



Lake Conroe Rules & Regulations

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Lake Conroe has long been an extremely popular recreational lake, used for activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming. As the entity responsible for ensuring continued safe, public access to Lake Conroe and for managing private activities that utilize these public lands, the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) maintains and enforces certain rules and regulations that are intended to balance these important, and sometimes competing, interests.

Updates and amendments to the Lake Conroe Rules and Regulations (the "Rules") were recently adopted on June 1, 2015. The Rules were last amended on August 28, 2003, so they were due for an update simply to incorporate changes that have occurred in state laws related to boating safety. A key part of the revision process was stakeholder input. Prior to consideration by SJRA's board of directors, the Rules were reviewed by SJRA's staff, Montgomery County Constable Precinct 1, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Lake Conroe Watershed Protection Plan Stakeholder Group. In addition, the Rules were published online for public comment. Numerous comments were received during the process of stakeholder review, resulting in an improved set of rules.

The majority of the amendments involved reformatting and restructuring of the existing rules to organize them more logically and make them easier to read and understand. These changes also allow the rules to be referenced by chapter, section, subsection, and sub-division, which will make it easier for Montgomery County law enforcement to reference specific provisions when enforcing the rules.

In addition to the reformatting changes, a number of substantive revisions have been included. Below is a summary of each chapter, including highlights of key revisions:

1. Definitions.

Certain definitions have been added, such as Private Structure, Marina, and Encroachment.

2. Boating.

Various federal and state laws that apply to the operation of vessels on Lake Conroe are referenced, and in some cases additional clarifications are added. Language has been added to give law enforcement officers more authority to deal with amplified music and other noise that unreasonably disturbs the public.

3. Public Access and Use.

This section states the general rule that all portions of the reservoir and SJRA lands surrounding the reservoir are generally considered open to the public and clarifies the limited circumstances in which public access may be restricted.

4. Picnicking and Camping.

Clarifies that picnicking and camping is allowed on SJRA land in designated areas. Prohibits certain nuisance activities such as littering and burning refuse. Also prohibits glass containers on SJRA land. Prohibits the conspicuous public consumption of alcohol that unreasonably disturbs the public. States that natural resources, such as timber and gravel, may not be removed from SJRA land without prior written approval, and provides certain regulations for fires.

5. Fishing and Hunting; Firearms; Feral Animals.

Rules related to fishing, hunting, use of firearms, and commercial guide services have been clarified. Feeding of feral or wild animals on SJRA land is prohibited.

6. Encroachments.

This is a completely new chapter that addresses encroachments on the reservoir and SJRA lands. An encroachment is any structure, building, fence, or other fixture permanently placed on SJRA land. All encroachments will require a permit or other approval from SJRA, with the exception of easily removable items such as furniture, landscaping, and irrigation systems. Bulkheading on the lake has created an issue known as "bulkhead creep," which has led to the need to review bulkhead projects prior to construction. This chapter sets forth guidance for bulkheading and dredge/fill work.

7. Sanitary Conditions.

Clarifies that it is a violation of SJRA rules to violate a federal, state, or local law related to sanitary conditions and pollution control. Certain sanitary facilities on SJRA land are subject to permitting as an encroachment, and on-site sewage facilities (septic systems) are regulated by SJRA under a separate program.



8. Abandonment of Personal Property.

Clarifies how SJRA will process and dispose of personal property (typically boats and watercraft) that are abandoned on the reservoir. SJRA is not under an obligation to attempt to identify or locate the owner of abandoned personal property prior to removing and disposing of same.

9. Commercial Operations.

Clarifies SJRA's existing requirement that all commercial operations on Lake Conroe or on SJRA land must be permitted by SJRA. This allows SJRA to ensure that people operating commercial businesses on the reservoir are properly insured to protect the public.

10. Raw Water Use.

Clarifies SJRA's existing rule that any water withdrawn from Lake Conroe must be covered by a permit or contract from SJRA, except in the rare situation where a person has their own water right from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

11. Penalties and Enforcement.

Consolidates the penalty and enforcement provisions within existing rules.

You can find a copy of the Lake Conroe Rules and Regulations on the SJRA website at: www.sjra.net/lakeconroe, or you can pick one up at your local marina and various businesses around the lake. If you have any questions about the Rules, please contact the Lake Conroe Office at (936) 588-1111. ♦