



NEWS RELEASE

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ARMY CORPS STRESSES “WEAR IT!” LIFE JACKET CAMPAIGN ON LAKES/RIVERS

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA – Traditionally, Memorial Day marks the beginning of the summer boating and swimming season and generally coincides with the time when the number of drowning deaths increases. However, this year’s numbers are different—and not in a good way.

“The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District recorded three drowning deaths at Corps lakes on the Savannah River for the entire year in 2009,” said Ryan Hartwig, Natural Resources Program Manager for the [Savannah District](#). “The 2010 count is already at five, and the high season for recreation hasn’t even started.”

In 2008 (the latest statistics available) the U.S. Coast Guard received reports of nearly 5,000 boating accidents. Among those who drowned, nine out of 10 were not wearing life jackets.

Closer to home, in the past 10 years there have been 80 drowning deaths on Savannah River lakes. Only one person of that number wore a life jacket. “That’s 79 people who could still be here if they had taken one extra step,” Hartwig said.

Starting this weekend and throughout the season, the Corps urges people to combat the problem head on with their [“Wear It!” campaign](#) designed to get people into life jackets. “Take that one step when getting on, in or even near the water, and ‘Wear It!’” Hartwig said.

It could have made the difference for five people who won’t be sharing this summer on the Savannah River with their families.

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