

Clean Marinas Promoted in Cumberland River Basin

By Mr. David S. Treadway

The Nashville District, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), is implementing a Clean Marina Program (CMP) for the Cumberland River Basin and becomes one of the first USACE districts in the nation to sponsor such a program. The program allows marina operators to certify that they are environmentally conscious and are attempting to go above and beyond what is required by law and regulations and within their lease requirements.

Then Major General (P) Carl A. Strock, now Chief of Engineers, endorsed the program in a May letter to division and district commanders while he was Director of Civil Works: "Building on the solid foundation of our Environmental Operating Principles and in implementation of our Civil Works Strategic Plan, the Corps of Engineers strongly endorses the Clean Marina Program and encourages all districts to share information on the program with their lessees and recreation partners."

Originally developed in coastal states to address nonpoint source pollution under the Coastal Zone Act Re-authorization Amendments of 1990, CMPs have been adopted or are being developed by 18 states, the District of



Columbia, and several federal agencies. With 456 lakes around the United States, USACE (with agency partners) is the largest provider of marinas east of the Mississippi River.

The program is designed to help marina operators protect the very resource that provides them with their livelihood. It also encourages boater education, increased coordination among state agencies, and better communication of existing laws.

Two Cumberland River Basin Marinas—Willow Grove Marina at Dale Hollow and Green Turtle Bay Marina at Lake Barkley—will serve as models for the certification process. Other marinas at Old Hickory Lake and J. Percy Priest Lake have expressed interest in the

program. Officials opened the program to all interested marina operators during the Kentucky and Tennessee Marinas Association meeting in November.

The Nashville District's program is a model of cooperation. Many partnering agencies worked closely to draft the guidebook and certification checklist. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Water Pollution Control, and the Cumberland River Compact reviewed the guidebook and checklist, providing valuable suggestions for improvement. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency reviewed the program and gave permission to use the agency's logo in the package.

Marina operators must take a number of steps to attain certification. They first sign a pledge and commit to controlling pollution and erosion at their facility and to promoting water protective behavior with the boating public. Next, they familiarize themselves with the program guidebook and accompanying checklist. With that checklist, they conduct a self-assessment and invite the lake resource manager to visit and endorse the marina for the program. The checklist covers a wide variety of related questions in seven critical areas: sewage management; oil and gas control; solid waste and petroleum recycling/disposal; vessel maintenance and repair; marina siting, design, and maintenance; storm water management and erosion control; and public education and water safety.

CMPs are entirely voluntary. Certification means that marinas can display a certificate and Cumberland River Basin Clean Marina flag, indicating their new status. Recognition in press releases and promotions can then follow. If desired, recertification is completed every five years. If a marina changes hands, the new owners can go through the process to be certified as a clean marina. 

Mr. Treadway is a public affairs specialist with the Nashville District, USACE. He is retired from the US Marine Corps. He was General H. Norman Schwartzkopf's Public Affairs Chief during the Gulf War in 1990.

Photo by David S. Treadway



High School students work at Conley Bottom Marina on Lake Cumberland to help rid the lake of garbage.