

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SJRA Making Preparations for Heavy Rainfall at Lake Conroe**

With current forecasts predicting anywhere from 10 to 15 inches of rainfall in the Lake Conroe watershed, SJRA employees are implementing their standard procedures for a heavy rainfall event, including establishing 24-hour work schedules, testing all equipment, positioning generators and fuel, and otherwise preparing for emergency operations.

Anyone interested in monitoring Lake Conroe levels, releases, rainfall totals, or stream flows can visit [www.sjra.net](http://www.sjra.net) and click on the link for “Lake and River Conditions.” This link can be found near the top right corner of the home page where current lake conditions are listed. We will also post press releases and other updates on our home page.

During major events such as this, SJRA receives numerous calls asking whether we might pre-release water from Lake Conroe. SJRA never pre-releases water from Lake Conroe prior to a storm event for numerous reasons.

- First, in order to pre-release water at a reasonably safe rate (so that it doesn't cause flooding downstream), it would take weeks to accomplish enough drop in lake level to have any hope of buffering a major storm event.
- Second, if we did try to pre-release in advance of a storm, we would be artificially filling the river downstream and adding water to Lake Houston. If the heavy rains fell in other watersheds (which is highly likely given the relatively small size of our watershed), then we would have pre-filled the west fork of the river and Lake Houston, which could exacerbate downstream flooding problems.
- Third, if we pre-released and ended up not receiving significant rainfall in our watershed, then we would have drained critical supplies of stored water from Lake Conroe.
- Meteorologists simply cannot precisely predict how much and exactly where it is going to rain with enough notice (several weeks) to allow a safe pre-release from a reservoir.
- Dam operators strictly adhere to gate operating protocols designed by their engineers, and pre-releasing is inconsistent with those protocols for the reasons stated above.

Another question SJRA frequently receives is whether releases from the Lake Conroe dam are the cause of downstream flooding. This is a common misconception. In actuality, the operational guidelines for Lake Conroe are designed to ensure that the peak rate of flow released from the dam is LOWER than what would have occurred if the dam had not been built. So even

though Lake Conroe was not designed for flood control, the Lake Conroe dam has significantly REDUCED downstream flooding for every major storm in the watershed since it was constructed in 1973. For example, during the 2016 Memorial Day flood event, the peak inflow coming into Lake Conroe was over 90,000 cubic feet per second, but the peak release from the dam was only 22,000 cfs. By allowing Lake Conroe's level to rise during the event, the peak flow going down the river is reduced.

For additional information visit our website at [www.sjra.net](http://www.sjra.net) or like SJRA on Facebook @SanJacintoRiverAuthority