



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

SOUTH ATLANTIC DIVISION

Water Safety Initiatives Newsletter

QUARTER 4 • PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2024



"I Got Caught" Campaign
Photo: W.P. Franklin South

GOALS FOR WATER SAFETY INITIATIVES NEWSLETTER

Why participate in this quarterly newsletter?

- Showcase what your project or office is doing
- Share water safety programs & initiative ideas between projects and offices
- Provide a brief record of SAD water safety initiatives

WATER SAFETY INITIATIVES NEWSLETTER TIMETABLE

Quarter 1 | Oct. - Dec. | Submit by Dec. 25th

Quarter 2 | Jan. - Mar. | Submit by Mar. 25th

Quarter 3 | Apr. - June | Submit by June 25th

Quarter 4 | Jul. - Sept. | Submit by Sept. 25th

2023-2024 PHOTO CONTEST - SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

Contest guidelines & instructions:

<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/watersafety/photos.cfm>



USACE WATER SAFETY



Here's a chance to showcase your photos and talent.

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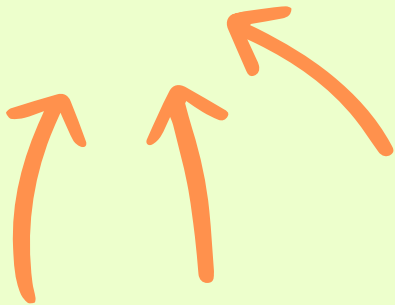
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ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

2024 NATIONAL WATER SAFETY AWARDS NOMINATION REQUEST

Nominations must be submitted through District Operations Chiefs to their respective MSC for consideration. Division Operations Chiefs should submit one nomination for each award to Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager, NLT 06 December 2024.

For the South Atlantic Division please submit your nomination(s) to your District Water Safety Representative by their November deadline.



Things mentioned in the nomination packet can be new initiatives, events, policies, partnerships, etc. and ones that were implemented before 2024. If it was something implemented before 2024 mention when it was implemented and what was done in 2024 regarding it.

Questions please contact your District Water Safety Representative.

SAD QUARTERLY AWARDS SCHEDULE

The SAD Water Safety PDT wants to recognize you for your outstanding efforts to educate the public on water safety, the environment, Corps mission, your project, and more!

- Awards program open to all employees within the Operations Community of Practice
- Recipients receive time off awards
- Nominations can be received from anyone (co-workers, supervisors, self-nominations)
- No effort is considered too small
- Can include - direct contacts, social media engagement numbers, EKO cards, and pictures

Quarter 1 | Oct. - Dec. | Submit by Feb. 14th
Quarter 2 | Jan. - Mar. | Submit by Apr. 28th
Quarter 3 | Apr. - June | Submit by July 28th
Quarter 4 | Jul. - Sept. | Submit by Nov. 30th

Send nominations to your district representative on the SAD WS PDT!

JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT (SAJ)

Photo: @JacksonvilleDistrict

W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area

On August 30th, Ranger Megan Parsons recruited lock operators Jason Pritt and Jacqueline Verwers to participate in a Labor Day outreach water safety video at W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam. We provided a few tips for being safe while out on the waterway during the holiday and taught the saying “Reach, throw, row, don’t go” to remind video viewers not to go in after a drowning victim. This video was submitted to the Public Affairs Office to be posted on the Jacksonville District’s Facebook page where it received over 1,700 views.



On Saturday, August 31st, Park Ranger Megan Parsons and USACE volunteers Cassie and Phoenix Cullen set up a table at the W.P. Franklin South boat ramp for Labor Day water safety outreach. In just a few hours, 19 direct quality contacts were made, in addition to another 10-15 contacts where we pointed out the life jacket loaner station and reminded boaters to wear their life jackets. At our table, we offered a few different types of water safety giveaways, as well as informational brochures about safe boating and choosing the right life jacket. When we stopped boaters to talk, we handed out giveaways to those that had quality conversations with us. We also continued our participation with the “I Got Caught” initiative and stopped a few adults to reward them for being good role models and wearing their life jackets.



MOBILE DISTRICT (SAM)

Photo: @USACEMOBILE

Alabama River Lakes

On July 3rd Rangers Christina Collins and George Bennett did a water safety program for a church camp at Holy Ground Battlefield Park. Rangers spoke about the Five Rules of Water Safety and how to properly fit a personal floatation device.

Rangers Christina Collins and John Bennett participated in the Lowndesboro, AL July 4th Parade. Rangers decorated their patrol boat with water safety items and American flags. Ranger Bennett rode in boat wearing his PFD & kill switch and threw water safety frisbee to parade-goers.

On July 29th Alabama River Lakes Rangers George Hunter and Joseph Ponder collaborated with Alabama Power and Autauga PALS (People Against a Littered State) to host a River Clean Up Day. Over 75 volunteers showed up to Swift Creek Boat Ramp to help pick up trash. Dozens of trash bags were filled and rangers had the opportunity to speak to volunteers about water safety as well as environmental stewardship.



MOBILE DISTRICT (SAM)

Photo: @USACEMOBILE

Allatoona Lake

Allatoona Lake partnered this summer with the American Canoe Association, Georgia River Network, and others to provide low-cost Kayak 101 training classes for individuals interested learning more about the recreational sport and improving their skills and safety. On July 19-20, July 27, and August 24, 3 Kayak 101 classes were taught in USACE provided areas at the same time as classes being presented in 6 other states. For this quarter, there were around 60 participants.



In Euharlee, GA, Rangers and Volunteers attended the Georgia Outdoor News Blast boat show and made 1,803 water safety contacts. It was a 3-day event that included Rangers talking with attendees about water safety but also environmental stewardship (shoreline and hunting/fishing). Children attended with their parents, but their adult parents were also informed on various water safety aspects of boating and fishing.

MOBILE DISTRICT (SAM)

Photo: @USACEMOBILE

Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway

On October 8, 2024, Park Rangers Ward McGee, Raven Hartley, Matthew Dziamniski, and Austin King, as well as Wildlife Biologists, Jason Letson and Stanley Oden, participated in Fawn Day. This event took place at the Pickensville Recreation Area in Pickensville, AL. During this event, the rangers and biologists spoke with 180 5th grade students on water safety and the importance of wearing a life jacket, as well as taught them about wildlife and invasive plants along the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

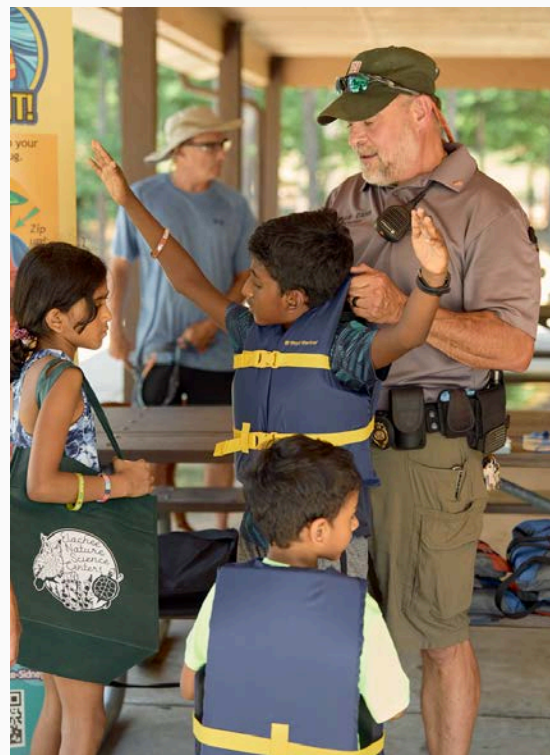


MOBILE DISTRICT (SAM)

Photo: @USACEMOBILE

Lake Sidney Lanier

The Lake Lanier Project staff participated in the River Forks Park Explorer event on July 13. SafeKids N.E. Georgia and Georgia DNR rangers also participated in the event. Staff provided life jacket try-on and water safety tips. More than 130 direct water safety contacts were made at the event.



The Lake Lanier Project staff and Friends of Lake Lanier placed “Remember to Wear It” and “Know Your Buoy” signs from the National Safe Boating Council to ten (10) courtesy dock locations around the lake. These signs were purchased by the Friends group. These signs will be seen by every boater using the courtesy dock.

The Lake Lanier Project staff and volunteer James Sheppard painted the “Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns” logo from the Corps Foundation on the side of three (3) day-use park gatehouses. These were done over the quarter and will be seen by every visitor entering the parks.



MOBILE DISTRICT (SAM)

Photo: @USACEMOBILE

Walter F. George Reservoir

The annual Labor Day Fair in Russell County, Alabama at the Old Russell County Courthouse was attended by Walter F. George Reservoir's Ranger Shannon Schaefer on September 2, 2024. A total of 101 contacts were made at the event, to include Corps mission, water safety, environmental, cultural/historical, and general safety contacts.



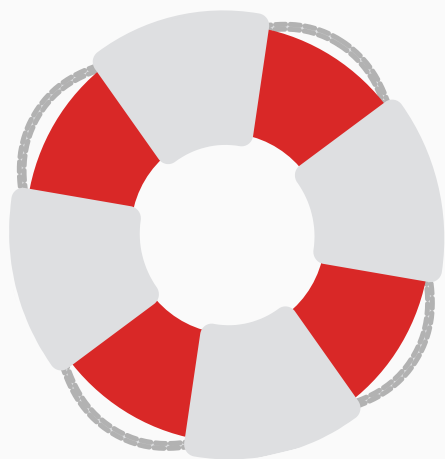
Stay Safe In, On, and Near Open Water This

LABOR DAY WEEKEND



With These Simple Tips:

- ✓ Wear a Properly-Fitted Life Jacket
- ✓ Keep Your Children Within Arm's Reach
- ✓ Watch for Sudden Weather Changes
- ✓ Don't Depend on Floating or Air-filled Toys



MOBILE DISTRICT (SAM)

Photo: @USACEMOBILE

West Point Lake

On 1 June 24, the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce organized a kids' fishing rodeo at Hardley Creek at West Point Lake. Park Rangers Mike Linville, Christine Dowell, Jeff Mau, and Danielle Woody, participated in the event, making water safety contacts by handing out water safety items and providing lifejackets.



On 17 June 24, Park Rangers Christine Dowell and Chris Brewer participated in a water safety event for the La Grange Police and Fire Youth Camp in La Grange, Georgia. The Rangers spoke to approximately 50 kids about water safety, wearing the proper life jacket, and let them explore the Ranger patrol vessel and truck. The event included first responders from the Georgia Highway Patrol, Georgia DNR Game Wardens, Troup County Sheriff's Deputies, La Grange PD, CSI, SWAT, and Fire and Rescue.



On June 11, 2024, Park Ranger Rusty Newton participated in the Valley Police Department's Jr. Police Academy by presenting a "Water Safety Course" to those present. He made 62 water safety contacts (52 participants, 10 instructors) by discussing safe habits around water and demonstrating how to properly fit a "Life Jacket" with one of the participants. Participants were then allowed to ask some very important questions to Park Ranger Newton.

SAVANNAH DISTRICT (SAS)

Photo: Richard B. Russell Lake

Hartwell Lake

Park Ranger Annette Dotson conducted a program to 45 kids and parents at a local library for their Adventure Begins summer reading program. Ranger Dotson and Bobber instructed the participants on how to be safe on the water and how to offer help to someone who is struggling to swim.

Park Ranger Annette Dotson conducted a water safety/Power Production program and to 35 students in a local home school group. Dotson covered proper life jacket wear tips and how to offer assistance in the water by using the Reach, Throw, Row, but Don't Go tips.



SAVANNAH DISTRICT (SAS)

Photo: Richard B. Russell Lake

Richard B. Russell Dam & Lake

Rangers patrolled the lake and public swimming areas at the state parks to monitor and communicate water safety to the public. There were 1042 interpretative contacts made during this holiday weekend, being a mixture of children and adults.

Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition (LRRTC) hosted event at Blue Hole: Paddle Fest. Local residents were invited to join festivities hosted by LRRTC at the Blue Hole PSA. Corps rangers were asked to attend the event and to deliver a water safety message to those who were going to be participating in water activities (Paddling). There were 35 interpretative contacts made during this event.

Stay Safe In, On, and Near Open Water This

FOURTH OF JULY WEEKEND

With These Simple Tips:

- ✓ Wear a Properly-Fitted Life Jacket
- ✓ Encourage Others to Wear Life Jackets
- ✓ Boat with Consideration for Others
- ✓ Swim and Boat with a Buddy



WILMINGTON DISTRICT (SAW)

Photo: @PhilpottLake

Wilmington District

On Sunday, September 15th, the District Water Safety Team setup a water safety booth at La Fiesta del Pueblo in Downtown Raleigh, NC. La Fiesta del Pueblo is one of the area's largest and most diverse festival of Latin American culture. In addition to live music, artisanal vendors, food trucks, and activities, there are educational booths set up throughout the event. At the Corps' booth, staffed by Elaine Wittry, Jon Bannerman, Lisa Bredl, Carmen Boyette, and Kelly Oest we highlighted the dangers of open water swimming specifically focusing on drop-offs using an interactive activity. The goal of the activity was to get a superhero or small barbie from one side of a fish aquarium to the other by walking along the "lake" bottom. The tank was cloudy so they could not see the "drop-offs." While they were set up for failure, it provided a great avenue to teach visitors about the hazards of swimming in a lake and discuss life jacket wear. We also had a diorama replicating the lake and underwater hazards. This was a self-led activity with the lists of hazards in both English and Spanish. Participants looked for the hazards in the diorama. Overall, we made 333 direct contacts, and the activity was very well received by all ages from children to adults.



WILMINGTON DISTRICT (SAW)

Photo: @PhilpottLake

B. Everette Jordan Lake

On July 11th and 18th, community member Angela White joined rangers to conduct water safety outreach at the Jordan Lake swim beaches. Angela's son Kristoffer drowned at Jordan Lake in 2023, and Angela is making it her mission to educate other families about the dangers of open water. Angela shared Kristoffer's story with 54 beachgoers.



WILMINGTON DISTRICT (SAW)

Photo: @PhilpottLake

John H. Kerr Dam & Reservoir

On July 9, 2024 Ranger Emily Jones facilitated a program at Ripberger Public Library in Kenbridge, VA about camouflage and mimicry in insects. Approximately 70 people participated in the program which focused on the differences between camouflage and mimicry and included a scavenger hunt in the library looking for pipe cleaners shaped like walking stick insects. All participants received a water safety message.



On July 15, 2024 Ranger Will Daniel facilitated a program at Victoria Public Library about identifying native snakes. The 26 participants learned about common snakes found in the area, how to identify them, what to do when you encounter a snake, and the benefits of snakes to the ecosystem. All participants received a water safety message.

On August 6, 2024 Rangers Jerry Jarman and Emily Jones participated in Chase City (VA) Police Department's National Night Out Event. Rangers Jarman and Jones spoke to 226 individuals about water safety and the various Corps Missions. Chase City Police Department host this event every year for the community and there are many booths and activities for event attendees. Photo attached and taken by member of the public.





SAD FY24 Q3 AWARD WINNERS

Q3 Education Award

Evan Brashier, J Strom Thurmond Lake (SAS)

Evan Brashier Savannah District J Strom Thurmond Project Park Ranger, is recognized for his education contributions during the 3rd quarter 2004. Park Ranger Evan Brashier lead the effort to coordinate the 2nd annual Kids Fishing Rodeo. Over 50 kids showed up to enjoy the event with all receiving a free fishing rod and reel. Local bait shops donated bait and lunch supplies with the VFW cooking the lunch for all in attendance. This event was in partnership with the Union Sportsman Alliance. Ranger Brashier also helped present water safety while maintaining focus on natural resource education to over 575 individuals. He worked with Park Ranger Kevin Madsen to present two tables at the 2024 Earth Day event at Phinizy Swamp in Augusta, GA. Park Ranger Evan Brashier focused on natural resources and wildlife at the lake sharing animal pelts and skulls with visitors.

Q3 Water Safety Award

Annette Dotson, Hartwell Lake (SAS)

Annette Dotson, Savannah District Hartwell Lake Recreation Section Park Ranger, is recognized for her water safety contributions during the 3rd quarter. Ranger Dotson is commended for her quick thinking and efficient use of life jacket loaner boards to keep visitors safe. She was also instrumental in creating a new public service initiative with Radio Station WHLR 92.1(Lavonia, Ga) which has radio coverage over all 6 counties surrounding Hartwell Lake. Dotson initiated monthly radio interviews designed to connect the lake community with Corps park rangers. It now gives rangers across all program areas an opportunity to address current issues and a captive audience to convey water safety on the lake. During this quarter Ranger Dotson also made 1,161 direct water safety contacts while on patrol and lead 4 formal water safety programs with 214 participants.

Congratulations



SAD FY24 Q3 AWARD HONORABLE MENTIONS

Q3 Education Award Honorable Mention Kevin Madsen, J Strom Thurmond Lake (SAS)

Kevin Madsen Savannah District J Strom Thurmond Project Park Ranger, is recognized for his education contributions during the 3rd quarter 2004. Park Ranger Kevin Madsen participated with Ranger Evan Brashier to provide quality water safety and education contacts to the 2024 Earth Day at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta GA. Ranger Madsen presented on water safety and properly fitting a life jacket while Ranger Brashier presented on natural resources and wildlife. Together they made 575 high quality water safety and educational contacts! Ranger Madsen also worked with his J Strom Thurmond Recreation Section to partner with Columbia County Schools to promote water safety, EKIP, and the importance of life jackets to every 4th grade student in the county. This year Stevens Creek Elementary hosted the presentation. This resulted in 1,972 4th graders receiving a EKIP Pass. The team was able to give away 4 life jackets to students that were in need!

Q3 Water Safety Award Honorable Mention Elaine Wittry, B. Everett Jordan Lake (SAW)

As a new Corps ranger, Elaine hit the ground running jumping into established partnerships and creating new ones during the 3rd quarter. Specifically, she provided water safety lessons to parents and caregivers with Safe Kids Chatham County. Elaine worked with Carolina Swims Foundation on a new life jacket loaner station. She also collaborated with Angela White, who advocates for water safety after losing her son to drowning, by presenting a water safety program at her son's remembrance ceremony. Additionally, Elaine filmed short water safety videos with the District's Water Safety Team and NC State Park Rangers. She also presented school programs and patrolled the shoreline making over 750 direct contacts. Park Ranger Wittry's exceptional work reflects greatly upon herself, the Wilmington District, the South Atlantic Division, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Congratulations