

# Dale Hollow Rangers Win Water Safety Award

by Dave Treadway

The Dale Hollow Lake Park Rangers were presented an Award of Merit by the National Water Safety Congress March 6 at the eleventh annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit in San Antonio, Texas. Outdoor Recreation Planner Carolyn Bauer accepted the award on behalf of the Rangers.

The award recognized the efforts by the Dale Hollow team in promoting water safety to reduce public accidents and fatalities. The park rangers focused on education, publicity and partnerships as ways to promote water safety by the visiting public.

They implemented a variety of programs that demonstrated a dedicated team effort focused on water safety.

The team coordinated a very special water safety event with the Macon County Football Team in 2006 as a kickoff for National Safe Boating Week. Rangers Jamie Summers and Mark Willis coached members of the football team on water safety and provided water safety materials. Wearing their blue and white football jerseys, team members talked to boaters and fishermen and distributed literature about the importance of boating safely and wearing life jackets. This was done in honor of team member Jonathan Hudson who drowned earlier in the year when he fell overboard from a 17-foot vessel while



Carolyn Bauer accepts awards March 6 from National Water Safety Congress Region Three Vice President Mac Wimbish.

boating with friends. The team's coach said after losing a friend and a valuable member of the team, the players wanted to honor Hudson by drawing attention to safe boating.

Environmental Protection Specialist Sondra Carmen implemented and coordinated the new Life Jacket Loaner Program at Dale Hollow Lake. She applied for and received a grant from Boat US Foundation to install a life jacket loaner program at both Lillydale and Obey River Campgrounds. This provided loaner life jackets for those who needed them and provided publicity for the important message to "Wear Your Life Jacket."

Direct on-site contacts exceeded 500, and off-site contacts nearly reached 1,800.

The rangers conducted numerous water safety programs for schools and community groups including 450 young people at Trooper Island Youth Camp, an event coordinated by Ranger Bobby Bartlett, in partnership with the Kentucky State Police. Water safety was also included in the program for the Environmental Education Camp. In partnership with the Friends of Dale Hollow Lake, the Dale Hollow staff conducted an Eagle Watch for members of the public, which included wearing life jackets as part of the program.

Rangers used a number of community events to distribute the water safety message. Exhibits with water safety materials were provided for the Overton County Fair, Overton County Agricultural Safety Day, Celina Health Fair, Tennessee Technology University Health Fair, and Cumberland River Hospital Health Fair.

They prominently displayed water safety brochures in the visitor center, put posters on bulletin boards, and posted a daily water safety message on the web.

Rangers, led by Greg Nivens, conducted more than 350 hours of water safety patrols during the summer recreation season, in partnership with the Kentucky State Po-



Dale Hollow Rangers (from left-front row) Greg Nivens, Bobby Bartlett, Brock Jones, (back row) Mark Willis, Jamie Summers, and Sondra Carmen.

lice and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. They performed numerous boating safety equipment checks during weekend patrols and rewarded youth with safety badges when they were found wearing lifejackets during inspections.

"Being both visual and accessible to the public," said Resource Manager Ronnie Smith, "by land and water are extremely important for the promotion of water safety. Our Ranger staff does an excellent job at this and the public definitely notices."

In partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, the rangers distributed water safety coloring books, crayons and other educational materials at the Dale Hollow Fishing Rodeo. More than 250 children and 500 adults were exposed to those materials at the event.

Five rangers participated in the field test of inflatable PFDs, the results of which may be announced before the 2007 recreation season begins. Nivens, Carmen, Willis and Ranger Brock Jones serve as instructors for the Motorboat Operator Training Program to provide safe boat operation across the District.

Bartlett serves on the District Water Safety Task Force to promote water safety and reduce public accidents and fatalities.

Rangers helped Conservation Biologist Dena Williams promote the Clean Marina Program, which resulted in Willow Grove Marina being the first in the District to qualify and earn the privilege of flying the Clean Marina Banner.