



# Cottage Grove and Dorena lakes Alcohol Ban

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

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On Jan.1, 2011, the Corps implemented an alcohol ban at all Corps-owned land and water sites at Cottage Grove and Dorena lakes, including Riverside Park and Schwarz Campground. In addition, Lane County Parks implemented the alcohol ban at their facilities at Dorena Lake, including Baker Bay Park. The goal of the alcohol ban is to improve public and employee safety, recreation quality, and resource allocation and protection.

Alcohol bans or restrictions at other federal recreation areas have resulted in a more family-friendly atmosphere, with reduced number of complaints related to alcohol abuse. In addition, alcohol bans reduce incidents of impaired judgment and unruly behavior that create safety risks for the public, Corps park rangers and law enforcement officers. The alcohol ban at Cottage Grove and Dorena lakes will allow the Corps and local law enforcement agencies to reasonably balance efforts and resources across the Willamette Valley, rather than spending an inordinate amount of time in a few concentrated areas where alcohol usage has been a problem.

For more information, please see the questions and answers on the next page, or contact the Corps of Engineers Park Ranger office at 541-942-5631.



# Cottage Grove and Dorena lakes Alcohol Ban Questions and answers

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**1. Why is the Corps implementing an alcohol ban at Cottage Grove and Dorena lakes?**

A two year study determined that a significant proportion of incidents at Cottage Grove and Dorena Lakes were alcohol related. Many incidents that Corps rangers, contract employees, and law enforcement officers deal with on a regular basis - litter, vandalism, boating accidents, injuries, and late night disturbances - have alcohol as a contributing factor. These incidents take up a disproportionate amount of staff time and limit the rangers' ability to provide a balanced level of visitor assistance and stewardship across the Willamette Valley.

**2. Why didn't the Corps ask the public about the alcohol ban?**

The decision to ban alcohol was not made lightly and involved research, analysis and open communication with local government entities over a two-year period. The Corps began analyzing incidents in 2008 and identified alcohol as a common contributing factor. Ultimately, this safety-driven issue was a management decision, made to better protect lives, property and ensure a quality recreation experience.

**3. How will an alcohol ban benefit visitors to the lakes?**

In recent years, the Corps documented numerous incidents where customers were negatively impacted by alcohol abuse. For example, campers often complain that a rowdy drinking party in the campground kept them and their children awake late into the night. Another concern is that intoxicated people boating on the lakes pose safety risks to other boaters and themselves. With an alcohol ban, the recreation areas will be cleaner, quieter and safer.

**4. Won't prohibiting alcohol punish the law-abiding citizens also?**

The alcohol ban may have an impact on visitors that drink responsibly while in our facilities. However, these visitors are currently being impacted by inappropriate behavior, litter and vandalism associated with alcohol. Opportunities to boat, fish, and camp will improve for all visitors with a decrease in alcohol related incidents.

**5. Why don't you just arrest intoxicated people who cause disturbances or act unsafely?**

Arresting numerous intoxicated people is not possible with current resources and funding. Implementing an alcohol ban will address the root cause of these types of problems, rather than ineffectively treating the symptoms.

**6. When will the ban go into effect?**

Implementation and enforcement began on Jan. 1, 2011.

**7. Will the ban be extended to other lakes in the Valley?**

Right now, this ban applies only to Cottage Grove and Dorena Lakes.



# Cottage Grove and Dorena lakes Alcohol Ban Questions and answers (cont'd)

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## **8. How will an alcohol ban be enforced?**

As with other regulations, the ban will be enforced consistently and fairly in all recreation areas during routine patrols of Cottage Grove and Dorena Lakes. Initially, if a ranger or other law enforcement officer observes a visitor in possession of alcohol on Corps lands, in most cases the visitor will be asked to voluntarily comply with the regulation by removing the alcohol from the area or pouring it out. If a visitor does not comply, the visitor may be evicted and/or receive a citation.

## **9. Won't it take more resources and cost more money to enforce the ban?**

Other Corps lakes around the nation have implemented alcohol bans and the change in policy required some extra initial resources to educate the public and enforce the ban. However, once visitors to these lakes understood that alcohol was no longer permitted, fewer resources were required to enforce the ban. In addition, the reduction in alcohol-related incidents resulted in reduced costs and higher customer satisfaction.

## **10. Won't there be economic impacts to the area as a result of the alcohol ban?**

The Corps understands that recreation opportunities at the lakes provide significant economic benefits to the local community. In order to continue providing these opportunities and benefits, the Corps needs to address safety issues and manage operational costs. While the alcohol ban may change visitor spending habits in the area, customers who value safe, clean, and family-friendly facilities will continue to visit the Corps lakes.

## **11. Can you give an example of another lake where a ban was successful?**

- New Mexico, Abiquiu Lake (Corps)
- West Virginia, Sutton Lake (Corps)
- Kentucky, Dewey Lake (Corps)
- Mississippi, Sardis Lake (Corps)
- Pennsylvania, Blue Marsh Lake (Corps)
- Georgia, Hartwell and Lake Sidney Lanier (Corps)
- Iowa, Saylorville Lake (Corps)
- Oregon, Oxbow Regional Park, (Metro Regional Govt)
- Oregon, Sand Lake Recreation Area and Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, Siuslaw National Forest, U.S. Forest Service.
- Several lakes in Kansas City District (Corps)