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Lake O' the Pines beaches remain closed for E coli

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By Glenn Evans gevans@news-journal.com |

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers could know by Thursday whether beaches and campgrounds closed by can reopen at Lake O' the Pines, the reservoir manager reported Monday.

Seven designated swimming areas closed this past Friday after routine sampling revealed bacteria levels be lake manager Bobby Hamrick said.

No illnesses or other physical harm have been reported to the Corps of Engineers, which built and oversee

There also are no health implications for Longview, Lone Star, Hughes Springs or other cities that drink w:

"In terms of water supply, it's of no significance to Longview and our (customer network) cities," Northeast Supply District Manager Walt Sears said. "Our water treatment for both (customer groups) require that the use chlorine or some disinfectant that treats the water."

The closed areas are Sandy Beach and Long Beach, the Brushy Creek, Alley Creek and Johnson Creek c: at Shady Grove and Johnson Creek.

Hamrick said the ban affects only shoreline activity. The standard for banning offshore much higher than c onshore decisions, he said.

"The guidelines for the water is 10 times what they are for the beach area," Hamrick said. "(Bacterial) org are in the water all the time."

He said 70 new shoreline samples were taken early Monday.

"We will review those, and if they are within state standards we'll reopen the beach (in the sample)," he said. "We will go in until we find that the numbers are good."

He estimated learning results of Monday's tests by Thursday, when the Fourth of July weekend will still be

"I know it, I know it — everybody wants to get in the water," he said. "(Testing) is generally a four-day pr

Meanwhile, he stressed that only shoreline recreation is curtailed.

"The fish are still the same, the skiing, boating — all the other recreation are the same," Hamrick said. "We will report it."

The closed areas comprise all of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designated swimming areas. Other shallow waters, have a different threshold for such alerts to be enacted because they don't draw Hamrick said.

The corps does not test other shoreline areas, though staff with the Texas Commission on Environmental Conservation up and down Lake O' the Pines as part of the Clean Rivers Program and other initiatives. No other closings in those channels.

Sears and Hamrick credited heavy rains two weeks ago with washing bacteria found throughout the region. Litter and other residue from local confined animal production historically have been primary sources of pollution in Big Cypress Creek Watershed including Lake O' the Pines.

"That kind of heavy rainfall will migrate dirt that has bacteria in it," Sears said, adding that rising temperatures can help bacteria. "So it's a normal thing to see bacteria go up if you have rains and elevated temperatures. Just remember that bacteria is the beginning of the food chain."

Lyda Edwards, co-owner of Johnson Creek Marina on the north shore of the lake, welcomed news that the lake is open.

"That makes a big difference," she said. "All of our boats were supposed to be gone (Sunday), but we had to stay because they were scared. ... We were having cancellations for the Fourth of July, people are scared to death that the lake is closed."

The lake manager acknowledged rumors breaking in the wake of the closings.

"This only affects the beach area where you have a lot of water contact from recreation, where you actually swim."

More about Bacteria

- **IMAGE:** Lake O' the Pines beaches remain closed for E coli

More about Swimming

- **IMAGE:** Lake O' the Pines beaches remain closed for E coli