



## COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

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Lake Pueblo State Park  
640 Pueblo Reservoir Road • Pueblo, Colorado 81005  
Phone: 719-561-9320 • FAX: 719-564-9455  
wildlife.state.co.us • parks.state.co.us

August 5, 2011

RE: Swimming at Lake Pueblo State Park

Dear Park Visitor,

Due to the noticeable increase in the amount of swimming and cliff diving occurring in and around Pueblo Reservoir, the two recent tragic deaths of illegal swimmers, and a significant increase in inquiries regarding swimming at Lake Pueblo State Park, I am providing this letter to help clarify the swimming regulations.

Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife Commission Regulation #100.B.14.a states, “It shall be prohibited for any person to swim in any waters under the control of the Division of Parks and Wildlife, except in areas designated for such use.” The only designated area for swimming is the Rock Canyon Swim Beach area located downstream of the dam. Swimming is prohibited in Pueblo Reservoir. Diving and rope swinging/jumping are strictly prohibited from and/or along the shorelines of Pueblo Reservoir and/or from the railroad trestle.

How is swimming defined? If a person is in the water and their feet are NOT touching the ground, they are swimming. Swimming is prohibited. If a person is in the water and their feet are touching the ground, they are wading not swimming. Wading is permitted. It is prohibited to be in the waters of Pueblo Reservoir for the purpose of swimming as defined above. Swimming close or next to a vessel or shoreline, having an observer on the vessel, displaying a warning (skier) flag, and/or wearing a PFD while swimming are NOT exceptions to the no swimming regulation.

There are exceptions for on the water sport activities. When a water skier, jet skier, knee boarder, sailboarder, kayaker, wake boarder, stand up paddle boarder, or other person engaged in another legal on the water sport activity falls into the waters of the reservoir during the course of their activity, swimming back to their vessel is permitted. The underwater sport activity of scuba diving is also permitted per regulation.

The no swimming regulation was enacted and has been in place since the early 1980’s to protect swimmers in the water from boaters, underwater hazards (rocks, trees, steep drop offs, fish hooks, etc) and high concentrations of bacteria that sometimes occur in reservoirs. The Rock Canyon Swim Beach is regularly tested for E. coli. Water in the reservoir is not tested and could contain high levels of E. coli, which can cause stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhea. The swim area at the Rock Canyon Swim Beach is free of underwater hazards, a little over one surface acre in size, is staffed with a park ranger,

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John W. Hickenlooper, Governor • Mike King, Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources  
Rick D. Cables, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Parks and Wildlife Commission: David R. Brougham • Gary Butterworth, Vice-Chair • Chris Castilian  
Dorothea Farris • Tim Glenn, Chair • Allan Jones • Bill Kane • Gaspar Perricone • Jim Pribyl • John Singletary  
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and the water depth is known and constant throughout the swim area which increases the likelihood of a quick and successful rescue. Pueblo Reservoir has many underwater hazards, is large (4,611 surface acres with 60 miles of shoreline when full) and the water depth varies throughout the reservoir. Park rangers are unable to watch over so large of an area which decreases the likelihood of a quick and successful rescue.

I hope this letter helps clarify the swimming regulations at Lake Pueblo State Park and you enjoy your visit.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bradley J. Henley  
Park Manager  
Lake Pueblo State Park  
Colorado Parks & Wildlife  
640 Pueblo Reservoir Road  
Pueblo, CO 81005

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