STATE OFFICIALS URGE SAFETY AROUND FLOOD WATERS THIS WEEKEND

TALLAHASSEE – State officials are urging residents and visitors to use caution around flood waters this weekend. Many northern rivers such as the Suwannee and the Santa Fe remain in flood status and may be hazardous for recreational access and use.

The Department of Health recommends that all persons avoid contact with flood waters where possible as they may carry hidden dangers of waste water, associated bacteria, and other chemicals that have washed from land.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) is also asking that boaters stay off the water in the flooded areas and observe all local restrictions and closures. State and local officers will be patrolling the rivers conducting safety checks this weekend.

In areas that are not closed, boaters should be aware of posted “no wake idle speed” zones. An idle-speed, no-wake zone means a vessel must proceed at a speed no greater than what is required to maintain proper steerage and headway. All boaters should wear life jackets at all times when on the water.

Boaters should be on the lookout for objects right at or below the surface of the water. Docks, pilings, tree stumps and other objects which were once visible above the water, may now be submerged and could be dangerous if a boat strikes them.

All wildlife should be left alone. If wildlife requires help (injured manatee, bird, etc.), the public should call the Wildlife Alert Hotline at 1-888-404-3922.

While all major roads are now open, the Department of Transportation (FDOT) is continuing to monitor the roads and bridges in the areas impacted by flooding. Motorists are advised to “Turnaround, Don’t Drown” if faced with a flooded roadway and to follow all posted detours as many local roads remain impassable.

Travelers are urged to call FDOT’s 511 or visit www.fl511.com for the latest travel information before getting on the road and before they return to the region from their weekend destinations.

For additional information, please visit www.FloridaDisaster.org.

All students, teachers and parents can find educational information and free downloadable materials at: www.KidsGetAPlan.com.
And for the latest daily situation and flash reports go to: www.YouTube.com/FloridaSERT.

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