



News Release

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Perry Lake to make releases in support of navigation

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Patrons of Perry Lake can expect lower lake levels as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases water from the lake to support navigational flows on the Missouri River.

The additional releases from Perry Lake began July 7. Corps experts say lake levels could drop up to two inches each day as a result. Releases to support navigation also may lower levels of Milford and Tuttle Creek lakes by as much as two feet.

About one sixth of Perry Lake's normal pool is used by the state for water supply, mainly for Valley Falls and downstream communities like Lawrence and Shawnee. The supplemental releases now being made for navigation will not affect the water supply portion of the pool.

As lake levels fall, the Corps cautions boaters to be aware that some parts of the lake, especially the upstream end, become too shallow for safe access. Boaters should be aware of exposed rocks and stumps, and boat owners who have watercraft with deep drafts should contact their marinas to see if their boats should be removed from the lake.

The releases from Perry Lake are part of a broader river system operation. Milford and Tuttle Creek lakes are also providing releases to meet the downstream targets.

Perry Lake is currently at an elevation of 892 feet, about six inches higher than its normal multipurpose pool elevation of 891.5 feet. Based on current estimates the lake would reach its multipurpose pool elevation about July 17. Corps experts say that, given a "worst case" estimation, Perry Lake will fall another three feet, to 888.5 by the last week of July.

As in years past, lake levels may continue to fall as releases for water supply and other uses continue throughout the rest of the year. In 2002, releases brought the lake's elevation to 885 feet, six feet below its multipurpose pool level.

Like all Corps lakes, Perry Lake has several missions. During wet years, its primary benefit is derived from flood damage protection, and during normal years ideal conditions can be provided for recreation and fish and wildlife. In dry years, the USACE operating plan puts a higher emphasis on navigation and water supply.

Drought conditions now exist across most of the Missouri River basin, particularly in Kansas and Missouri. The total lake inflow to Perry Lake in June was the second lowest on record for the month. It was the lowest on record at Milford and Clinton lakes, as well as at many federal lakes in central and western Kansas. On July 9, Waconda Lake west of Concordia fell to a new all-time record low pool elevation.

The Corps ensures that the Missouri River flows are maintained at a minimum level of 35,000 cubic feet per second needed by towboats and barges operating on the river below Kansas City.

The operation of the Kansas lakes and the Missouri River is in accordance with Congressional authorizations, the approved lake regulation manuals, and the Annual Operating Plan for 2006.

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