

Dry land abandoned for water sports

By Mike Reilly

Mother Nature has turned her other cheek and the mercury has begun rising to the top of the thermometers in the Capitol City, many Lincoln citizens are putting away their snow boots, parkas and cross country skis and are diving for the much cooler recreational activity of water sports.

Before the prospective water skier, scuba diver, or wind surfer hits the H₂O, they should stop and ask themselves the following questions: Am I properly trained for this activity? Should I buy or rent my equipment? Where are the best places to go? What safety rules should I know about?

Safety and training are the two most important aspects of water sports. Holmes Lake Marina offers free instruction in wind surfing, sailboating and canoeing. According to Marina Head Manager Todd Halle, a person can receive a three-hour course in sailboating or a six-hour class in windsurfing just by preregistering. Halle said even if someone doesn't register, the Marina will still provide 15 or 20 minutes worth of instruction.

Instruction is not the only aspect of learning a water sport. For example, Halle said a novice wind surfer needs four things before beginning: A high-wind sail which is easy to manipulate, the ability to swim, a 5 to 10 mph wind and proper instruction.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers an outdoor educational workshop that begins in April and runs through August. A section of the workshop is devoted to water safety and deals mainly with powerboating.

A home study program also is available through Parks and Recreations. Study packets are mailed out to interested peoples, followed by a mail-in test. If a person receives a score of 90 percent or better on the test, they receive a certificate which can be used to save 10 percent on insurance.

Paul Horton, Outdoor Education Division Chief at Parks and Recreations, said the most important aspect of boating safety is to use common sense. In the last two weeks, four boat-related drownings occurred in Nebraska. Horton said the drownings would have been prevented if a life jacket had been worn. "People don't bother to think about using a jacket," Horton said. "That is something we emphasize in our courses."

Nebraska averages five drownings, 35 to 40 boating accidents, and \$50,000 to \$60,000 worth of property damage a year, Horton said.

Purchasing water equipment can be confusing as well as expensive. Wind surfers should expect to pay around \$900 for a beginning board or as much as \$1,200 for state-of-the-art equipment.

Water skiers also run up a tab buying accessories. Besides a motorboat and tow line, skis, vests and wet suits can add up to more than \$600. Slalom skis range in cost between \$150 and \$400 while combos run from \$100 up to \$175. A good wet suit costs around \$150 and a vest is in the \$30 to \$40 price range.

Renting equipment is a practical way to enjoy water sports. Holmes Lake rents sailboats and wind surfers at \$10.25 for the first hour plus a \$5 deposit. Canoes and paddle boats can be borrowed for a \$2 deposit and a \$5.25 charge for the first hour.

Local swimming holes offer relief from heat

By Lori Griffin

Swimming is almost as American as "Mom, apple pie and Chevrolet." Almost everyone does it at one time in their life but it can only be done outside during one season, and this is it — summer!

Although there are many lakes surrounding Lincoln, not all of them allow swimming. Those that do allow swimming include: Louisville Lakes, Two Rivers, Wagon Train, Fremont Lakes, Alexandria, Rockford Lake, Blue Stem, Pawnee and Branched Oak. All are within a one-hour drive of Lincoln.

In order to swim at the lakes, a parking permit must be purchased. They can be obtained at any Games and Parks vendors or they can be requested upon entrance to the park. The cost is \$10 dollars annually or \$2 for each visit to the park.

"I would advise everyone to purchase a permit prior to entering the park because sometimes they do not sell them there," said Jim Fuller, an administrator with the Games and Parks commission.

The rules of the beach are posted. The basic rules at all of the area lakes prohibit swimming beyond buoys, bottles, fires and pets, fishing in the beach areas and swimming after 9 p.m.

There has only been one drowning within the past year. "The individual that drowned was on an ice boat and fell through the ice," Fuller said.

There are no lifeguards at the beaches so swimmers must be aware of the many dangers of the water. Hypothermia, becoming frozen in the water, is one of the most dangerous, according to Fuller.

Besides the lakes there are pools located both at the university and throughout the city of Lincoln.

City pools opened May 26, and will remain open through August 26.

Pools in Lincoln include Woods Park, 3200 J, Antelope, 2300 N (not open yet), Arnold Heights, 4000 N. 46, Hallard, 66th and Kearney, Belmont, 12th and Manatt, Eden Park, 46th and Antelope Creek Road, Irvingdale, 1900 Van Dorn, Meadow Heights Centennial, 900 West Avon Lane and Uni. Pool, 4900 Lexington.

There are four pools available for use on UNL's city campus although only two of them have open swimming. The pools are located at the Coliseum, Mabel Lee Hall, the Bob Devaney Sports Center and Abel-Sandoz residence hall.

Mabel Lee has no open swimming and is only open for classes during the first five week session. The sports center also does not have open swimming.

The Coliseum has open swimming during the noon hour from 11:30 until 2:30, according to Stan Campbell, campus recreation director. It is free of charge to students with current student I.D.'s.

Dorm residents and people attending camps can get in free, UNL students with student identification pay 50 cents and non-UNL students get in for 75 cents. The pool is open from 2 to 10 p.m. everyday.

Swimming is one of America's favorite pastimes and the Lincoln area provides many different opportunities to do it.

So go out, buy a new swimsuit and a favorite tanning oil, go to your favorite swimming hole and enjoy!

State lakes open shores for anglers

By Jeff Korbelik

Getting tired of putting your fishing hat and your waders on and standing in the yard casting your line in an empty bucket? The Salt Valley Lakes in Southeastern Nebraska offer recreational activity for both the novice and expert fisherman.

Wes Sheets, the assistant chief of the fisheries division within the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, said the Salt Valley Lakes district has nine major lakes and a series of smaller lakes. Branched Oak Lake, which is three miles north of Malcolm, is the largest of these. The lakes range from 20 to 1,800 acres and offer fishermen a large variety of fish.

The most common fish, Sheets said, are large-mouth bass, crappies, blue gill, walleye, and channel catfish. The crappies and channel catfish have largest populations and are the easiest to catch, Sheets said.

Catfish are stocked annually in the Salt Valley lakes and crappies reproduce quickly.

"The large mouth bass and the walleye are a quality type of species," Sheets said. "They require a lot better skills and knowledge of the fish."

The fisheries division is struggling to maintain the success variable for the fisherman, Sheets said.

"We are trying to satisfy a whole spectrum of fishermen and a whole variety of skill levels are involved," he said.

This year's spring weather has hindered fishing, Sheets said. To treat all fishermen fairly, he said, fishing success. Also, fishermen have to contend with changing water levels, the temperature and the

barometer of the water.

The variables have not dampened the hopes for about 225,000 Nebraskans who have bought fishing permits this year, Sheets said. That number accompanies the 60,000 permits bought by non-residents and 175,000 to 200,000 young people below the age of 16 who do not need a permit, Sheets said. Resident permits cost \$9.50.

"There is always a number of people who don't think they need a permit," Sheets said. "Sometimes I think half the people I see fishing on the lake are fishing illegally."

Keeping people within the bag and size limits poses another problem for the fisheries division, Sheets said. To treat all fisherman fairly, he said, people need to obey the rules.

Many Nebraskans leave the state and head north to what they think is better fishing, Sheets said. But, he said, people from Minnesota and Wisconsin come south to Nebraska to fish.

"We are getting an increasingly large number of calls from those states asking us where to fish in Nebraska," he said.

Out-of-state people as well as residents will find an abundance of crappie at Branched Oak Lake, Sheets said. Blue gill and large mouth bass are at their peak at Wagon Train, two miles east of Hickman. Yankee Hill, 2 1/2 miles east and one mile south of Denton, is filled with catfish.

Sheets recommended that the beginners get a more experienced fisherman to help them, or to watch others around them. Catching fish depends on how fishermen present their bait and how they fish.

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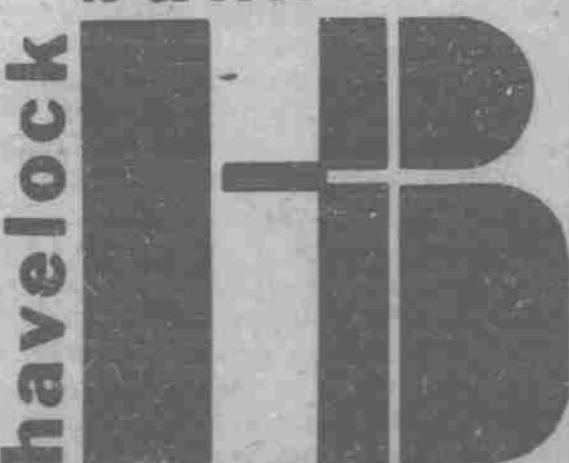
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