



# Public Affairs Office

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Philpott Lake reaches normal pool in time for summer season**

**BASSETT, Virginia**--The lake elevation at Philpott Lake reached 973.59 above mean sea level today, the first time for more than two years the lake has been at what's called 'normal pool.' Lower than normal rainfalls over a long period were the primary factor in lake levels that went down as low as 955.68 feet above mean sea level in September of 1999. The lowest recorded level occurred in January of 1957, at 944 feet msl and the highest level occurred in June 1972, at 983 feet msl.

"We are very happy to see the lake at this normal pool level as our peak recreation season begins," said Lake Project Operations Manager Carl Smith. "The first thing we are thankful for is the appreciable rain we've been seeing for the past six to eight months. Runoff from rainfall is what fills this lake, and when it's dry, we see lake levels fall."

Smith worked closely with John H. Kerr Lake, a sister Corps facility lower in the Roanoke Basin, to conserve water during the dry years. "They picked up some of our required power generation load so that we could minimize releases, and keep the lake pool as well-filled as possible," Smith explained.

Now, Smith and the US Army Corps of Engineers Water Control Manager, Terry Brown agree that more water in the lake is great news. "We may see a return of dry weather later this summer," Brown said. "In fact, we expect that. We intend to keep Philpott at the high side of the guide curve, 974 feet msl."

Because of a full normal pool, boaters can expect to find good access to the lake's boat ramps. This good news comes along with a few warnings about the changed conditions. Boaters and swimmers should be aware of floating debris that could have been washed down from banks as the water level moved up.

"We have been having a series of strong storms over the past week," Smith said. "We urge people to keep a close eye on weather and an ear to the radio when they are on or near the water. Flash flooding in the area is possible."

Smith particularly emphasized that the low water crossings at Jamison Mill and Bowen's Creek could be trouble spots. "If people see barricades at those or any other locations they should definitely stay away! We don't want anyone to be endangered by high water."

The former Twin Ridge Marina area will be opened for recreation as soon as recent storm damage can be cleaned up. "We had hoped to open for Memorial Day weekend," Smith said.

“However, storms have knocked down a lot of debris and caused some erosion. As soon as we fix that up, the area will be ready for boaters, picnicking, bank fishing, and sight seeing.”

“And speaking of Memorial Day,” Smith added, “We want everyone who comes to Philpott to go home safely! We had a tragic drowning at another District Lake project this spring caused when a child fell out of a boat and his granddad died trying to save him. Two lifejackets were in the boat—but not on the people. **Lifejackets work! But only if you wear them!** Also remember to keep a very close eye on your children when they are anywhere near the water.”

For more information about water levels in Philpott and other US Army Corps of Engineers Lakes operated by Wilmington District, visit our web site at [www.epec.saw.usace.army.mil](http://www.epec.saw.usace.army.mil) . For other information about Philpott Lake, call 540-629-2703.