

IAG Recreation Vision Statement
for the Neely Henry Development

Much of the Neely Henry development is characterized by shallow, riverine like conditions, particularly upstream of Highway 77 (near the Rainbow City Marina) and the City of Gadsden. Boat navigation upstream of Highway 77 can be challenging due to shallower water and submerged stumps. Recreational opportunities in that area consist primarily of boat fishing. The lower portion of the reservoir (downstream of Highway 77) offers a broader variety of recreation opportunities including pleasure boating. Portions of the reservoir shoreline within the City of Gadsden offer urban recreation opportunities including day-use park areas and two shoreline boardwalk trails, one in Black Creek that provides wildlife viewing opportunities and one along the main body of the reservoir near the river boat landing.

The Neely Henry reservoir supports a very good spotted and largemouth bass fishery, as well as a crappie fishery. Recreation facilities to accommodate large fishing tournaments have been constructed on the reservoir in the City of Gadsden. These tournaments and other recreation activities associated with the reservoir support an important tourism industry for Gadsden. At times there can be considerable boat traffic traveling upstream and downstream to and from the major boat launching area in Gadsden, which is centrally located on the reservoir.

The long-term vision for the Neely Henry development is to protect and enhance its high quality fishery, to provide opportunities for the urban population located in the immediate vicinity of the reservoir, and to minimize potential conflicts between users of the reservoir.

Improvements to be considered at the Neely Henry development include:

- Protecting and enhancing public bank fishing access.
- Supporting efforts to expand shoreline trail opportunities, particularly in populated areas of the reservoir.
- Investigating public access and day-use needs along the eastern shoreline of the reservoir in the City of Ohatchee.
- Investigating opportunities to relocate the boat ramp at Ten Islands Park to separate day users and swimmers from boaters and alleviate parking conflicts.
- Investigating potential fishing pier opportunities associated with construction of a new bridge over Big Canoe Creek (utilize old bridge abutments for fishing).
- Address user conflicts (for example, at the County Rd 24 bridge over Palmetto Creek).
- Improving the safety of boat travel on the lake, particularly between Highway 77 and Gadsden.