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PRV AND MDEQ ANNOUNCE INCREASED DISCHARGE FROM BARNETT RESERVOIR

Fresh water should help replenish oxygen in the Pearl River

(JACKSON, Miss.) – The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District (PRV) has temporarily increased the discharge from the Ross Barnett Reservoir to help the lower Pearl River recover from a massive fish kill. After discussions with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the PRV has increased the discharge to provide an increase of fresh water to help replenish oxygen in the Pearl River system and dilute remaining pollutants in the river. The discharge began Tuesday night, and the agencies estimate it will take several days for the water to reach the affected area. “We are grateful to the PRV for their assistance to help ease this tragedy on the Pearl River. MDEQ staff will monitor the release of water as it progresses south using existing stream gauges, and we may take some physical flow measurements as well. We are hopeful that we will see positive effects in the next few days,” said Trudy D. Fisher, MDEQ Executive Director. “Residents, boaters, and fishermen may notice a slight decrease in water levels, but we expect no significant impact on recreation, fishing, or water supply. We will return to normal discharge rates after we are able to determine the effects on the lower Pearl River,” said John Sigman, General Manager of the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District. MDEQ biologists, engineers, scientists, and emergency responders continue to actively monitor the fish kill that has killed hundreds of thousands of fish and mussels over a 35 to 40 mile stretch of the Pearl River from Bogalusa, Louisiana, downstream to the Mississippi Sound. The kill has severely damaged fishing and other water-based recreation in this portion of the river and has affected several threatened and endangered species including the Gulf Sturgeon, Ringed Sawback Turtles, and an endangered mussel.
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