

Recreation Vision Statement
For the Lewis-Smith Development

The Lewis-Smith Development provides a highly attractive natural setting with very good boating and fishing opportunities on the reservoir and unique fishing opportunities in the tailwater below the dam. The reservoir, which supports a trophy striped bass fishery, draws numerous out-of-state visitors and supports large bass fishing tournaments and businesses around the lake. The tailwater also supports the only year-round cold water trout fishery in the state.

The reservoir exhibits excellent water quality, particularly in the Sipsey Fork, much of which is located in the Bankhead National Forest and bordered by tracts of federal land. Portions of the Sipsey Fork have been designated as an Outstanding Natural Resource Water by the State as well as a national Wild and Scenic River. Development pressures around the lake are expected to result in continuing residential development of the shoreline. Over time this development will likely threaten water quality, impact scenic values and limit public access to the shoreline in some areas.

The long-term vision for the Lewis-Smith development is to recognize, protect and enhance the fishery, water quality, and recreational opportunities, while recognizing the need to protect aquatic communities supporting threatened, endangered and sensitive species of the reservoir and tailwater, and ensure adequate facilities and public access are provided. Given the size of the reservoir it is felt that it can continue to support a diversity of recreation opportunities.

Improvements to be considered at the Lewis-Smith Development include:

- Redesigning existing public shoreline facilities where necessary to accommodate higher spring reservoir levels and extending boat ramps to improve access at low water levels.
- Providing appropriate operations and maintenance of public recreation facilities.
- Optimizing the capacity of existing public recreation facilities to accommodate existing and future demand.
- Improving access and safety in the publicly accessible waters below the dam for bank angling and minimizing impacts of project operations on downstream recreation, recognizing the need to meet flood control, power generation, and downstream flow responsibilities at Smith.
- Protecting the existing character of the Sipsey Wild and Scenic River by discouraging motorized use within the Wild and Scenic River designated corridor.
- Managing lake level drawdowns so as to minimize the occurrence of surface elevations lower than 495' in the late summer and early fall.
- Ensuring public access areas for the non-boating public remain available along the shoreline.
- Development of new facilities if a proven need arises.