



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For Immediate Release:
June 13, 2012
Release No. MA 2012-057

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Corps of Engineers to conduct visitor surveys at the Westville Lake Recreation Area this summer

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will conduct visitor surveys this summer at the Westville Lake Recreation Area in Sturbridge, Mass. This is part of a nationwide effort to survey visitors at more than 30 Corps-managed recreation areas. Visitors leaving these recreation areas will be asked about their length of stay and overall experience.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. Surveys at five New England sites in Massachusetts and Connecticut will be on various days and at various times between June 14, 2012 and Sept. 2, 2012: Westville Lake in Sturbridge, Mass.; West Hill Dam in Uxbridge, Mass.; Buffumville Lake in Charlton, Mass.; West Thompson Lake in Thompson, Conn.; and Mansfield Hollow Lake in Mansfield, Conn. Surveys at Westville will be at the Grand Trunk Trail trailhead parking lot, just outside the main vehicular entrance to the Park.

These surveys will provide the Corps with baseline information to be used for budgeting and planning purposes. The Corps hopes to learn more about visitor recreation habits to better plan for new trends in the way leisure time is spent at Corps sites. Findings will help ensure that recreation facilities at Corps lakes are operating efficiently to maximize visitor outdoor opportunities and enjoyment.

Interns from the Student Conservation Association will conduct the short interviews (less than 3 minutes) with visitors. The survey has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget. The Corps routinely conducts visitor interviews at its lakes and river projects in an effort to gauge visitors' experiences and concerns.

The Corps is the nation's largest federal provider of outdoor recreation, managing more than 400 lake and river projects in 43 states and hosting more than 370 million visits per year. With 90 percent of these recreation areas within 50 miles of metropolitan areas they provide a diverse range of outdoor activities close to home and to people of all ages. For more information on the survey and Corps recreation sites nationwide, visit www.corpslakes.us/visitorsurvey.

Westville Lake is on Wallace Road off Route 131 in Southbridge and Sturbridge. There are five miles of stream fishing along the trout-stocked Quinebaug River. The 23-acre lake supports bass,

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Westville Lake recreation area visitor survey/2-2-2-2-2

pickerel and perch. A boat ramp is available for use. The area also provides handicap accessible parking, restrooms, numerous picnic tables and charcoal grills. Ball fields, drinking water, boating and hunting areas are available for visitor enjoyment. Trails for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing also are available. The 1.8 mile Community trail is universally accessible and takes in scenic views of Westville Lake and Westville Dam. The completed 2.0-mile section of the Grand Trunk trail is fully handicapped accessible, one of only two such trails in the Sturbridge area. Two picnic shelters, 30x44-feet and 20x40 feet, can be reserved for a fee. Electrical power is available at both shelters.

Westville Lake dam is 560 feet long and 78 feet high and cost \$5.7 million to construct. Its lake can store an 11,100 acre-foot reservoir, which amounts to 3.6 billion gallons of water. It has prevented damages totaling \$53.7 million since it was placed in operation in 1962. The reservoir area offers fine recreational opportunities, including picnicking, fishing, hunting, canoeing, boating, and nature study and annually attracts more than 55,000 visitors. For more information on Westville Lake call (508) 347-3705 or access the website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/wvl/wvlhome.htm>.

The link to the summer survey schedule with times and locations is at: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Recreation/>. For more information about Corps recreation sites in New England District go to the website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>.

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