district operations managers, the lake project management and the rangers agree best way to promote water safety is through one-to-one contact with the visitors. Starting this weekend, the rangers will increase boat and beach patrols.

“We want visitors to enjoy the lake, but we want to encourage them to swim in designated areas. We know the beaches are shallow, but they are groomed to provide safe areas to enjoy the water. They do not have drop-offs, shoals or large rocks,” said Chief Ranger Michael Lapina. “We encourage parents to make their children wear life jackets when playing in or near the water. Most parents do not realize that a child can drown in as few as 60 seconds.”

Boaters are reminded to wear life jackets from the time they arrive at the boat

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ramp until they are tying down their boats to go home. "With the lower water levels in the lake, boaters tend to back their trailers closer to the end of the concrete ramps to launch their vessels," said the chief ranger. "The boat ramps can be slippery and some have steep drop-offs at the end of the concrete pads."

There is no reason not to wear a life jacket. People have many reasons not to put a life jacket on when enjoying water activities. It's too hot! It doesn't look cool. I know how to swim. I can reach it if I need it. Nothing is going to happen to me. Approximately 700 people drown each year in recreational boating accidents, 90 percent of these fatalities could have been prevented if life jackets had been worn.

The old orange, hot, bulky vests commonly associated with water safety equipment are not the only life jackets available. New models are smaller, sleeker and more comfortable, leaving you no reason not to wear it. The new inflatable life jackets have greater mobility and flexibility when you are boating, fishing, sailing or paddling, and they are much cooler in warm weather. The inflatable floatation devices come in many models from those that inflate instantly when you hit the water, to those that are manually inflated. All are designed to be more comfortable than the old orange life jackets.

Accidents happen quickly on the water, and there just isn't time to grab a life jacket and put it on properly before you are in the water. Without the life jacket on, you will not be able to help yourself or anyone else who may have ended up in the water with you. The simple act of wearing a life jacket will allow you to be safe in case of an accident and will give you the ability to assist friends or family who are in danger.

The other challenge the rangers face are full day use areas. "We close a park to traffic when it is full. People are willing to park along the edge of the road leading to the day use areas, but this creates a safety hazard," explained Lapina. "The rangers have to keep the cars from parking on the access roads in case an emergency vehicle has to come to the day use area. The rangers don't like telling visitors the area is

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closed to additional visitors and they cannot park along side the road.”

Visitor safety is a primary concern of the rangers, gate attendants and management. “We want visitors to enjoy their time at Lake Lanier and to play safely so they can come back again,” said Lapina.

<b><i>Water Safety Tips for Swimmers</i></b>	<b><i>Water Safety Tips for Boaters</i></b>
Learn to swim	Always wear a life jacket when you are on a boat.
Remember that swimming in a lake is not like swimming in a pool.	Many male boaters who drown fell overboard while answering nature’s call.
Wear a life jacket.	Most drowning victims knew how to swim, but did not intend to get in the water and could not reach their lifejackets in time.
Swim with a buddy.	Always boat sober.
Don’t over estimate your swimming abilities.	Always boat with a friend.
	Always 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.
	Always check the weather before you put the boat in the water.
	Know and follow the water “rules of the road.”
	Learn how to swim.