



# **City of Grand Island**

**Tuesday, January 18, 2005**

**Study Session**

## **Item -2**

**Discussion Concerning Current Policy of Swimming at L.E. Ray  
Lake**

**Staff Contact: Steve Paustian**

# **Council Agenda Memo**

**From:** Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director

**Meeting:** January 18, 2005

**Subject:** Discussion Concerning Current Policy of Swimming at L.E. Ray Lake

**Item #'s:** 2

**Presenter(s):** Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director

## **Background**

The City of Grand Island took ownership of L.E. Ray Lake in the early 1970's. The area was donated to the City by the Ray family for use as a park. The lake has been used for swimming since the City took ownership. During this period of ownership swimming has been allowed in a designated area only. For many years, until 1993 lifeguards were provided by the City to patrol the designated swimming area. The guards were also used to limit swimming to the designated area only.

With the opening of Island Oasis, and the drop in popularity of L.E. Ray Lake as a swimming area, the policy has been to allow swimming in a designated area of the lake without lifeguards present. While some people still swim in the designated area many people have chose to swim in other areas of the lake. Unfortunately for everyone involved, four swimmers have lost their lives to drowning while swimming in areas of the lake that were not designated for swimming.

## **Discussion**

For many years City Administration has suggested that swimming be eliminated at L.E. Ray Lake because of safety concerns. Many of the guards employed by the City to work at L.E. Ray Lake were never comfortable there. With the inherent dangers of swimming in a sand pit, including water clarity, drop offs, and cold water currents to name a few, many guards felt unable to insure patron safety.

The present situation is unacceptable in that without controls, people are swimming everywhere in the lake and for some the results have been catastrophic. For the past several years the area has been in a severe drought. Because of the drought and the resulting low water levels at the lake, the designated swimming area has shrunk to a size that really isn't adequate for swimming.

## **Conclusion**

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

It is the intent of City Administration to bring this issue to a future council meeting.