



## **Barnett Reservoir Spillway Recreation Area to become permit-only area Dec. 1**

In an attempt to curb a continuing problem of litter and vandalism in a popular fishing area of Barnett Reservoir, the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District Board of Directors voted Thursday to make the Spillway Recreation Area a permit-only park beginning Dec. 1.

The PRVWSD is a state agency that oversees operation of the 33,000-acre lake near Jackson. The spillway area is a unique and very productive fishery that has been enjoyed by fishermen since Barnett Reservoir's opening in 1965.

"We hate it has come to this, but we have to create some feeling of accountability among our users to end this problem," said Reservoir Director John Sigman. "We've looked at it from every angle and have invited input from our users, but the litter situation has not improved, and this has to change. It's not just an environmental problem but also a safety issue with so much litter on the rocks."

Barnett Reservoir will be creating a free daily registration system on both sides of the Pearl River below the dam, similar to the daily check-in stations used by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks at that agency's system of Wildlife Management Areas. There will be no fee associated with the permit cards at the Spillway.

Daily users over the age of 16 will be required to obtain a permit form at one of the stations, and immediately fill out the registration card before recreating. While still in the design phase, each perforated card is expected to have three parts, with one to be left in clear view on the dashboard, one to be placed in a box at one of the permit stations prior to recreating, and a third smaller tab to be carried by the user during his or her visit.

While the permit requirement will be a PRVWSD policy to start, the Board directed the staff to begin the process of making the system a regulation. After that 90-day process, it will become a law that carries a maximum of a \$100 fine.

“From a safety standpoint, part of the information we’ll be getting off the dashboard card is a cell phone number that we can use to reach people in an emergency,” said Reservoir Police Chief Trevell Dixon. “There are times when people need to be notified that we are anticipating a rising river that will require the removal of vehicles from the parking lot on the northwest side.”