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News Release

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Lake Shelbyville, - With the archery season already open, many hunters will be heading to their favorite hunting spots in search of success. Most hunters will hunt from a tree stand in order to increase their chances of a successful hunt. With this in mind, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would like to mention a few unlawful uses of tree stands/tree damaging devices on Corps of Engineers Project Lands at Lake Shelbyville and general tree stand safety tips to help make this year's hunting season a safe one.

Title 36 Rules and Regulations

Under Title 36 Section 327.15 (a) Personal property of any kind shall not be abandoned, stored, or left unattended upon project lands and waters for longer than 24 hours. Any tree stands left unattended more than 24 hours will be considered abandoned property and subject to impoundment. To retrieve an impounded tree stand, the owner will be required to pay an impoundment fee and receive a citation for abandonment of private property. To avoid having a stand impounded, simply remove the tree stand from Project lands if you are not hunting the stand site on consecutive days. Site saving – hanging many stands to discourage use of public lands by other hunters is not allowed. Complaints of site saving taking place on all 5 Corps lakes in the St. Louis District have been reported and all lake projects have been directed to remedy the situation through stricter enforcement. Only climbing type stands, portable loc-on stands, ladder stands, and ground blinds are allowed on project lands. Tree damaging devices such as nails, bolts, or screw-in tree steps will not be allowed. Additionally, the construction or hunting from permanent tree stands, even if not erected by the hunter, will not be allowed. Reports of stolen stands are not uncommon.

Tree stand Safety Tips

- 1) Always wear a safety belt and harness while climbing and sitting in a stand. Fully 85% of tree stand accidents happen when the hunter is climbing or descending the tree.
- 2) Maintain a short tether between yourself and the tree you are in.
- 3) Make slow, deliberate moves while climbing into and out of the tree stand.
- 4) Always pick a safe, sound, tree to climb.
- 5) Be familiar with your equipment and inspect it periodically.
- 6) If using a climbing stand, tie both the climber and platform together to ensure the platform cannot slip away out of your reach.
- 7) Do not climb higher than your comfort level.

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- 8) Do not use tree limbs/branches as steps.
- 9) Never climb with a bow or firearm. Always use a haul/tow rope.
- 10) Always let someone know where you are hunting and the time to expect you home.

Current statistics show that one out of three hunters will have a “close-call” sometime during their hunting career. Be cognizant of the dangers that do exist and be extremely careful while in the field. Using some common sense, slowing down, and respecting the environment will help keep you safe and secure. Enjoy your hunting season!

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