



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Nashville District

Old Hickory Lake

Lake Casts



**Spring/Summer
2008**

**Cutting, Damaging, or Destroying Trees on
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Property is a Federal Crime**

The communities surrounding Old Hickory Lake have experienced a tremendous amount of residential development in recent years. This development has resulted in a significant increase in the number of cases of tree vandalism on Corps property. During the past year, we have discovered that several landowners with property adjacent to the shoreline have destroyed trees on public land in order to improve the view of the lake from their private property.

In addition to causing the loss of a valuable natural resource, the removal of trees and other vegetation from the shoreline also creates potentially severe erosion problems. The presence of the natural shoreline is necessary to maintain the water quality of Old Hickory Lake. Natural vegetation along the shoreline acts as a buffer and helps to purify run-off water and to control erosion.

Individuals who illegally cut trees and vegetation in this important and sensitive “buffer zone” on public property are committing criminal acts of vandalism. It is the Corps’s goal to maintain and preserve the outstanding features of Old Hickory Lake for the full benefit of the general public and future generations of Americans. The replacement of 60-year-old trees along the boundary line is far more difficult than repairing a vandalized restroom at a recreation area or a picnic table at a campsite. These violators are doing more than simply destroying government property -- they are stealing. They are stealing from their neighbors, friends, and local communities by removing the picturesque quality that attracts over eight million visitors to Old Hickory Lake every

year.

Cutting or damaging trees on public land is a federal crime and is punishable under the provisions of Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 327. Anyone who violates these provisions may be punished by a fine of not more than \$5,000 and/or imprisonment for not more than six months.

In the past several years, the Corps has worked closely with violators to either restore the damaged areas or to collect the monetary value of the damages and utilize the money to enhance or protect the natural resources at the lake without fully prosecuting the violators through the federal court system. A more effective approach is necessary, however, to deter acts of vandalism and to ensure the long-term environmental quality of the lake and surrounding shoreline. For this reason, all future acts of vandalism will be investigated, and all findings will be



turned over to the United States Attorney's Office for prospective prosecution through the federal criminal court system. The Resource Manager and Park Rangers have identified this as a high priority and are working diligently to locate, investigate and consider federal prosecution in all cases of destruction of public property. **Permits for boat docks may also be suspended, revoked, or terminated if the permit holder is found to have violated the provisions of Title 36 pertaining to**

the destruction of public property or the placement of unauthorized structures on public land or waters. Non-renewal or revocation will require the removal of any permitted facility (ies) at the owner's expense. Until non-compliance issues are satisfactorily resolved, the permit will not be reinstated or reissued, even if the property changes ownership.

During recent investigations of tree vandalism cases, violators have provided false statements concerning the facts of the cases to Park Rangers. Providing false statements to federal officers is also a federal crime. Any person who provides a false statement to a federal officer is subject to prosecution under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001.

Local residents can help us stop the degradation of our scenic lakeshore. Although the Corps is making every effort to locate and take the appropriate action against offenders, our most important asset could be the eyes and ears of the public. Community members are invited to help protect our natural resources by calling the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resource Manager's Office at Old Hickory Lake if they hear a chainsaw or bulldozer at work in an area they believe is government property. The phone number is (615) 822-4846 or (615) 847-2395.

Anyone who observes or has knowledge of theft, vandalism, or any other threat or suspi-

cious activity against Corps property is also encouraged to participate in the "Corps Watch" program, which is a nationwide crime-watch program developed to protect public property. Each year, millions of dollars are lost due to property damage from vandalism, larceny, arson, and environmental and cultural resource degradation. The "Corps Watch" program is designed to heighten public awareness of the seriousness of the impacts of crime within or around dams, lakes, locks, recreation areas, and other Corps of Engineers property and facilities.

Authorized by Section 205 of the Water Resource Development Act of 2000 and the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535), national funding is available to issue rewards of up to \$1,000 to individuals for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of offenders. "Corps Watch" uses a 24-hour-a-day toll free hotline that assures the identity of the caller is protected and the proper authorities are notified. To report theft, vandalism, or any threat or suspicious activity against Corps property, please call the "Corps Watch" hotline at 1-866-413-7970.

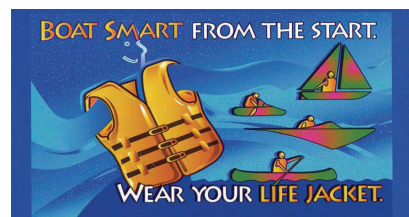
Visitors to Old Hickory Lake add more than \$200 million to the local economy annually as they pursue outdoor recreational activities such as wildlife viewing and photography, boating, fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking,

or just simply sight-seeing. Please help us preserve our natural resources so that future generations can enjoy these same activities.

Sign Program

You may have noticed the new signs that the Corps has installed around Old Hickory Lake. During the past year, we have put up new highway signs directing visitors to our recreation areas, marinas, and boat ramps; we have also been installing signs at all of our boat ramps and recreation areas identifying them as Corps-managed areas. In 2007, signs were installed on the north side of the lake; in 2008, we will be putting up new signs on the Mt. Juliet/Lebanon side.

If you know of an area where you feel that additional signs are needed, please contact the Resource Manager's office at 822-4846 or 847-2395.



Public Property Available for Everyone to Enjoy on Old Hickory Lake

The Corps of Engineers invites all adjacent landowners to enjoy all that Old Hickory Lake has to offer. There are many recreational activities to enjoy, including hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, camping and picnicking. But please keep in mind some of our rules and regulations.

Mowing of grass on public property is only allowed with a mowing permit. No personal property of any type may be stored on government property. Personal property includes, but is not limited to: firewood, bird baths, playground equipment, statues, tables, chairs, bird houses, boats, cars, flower pots, etc. No buildings or other structures, including, but not limited to, flower beds, dog houses, fire pits, sidewalks, patios, fences, storage buildings, etc., may be built on government property. No refuse or trash, such as, grass clippings, leaves, lumber, limbs, house hold trash, etc., may be disposed of on government property. The public property line around the lake has been established and clearly marked with signs on metal or wooden posts and blaze marks painted yellow on trees. It is the responsibility of each adjoining property owner to know the exact location of his or her property lines and corners.

If you have any questions about the location of public property lines or the shoreline management program, please feel free to contact the Resource Manager's office at (615) 822-4846 or (615) 847-2365.

Native Warm-Season Grasses

Native warm-season grasses (NWSG) are grasses historically native to this area which grow during the warm months of the year and are dormant during autumn and winter. They differ from cool-season grasses which make their active growth during spring and fall. There are many warm-season grasses native to this region; however, seven species are

most commonly promoted as cover for wildlife and/or forage for livestock. These are big bluestem, little bluestem, broomsedge bluestem, indiagrass, switchgrass, sideoats gramma, and eastern gamagrass.

Native grasslands are the most endangered ecosystem in this region. Historically, the area contained vast acreages of native grassland and savannas with scattered trees and shrub cover, which was maintained by fire. Today, that acreage has been replaced with non-native grasses (e.g. tall fescue, orchard grass, and bermudagrass), agricultural crops, forest cover and suburban development. As a result, several wildlife species (e.g. northern bobwhite quail, cottontail rabbit, many song birds, and American kestrel) which are dependent upon quality early successional habitat have experienced significant declines in population since the decline of NWSG in this area.

NWSG can provide excellent hay for livestock. Delayed harvest and exposure to the environment are major factors influencing hay quality; thus NWSG have fewer problems in hay production than traditional cool-season grasses because rain is less likely during summer. Once hay is cut, high temperatures enable faster drying, resulting in less nutrient loss from respiration. NWSG are similar in available protein and digestible nutrients as cool-season grasses, but the weather provides better hay making conditions (The factual information given above is available from the UT Agriculture Extension Office).

The Old Hickory Lake Ranger Staff is converting non-renewed agricultural leases into NWSG in order to help promote this type of endangered ecosystem for the benefit of many different types of wildlife. If you as a landowner have some land in an agricultural lease or other private land that you would like to turn into NWSG fields please contact your local NRCS office, your counties extension office, or the Resource Managers Office.

Make Memories Camping!

How many of us remember those camping trips as a kid? Family camping is a great way to build close relationships between parents and kids. All the fun trips you've been on will help you create memories, share experiences and most of all have quality time away from everyday life. Old Hickory Lake provides many opportunities for both individuals and families to create experiences boating, swimming and camping. We have two great campgrounds that offer campers a variety of recreational opportunities.

Cages Bend Campground
(Gallatin area) **and Cedar Creek Campground** (Mt. Juliet area)
Open- April 2 – October 30
Price- \$19 -\$23 per night

Old Hickory Lake also has picnic shelters that can be reserved at the following recreation areas: Rockland*, Nat Caldwell, Avondale, Cedar Creek, Shutes Branch, Old

Resource Managers Office
Old Hickory Lake
#5 Power Plant Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37075-3467

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Hickory Beach, Lone Branch and Laguardo.

Campsites or picnic shelters may be reserved through the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS) by calling toll-free 1-877-444-6777 or online at www.recreation.gov.

*Rockland picnic shelters must be reserved by calling the Old Hickory Lake Resource Manager's Office. For more information, contact our office at (615) 822-4846 or (615) 847-2395.

Former Campground to Undergo Makeover

Following the 2004 recreation season, Old Hickory Lake staff was forced to close several recreation areas as part of the Recreation Excellence at Army Lakes (REAL) program. The Corps's intention was to re-allocate resources from underutilized recreation areas to areas receiving more visitation, consequently enhancing the remaining open areas.

Included in the areas that were either closed or turned over to other agencies was Shutes Branch Campground.

Today, Shutes Branch Campground remains closed and has become a location for various unauthorized activities. The Old Hickory Lake staff has received numerous calls expressing concern about the once beloved area and the negative activity that is currently taking place there.

The staff at Old Hickory Lake has listened to feedback from concerned citizens and decided it was time for action. In order to create new outdoor recreation opportunities, the Old Hickory Lake staff has partnered with the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association to create a new mountain bike trail in the nearly 60-acre site of the former campground. Work on the trail is expected to commence this spring and once completed, nearly eight miles of trails will be available for public use. All design will adhere to strict International Mountain Bicycle Association standards for trail safety. For more information or if you wish to volunteer, please contact the Resource Manager's office.