

Lake o' the Pines

Lake O' Pines shoreline rules under review as Corps of Engineers seeks input from public

By Glenn Evans gevans@news-journal.com May 9, 2019 Updated May 22, 2019

More information

Comments and questions about shoreline uses at Lake O' the Pines can be emailed to CESWF-OD-LP@usace.army.mil or by mail to Rhonda Fields, CESWF-PEC-TM, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, 819 Taylor St., Fort Worth, Texas 76102.

JEFFERSON — About 60 Lake O' the Pines denizens learned Thursday that the rules governing which activities are allowed where along the lake's shoreline are under formal review.

How much change occurs, if any at all, awaits decisions by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that built and manages the 19,780-acre reservoir. Corps staff from the Fort Worth division office are conducting public hearings as part of the first rewrite of the Shoreline Management Plan since 1978.

A similar public input session in Longview was canceled because of Wednesday's severe weather and is expected to be rescheduled by month's end.

The Shoreline Management Plan controls where recreation is allowed at the shore, where development such as docks can take place, types of vegetation allowed at the lakeside and which sections of shoreline are set aside for environmental protection.

"I just want it to be beneficial for everybody," said Logan Barnes, who talked of how many pines grow lakeside at Pleasant Point, where he lives on the lake's northern end. "I want to see the lake. I want to keep it clean, so I can see the lake from my house."

Charlie Mauldin said she hopes to influence the new rules just enough to let her build a dock at her place, which she said already is close to a shoreline section where docks are allowed.

"Absolutely, it would be a matter of feet," she said, after checking one of several lake maps mounted in Jefferson's Visitor and Tourism Center.

Don Wiese, natural resources manager for the Corps region, said there are no proposed changes to how the shore is managed now. But he said a draft of the proposed Shoreline Management Plan should be ready for public inspection by August.

The public will then have another 30-day window to make final comments, he said.

"We really need the general public to pay attention to this land and to chime in," he said. "We don't want private use to harm public use."

That guiding principle is why fences are not allowed on the shoreline, which he said is open to the public all the way around the lake.

“(The rules) don’t impede public access to walk on the shoreline,” Wiese said. “We have robust public use out there.”

Weise said the Shoreline Management Plan follows adoption last February of a revised Master Plan for Lake O’ the Pines. He said that document does not alter major lake features such as residential areas, public park and swimming areas. It also does not add or remove acreage from the lake’s land boundaries.

There are 132 permitted docks along the shore now; some of those do not meet required standards but are grandfathered under the pre-1978 guidelines. Docks are only by permit at the lake, and Wiese said one reason for that is to accommodate marina owners.

“You can imagine, if there are too many private docks that would hurt their business,” he said.

Cody Berry, lead park ranger, said rules governing mowing, brush clearing and other shoreline landscaping are up for changes if the Corps and the public want change.

“There’s considerations for wildfire protection,” he said. “It’s all going to be considered. ... We’re going to evaluate the shoreline (use) allocations in the process. We’re also going to evaluate the dock construction standards. ... Your input on those things is going to be considered.”