



May 23, 2023

September 17, 2022 Boating Accident Findings and Response

The Appomattox River Water Authority (ARWA) operates Lake Chesdin as a surface water impoundment that provides potable drinking water to five members: Chesterfield County, Dinwiddie County, Prince George County, the City of Colonial Heights, and the City of Petersburg. All five members acknowledge the importance of balancing a potable water resource with recreational use. Therefore, when an incident occurs on the lake, the ARWA Board of Directors and staff review all associated reports and findings to determine if there are additional navigational aids or warnings that need to be installed or ordinances considered so that a similar occurrence does not happen in the future.

On September 17, 2022, there was a fatal boating accident on Lake Chesdin. Unfortunately, two individuals were thrown into the water and lost their lives. We would like to take a moment to remember these individuals and convey our deepest sympathies, thoughts, and prayers to their families.

Multiple agencies participated in this investigation with the lead agency being the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). The findings from the investigation were completed in late April and forwarded to the Dinwiddie Commonwealth Attorney's Office since the accident occurred on the Dinwiddie County side of the lake. No further action is being taken.

The ARWA Board of Directors and staff reviewed the findings and held additional discussions with DWR staff. The report and follow up discussions established that sight distance and lake conditions did not contribute to the cause of the accident. No recommendations were made for additional navigational aids or new lake ordinances to increase safety.

To be proactive, the ARWA Board of Directors instructed staff to perform the following tasks:

- Post the maximum speed limit at all public access ramps. The maximum speed limit by ordinance on the lake is 45 mph. The speed limit signs have been installed.
- Develop information for the ARWA website, [www.arwava.org](http://www.arwava.org) and signage with QR codes to be posted at public access points to make lake ordinances and boating safety requirements available to boaters as they access the lake. Information should include:
  - Locations of DWR permitted NO Wake zones (detail on a map):

- DWR public boat ramp (Dinwiddie side)
  - Whipponock marina (Dinwiddie side)
  - Seven Springs marina (Chesterfield side)
  - Entrance to Eagle Cove (Chesterfield side)
  - Cattle Creek at Chesdin Landing (Chesterfield side)
  - Whipponock Creek – under review (Dinwiddie side)
- Exclusionary zone requirements. No boats allowed within 500’ of the dam. (show on a map)
  - The posted 45 mph maximum speed limit.
  - A link to boater safety information.
  - Contact information if someone observes something on the lake. “See something, say something.”

This task is under development.

In addition to DWR, the Chesterfield County Police Department, Dinwiddie Sheriff’s Office and the State Police provide enforcement support on the lake. The Chesterfield County Police Department is providing additional boat patrols and speed limit enforcement on weekends and holidays.

We hope everyone who enjoys a day on the water will continue to do so. We encourage boat passengers to wear life jackets and be familiar with safe boating operations. We thank everyone for their continued protection and safe use of this valuable water resource and recreational amenity.