

Gator Tales



Volume 12 Issue 37

Newsletter Date: Spring 2024

A newsletter for the citizens of the PRVWSD community

The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District

Happenings around the Rez

Beetle Infested Evergreen Trees

If you take a drive around the Barnett Reservoir, you will notice large numbers of brown evergreen trees. The extreme heat and drought that we experienced this past summer and fall weakened and stressed evergreens, mostly pine trees, causing them to be susceptible to beetle attacks. PRVWSD acted quickly to implement a plan to cut dead and dying pine trees in campgrounds and parks to protect guests and visitors and to prevent further spread. So far, 714 pine trees have been harvested on PRVWSD property. Our harvesting plan is still evolving as the generally warm winter weather we have experienced this season has allowed the beetles to remain active.



This problem is not unique to the Reservoir area. It extends, in varying degrees, throughout the entire state and is a major concern to the forestry and timber industries. 12.5 million trees have died statewide.

We realize that there are also many damaged trees on leased property. Unfortunately, PRV is generally restricted from performing services that we do not charge a fee for on leased property. If you are concerned that a tree on your leased property could be infected with pine beetles, we encourage you to contact your local Extension Office at extension.msstate.edu.

If you are not sure whether a tree is on leased property, unleased PRV property, or a third party's property, please email us at comments@therez.ms.

Please feel free to email us with any other questions as well.



Bob Anthony Parkway Relocation Project Update

On Thursday evening, February 15, 2024, PRVWSD held a second public hearing to take comments and answer questions on the proposed Bob Anthony Parkway Relocation Project. Pursuant to the environmental guidelines applicable to the grant, which is paying for the design phase, PRVWSD was required to hold two public meetings. Below are some questions that we have received, along with our answers.

Q: What is the Bob Anthony Parkway?

A: The Bob Anthony Parkway is that section of Spillway Road that extends from the intersection with Breakers Lane in Ridgeland to the intersection with Old Fannin Road in Rankin County. The Bob Anthony Parkway is located for most of its length on the main dam of the Barnett Reservoir. Local residents also refer to this stretch of roadway as Upper and Lower Spillway Roads.

Q: What is PRVWSD proposing to do with Bob Anthony Parkway?

A: We are proposing to relocate all four lanes of traffic that currently cross the earthen dam south to a location beyond the existing water-filled ditches and the power lines, when funding becomes available.

Q: Why should the lanes be moved?

A: Removal of through traffic will allow PRVWSD to better inspect and maintain the structure of the dam and spillway. It will remove potential hazards to the City of Jackson water supply posed by the possibility of vehicles and their cargo accidentally entering the Reservoir. It will reduce the likelihood of an attack on critical infrastructure. Additionally, it will add resilience to the area's transportation system by allowing traffic to continue unimpeded when maintenance work on the dam or spillway requires closure of the existing roads.

Q: What will happen to the current four lanes if new lanes are built?

A: They would continue to be maintained and used for operation and maintenance of the dam and spillway. PRVWSD also plans to modify them to allow additional recreational activities on portions of the dam. Current plans include keeping the existing bike path lanes on the dam. Other recreational uses under consideration are fishing, walking/jogging, and sightseeing.

Q: Will there be negative impacts to fishing or the environment?

A: The two existing fishing and boat launching facilities located along the river below the spillway will remain in operation. Planners are developing the design of the project with the intent to keep all construction, including bridge support piers, out of the river. Plans will also be tailored to minimize the impacts on sensitive habitat areas such as wetlands. As part of the environmental assessment that is about to conclude, the plans have been reviewed by the Department of Environmental Quality, Wildlife Fisheries and Parks, EPA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Archives and History, and Army Corps of Engineers.

Q: How will the project be funded?

A: Total costs for this relocation project are estimated at approximately \$150 million. Currently, no funding has been secured.



Pelahatchie Bay Alligator Season

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) will offer 24 alligator hunting permits for Pelahatchie Bay during May 2024. Last year was the first year hunting permits were offered in Pelahatchie Bay. Twenty-two alligators were harvested.

This alligator hunting season is set during the breeding season and prior to the emergence of aquatic vegetation that restricts boating access. This hunt is an effort to try to reduce breeding populations of female alligators.

There will be two hunting periods: May 3-6 and May 10-13. For more information about the draw process and regulations, please visit mdwfp.com.



Tracking Water Usage, Made Easy



EyeOnWater

Have you ever wondered how much water you're using or how your current usage compares to past usage? When you download the free EyeOnWater app, which is available for both iPhone and Android devices, you'll be able to keep an eye on your usage and be alerted if any leaks occur.

All you need is your 15-digit account number, which can be found on the lower left corner of your bill. Once you register, you can immediately begin tracking your usage in real time. For more information, call 601-856-6574.

2024 Scheduled Events at The Rez

3/28	Sunset Concert	BCP
4/13	Crawfish (tentative)	BCP
4/25	Sunset Concert	BCP
5/3	Keep the Rez Beautiful Great American Cleanup	BCP
5/4	Natchez Trace Century Ride	OTP
5/10	Pepsi Pops	OTP
5/30	Sunset Concert	BCP
6/8	Father/Son Fishing	OTP
6/29	Independence Day Celebration	OTP/BCP
8/17	Lantern Festival	OTP
9/22	Pinelake Baptism	BCP
9/26	Sunset Concert	BCP
10/11-13	CelticFest	BCP
10/24	Sunset Concert	BCP



OTP - Old Trace Park / BCP - Bobby Cleveland Park at Lakeshore / PSP - Pelahatchie Shore Park / SP - Spillway Road / FL - Fannin Landing

ML - Madison Landing / RR - Rankin County Boat Ramp / TBD - To Be Determined



P. O. Box 2180
Ridgeland, MS 39158
Phone: 601-856-6574
Fax: 601-856-2585
E-mail: jmcmurtrey@therez.ms

PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
JACKSON, MS
PERMIT # 573

GET CONNECTED!

To receive texts about road closures, dredging updates, boil water alerts, and other important news around the Rez, text Madison or Rankin to 833-205-7575, or scan the QR codes with your phone!

A shortcut to enrollment



Rankin County QR

1. Use your smart phone's camera to take a picture of the QR code for Madison County (right) or Rankin County (left). Your phone will be directed to enter the county name in a text to the correct number.
2. Hit "Send" and the enrollment process will begin.



Madison County QR

Support the Barnett Reservoir Foundation with License Plates

Over 2,000 vehicles now bear the Reservoir Tag, the proceeds of which benefit the Barnett Reservoir Foundation. The Foundation serves as a non-profit support group for PRVWSD and the Reservoir community.

The Foundation funds projects and events around the Reservoir, most notably the Independence Day Celebration fireworks displays at Old Trace Park and Bobby Cleveland Park at Lakeshore.

Other events include the Sunset Concert Series, Food Truck Frenzies, crawfish boils, and others.



The license plate provides free admission to PRVWSD parks and many Foundation events.