



For the first time in four years, Lake Conroe has reached maximum capacity – 201 feet above mean sea level, or “full pool elevation.” It is hard to measure a body of water that is moving or being blown by the wind, so the reading fluctuates. Rainfall upstream drains from the Watersheds of the Upper San Jacinto River Basin and ultimately finds its way to Lake Conroe. This year, the total rainfall measured at the Lake Conroe dam is 12.7 inches. The “normal” year-to-date rainfall at this time of year is about 18.5 inches, so – even though the lake is full – we are still behind in terms of total rainfall.

This Lake level news has been welcomed by residents with lakefront homes, by local marine businesses and restaurants, and by people who enjoy boating and fishing on the lake. In the wake of the extreme drought of 2011, it is reassuring to know that it doesn't have to be a normal rainfall year for the Lake to fill up. Later during the hot, dry, and windy summer months, the Lake will lose about an inch to 1.5 inches of water a week through evaporation.

### **Just in time for Summer Fun!**

The lake is full just in time to enjoy summer recreation! But keep in mind that obstacles like stumps or rocks that were previously visible 4-5 inches above the water are now submerged -- BELOW the surface – so boaters and swimmers need to keep



safety in mind at all times.

According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, there are more than half a million registered boats in Texas, ranking number 6 in the country. This shouldn't be surprising; Texas has more square miles of inland water than any other state! Texas Game Wardens and Marine Safety Enforcement Officers have the responsibility to enforce recreational boating safety laws and regulations. For example, they issue citations to boaters for not having sufficient lifejackets on board and when they encounter boats with children under the age of 13 not wearing a lifejacket. Sadly, about 85 percent of boating fatality victims were not wearing life jackets.

Also of major concern are incidents of Boating While Intoxicated (BWI). Alcohol plays a role in at least 50 percent of all boating accidents (BOAT US). A “typical” boating accident fatality involves an open motorboat; takes place on a weekend between noon and 7 pm; the victim falls overboard; and the operator of the boat is between 25-50 years old. During 2013, there were 206 boating accidents in Texas, with 85 fatalities and 209 cases of BWI.

### **Boating Safety Tips...**

- Make sure that youngsters understand the difference between a pool and natural bodies of water. Rivers and lakes can have currents, hidden hazards and undertow that can impact even a good swimmer.
- Swim only in designated areas.
- Everyone on a boat should wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket..no exceptions.
- Do not mix boating and alcohol...period.
- Keep a phone handy in case of emergency.
- If boating is a sport your family enjoys, and there are youngsters who will be on or near water, take the time to learn infant and child CPR. This important skill is taught by local hospitals, fire and EMS departments.

**Have a safe and wonderful summer!**