



NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY
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GBRA and Lake Associations Will Study Water Safety Issues

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEGUIN The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) Board of Directors today authorized the general manager and staff to designate a 'No Wake' zone for a high traffic area on Lake Dunlap, and to continue to work with the lake associations and the Lake Management Group to address water safety issues in area hydroelectric lakes.

These lakes include Dunlap, McQueeney, Placid, Nolte, H-4 (Lake Gonzales) and H-5 (Lake Wood)," said David Welsch, GBRA director of project development. "These lakes are experiencing a substantial increase in recreation use and this is an appropriate time to work with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and lake-wide associations to address water safety concerns."

According to Welsch, the Water Safety Act authorizes GBRA to establish restrictions for water safety purposes on lakes it operates. However, the regulations must be approved by the GBRA Board of Directors through the General Manager, must be consistent with the Water Safety Act, and must be reviewed and approved by TPWD.

Welsch said today's action is a logical extension of the working relationship GBRA has developed with local homeowners' groups and lake associations to address a wide variety of issues including aquatic weed control, lake operations, water safety, water quality, fisheries and special utility districts.

"In 1997, a water safety subcommittee of the Lake Management Group met to review current and proposed legislation governing the use of motor powered watercraft, boating safety education, licensing and other state regulations," said Welsch. "Since then, the committee has continued to evaluate conditions on area lakes and the need for local regulations."

During the hydrilla treatment on area lakes in the mid-1990's, GBRA prohibited the use of motor powered watercraft in specific areas to protect the treatment process. Following the flood of 1998, GBRA directors adopted temporary restrictions governing the use of all motor-powered watercraft on the GBRA hydro lakes and established guidelines regarding removal of personal property and modification of shorelines for waterfront construction.

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Permanent safety measures currently in effect on GBRA lakes prohibit public access to waterways 200 feet upstream and downstream from dams and powerhouses at Lakes Dunlap, McQueeney, Placid and Nolte in Guadalupe County, including the canals and embankments at Dunlap and Nolte; and Lake Gonzales (H-4) and Lake Wood (H-5) in Gonzales County. GBRA also installed orange buoys downstream from the spillgates, and large red and white signs identifying restricted areas are located on the downstream side of all powerhouses, where they are clearly visible to anyone approaching these facilities from the water or riverbanks.

Welsch said GBRA and the Lake Management Group will keep the public informed about its progress and that public education will be an important component of their work.