

US Army Corps of Engineers Life Jacket Policy Test

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Summary as of March 2011



US Army Corps of Engineers
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USACE Test - Three Regions



USACE Study Lakes

Region	Test Lakes	Control Lakes
Pittsburgh Test	Youghiogheny River Lake Shenango River Lake (All Western PA)	Berlin Lake (OH) Tygart Lake (WV)
Vicksburg Test	Grenada Lake Enid Lake Arkabutla Lake Sardis Lake (Mississippi)	Ross R. Barnett Reservoir Bay Springs Lake (Mississippi)
Sacramento Test	Pine Flat Lake (Central CA)	Millerton Lake (Central CA)

Policies by USACE Test Region

Site	Non-motorized	Boats Less than 16 feet	Boats 16-26 feet	Boats greater than 26 feet	Swimming
Pittsburgh District	Less than 16 feet	At all times	No policy	No policy	Non-swimmers
Vicksburg District	At all times regardless of size	At all times	When under main propulsion	No policy	When outside designated area
Sacramento District (Pine Flat Lake)	At all times regardless of size	At all times	When under main propulsion (with exception)	When under main propulsion (with exception)	When 100' from shore (Ca law)

But Why?

The test isn't about whether
life jackets save lives



WE KNOW THAT THEY HAVE IN THE
PAST and WILL IN THE FUTURE!



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Long Road to an *Informed* Decision

Situation

- Greater than 90% of recreational drowning victims pulled from Corps waters were found WITHOUT life jackets



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Long Road to an *Informed* Decision

Observation

- Almost ALL of our accident victims would have had a greater chance of survival if they had been wearing a life jacket.



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The Arguments: Life Jacket Wear Requirements...

...imply that water-based recreation is unsafe

*nearly 2,000 people who died on Corps waters since 1998 proves to Corps there are risks

...will kill water-based recreation

*it may impact it for a while, but tests to date prove otherwise; Vicksburg lakes visitation has increased during the test. Gas prices hitting \$5 or more per gallon may do more harm



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The Arguments: Life Jacket Wear Requirements...

...take away personal freedom of choice
*just about life jacket wear on regulated waters; regulation is one of the "tools" granted to the Corps to minimize recreation risk

...reek of 'Big Brother Watching You'

*...we probably are anyway (tongue in cheek); recreation risk management is a priority



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The Arguments:

...Corps stats do not show a significant number of fatalities: on average 150/year over last decade

REALLY? Not significant?



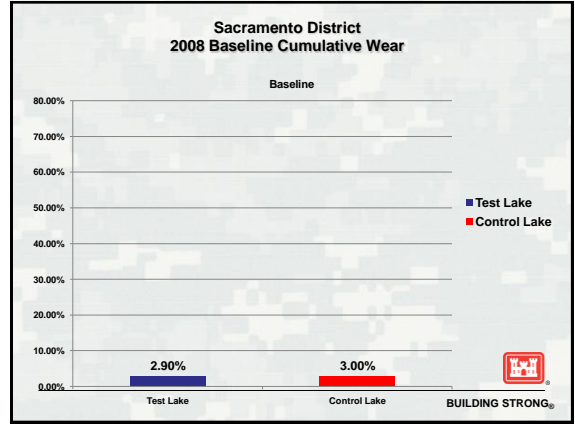
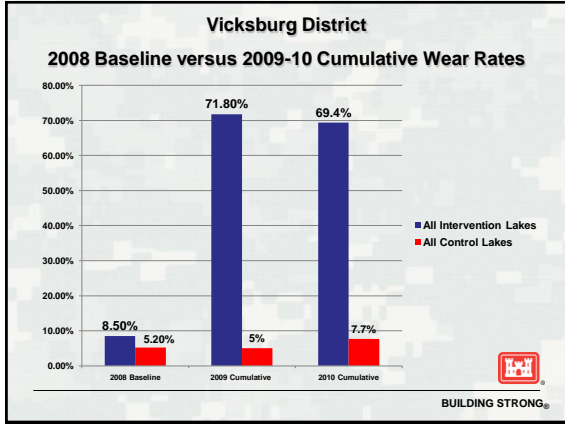
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The test allows us to know more **BEFORE** we make a decision

- Management challenges
- Two-sides of the coin
- Parameters that make sense
 - IF policy – what?
- Changes in wear behaviors



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The test has allowed us to educate on life jacket options



Safe



Safe AND comfortable
AND fashionable

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Test wrap up 2011

- Compile 3-year report and determine final recommendations for leadership
- Host a partners/stakeholders' informational meeting for pre-Command briefing discussion
- Conduct Commander/leadership briefing, with final recommendations

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