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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Completes Waterway Debris Removal at Neely Henry Lake

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) (USACE) on Monday completed its mission to remove debris that was the result of the devastating April 27 storms from Neely Henry Lake. The [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA) tasked USACE with the wet debris mission as part of the ongoing federal effort to assist the state of Alabama and its citizens in the recovery from the spring 2011 storms.

USACE contracted with local 8(a) firm TDR Construction Company, Inc., of Pelham, Ala., to complete the waterway debris removal. The contractor received the Notice to Proceed June 15, and removed the first load of debris June 19. A total of more than 5,000 cubic yards of debris, which included trailer frames, camper trailers and three boats, was removed.

The debris was collected onto barges and taken to staging areas where it was separated into vegetation, construction and demolition debris. It was then loaded onto trucks and taken to the appropriate disposal area.

Debris that posed an immediate threat to public health and safety was taken from the approximately 11,235-acre lake, located in northeast Alabama on the Coosa River.

“Risk to public health and safety is significantly reduced with the removal of the debris from Neely Henry Lake,” said Wes Trammell, waterway debris removal mission manager for USACE. “However, while the risk of boater traffic running over submerged debris has been reduced, we encourage the public to think about safety and exercise caution while on the lake as there is always a chance that some smaller storm debris might be present.”

The debris removal will also benefit the overall health and water quality of the lake. However, submerged debris found to be beneficial to the environment was left for fish habitat.

“If debris was in a non-developed area and posed no safety hazard, we didn’t remove it,” said Trammell. “It will eventually become fish habitat.”

Neely Henry Lake is one of two Alabama lakes assigned by FEMA to USACE for wet debris removal. USACE expects to complete debris removal from the second lake, Lake Martin, by the end of July.

USACE, as part of the federal response effort led by FEMA, is coordinating the debris removal efforts in cities and counties that request federal assistance through the Alabama [Emergency Management Agency Operations Center](#) and FEMA.

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