



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

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“No Boating Zone” Modified on Lake Oahe Dam Face, “No Swimming Zone” Included in Restrictions

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard has modified the “no boating zone” order previously put in place along the face of Oahe Dam.

Effective at 8 a.m. on Friday, June 17, 2011, the Governor will rescind the previously established “no boating zone” and put in place a new “no boating and no swimming zone” that will include just those waters on the face of Oahe Dam in the immediate vicinity of the stilling basin intakes.

The stilling basin intakes are located 350 to 400 yards east of the West Shore Boat Ramp and about 300 yards north of the face of Oahe Dam. Anglers, boaters, divers and swimmers will be prohibited from using this area due to the high water flows through the outlet works to the stilling basin below Oahe Dam.

State law gives the Governor authority to prohibit or restrict recreational use or navigation on any portion of a river, lake or stream in order to protect the public peace, health, or safety. This new order will be in effect until rescinded by Governor Daugaard. Signs depicting the boating and swimming closure will be posted at boating access sites at West Shore ramp, East Shore ramp and near the east intake structures on Lake Oahe.

“This new ‘no boating and no swimming zone’ will extend from the West Shore Boat Ramp easterly to the first ‘grassy strip’ on the face of the dam,” said Emmett Keyser, Assistant Wildlife Director for the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. “Boaters and anglers will find the eastern boundary of this closure zone marked with an orange line depicted on the face of the dam at the ‘grassy strip. This zone will extend out to a distance of one-half mile due northwest from the face of the dam.”

A violation of the public waterway restriction is a Class 2 Misdemeanor, punishable by up to 30 days in jail, a fine of \$500 or both.

Fishing and boating are extremely important to businesses on the Missouri River, said Game, Fish and Parks Secretary Jeff Vonk.

“Now that water flows through Lake Oahe have stabilized, the Governor is taking this action in an effort to balance the important need to protect public safety and still allow boaters and anglers access to these important recreational opportunities,” Vonk said. “The modified “no boating and no swimming zone” will continue to allow boaters to enter Lake Oahe via the West Shore Boat Ramp located near at the face of the dam,” he added. “Boaters departing from the West Shore Boat Ramp will need to travel due northwest through the line of buoy markers in order to give a wide berth to the stilling basin intakes,” Vonk said.

The West Shore Boat Ramp has been a popular area for anglers and boaters to access Lake Oahe. Salmon fishermen in particular have used the West Shore Boat Ramp as a means to gain quick access to deeper waters along the face of the dam.

“Salmon fishermen will be especially welcome to hear of this change as it will allow them to fish a large portion of the deeper water areas along the east end of the face of the dam, including the area immediately around the east intakes that discharge through the Oahe Dam Powerhouse,” Vonk said.

Despite the high water releases from Missouri River dams, nearly all boating access areas on the upstream or ‘lake side’ of the mainstem dams remain open and available for use. Boaters and anglers who plan to access Lake Oahe will find boating access facilities located at West Shore, East Shore (Corps Bay), Peoria Flats, Chantier Creek, and the more developed access sites at Spring Creek and Cow Creek all open for use.

A current list of boat ramp closures and boating restrictions associated with the Missouri River flood can be found online at <http://gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/missouri-river-flood.aspx>