

August / September 2007



# Bulletin

**YOUR PRIMARY VOICE ON LAKE ISSUES**

With a mission to identify issues affecting our members and pursue resolution with the responsible organizations

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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## **President's Corner**

Hello. I am John Cataldo the new president of the LGA. I was elected by your Directors at the July meeting. I served this last year as the Vice President and think I have a fair knowledge of what's going on. Luckily enough Larry Jolly (now our Past President) will still be around as a mentor. Doug Hughes is our new Vice President.

I spent 26 years in the Navy and then another 15 years working for the Navy as a civilian. We bought our property here at the lake in 1978. My wife (Pat) and I went through the usual phases of camping and then a small trailer before I retired and we built our "lake house" and became permanent residents in 2002.

There are many things going on here at the LGA. We need to find ways to enlarge our membership so that we will have more clout when we speak as your representative. We must figure out how to get the 5 counties to work together on an intelligent plan for lake area development. The number of boats on the lake is increasing every year and the safety of these boaters demands that the LGA continue its efforts to get both states to educate boaters. As the lake grows and grows older, we must stay on top of the environmental issues that could ruin the lake for our children. There are elections this year and we need to schedule candidate forums. The LGA will continue to be involved with the Hydrilla control effort. We still feel that more Grass Carp should be inserted.

Lastly, I want to encourage all members to participate in our committees. We presently have a number of non directors involved but need more. The committees meet in the mornings and mostly at the Eaton Ferry Grocery and Grill (EFG&G) located on Highway 903 on the south side of the Eaton Ferry Bridge.

- Lake Environment, 2<sup>nd</sup> TUE at 10:00 a.m. at Bill Lindenmuth's house, call (434) 636-4315
- Safety, 2<sup>nd</sup> FRI at 8:30 a.m. at EFG&G call Jack Saunders (252) 537-3624
- Membership Development, 2<sup>nd</sup> FRI at 10:00 a.m. at EFG&G call David Duxbury (757) 719-4754
- Public Affairs, 3<sup>rd</sup> MON at 9:00 a.m. EFG&G call Larry Jolly (252) 535-2933
- Aquatic Weed, 3<sup>rd</sup> WED at 8:30 a.m. at EFG&G call Pete Deschenes (252) 586-3144
- Planning and Development, 3<sup>rd</sup> FRI at 8:30 a.m. at EFG&G call Jack Saunders (252) 537-3624

## ***Why Can Water Be Low to LGA Members and Not to Dominion***

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission guidelines by which Dominion Power NC & VA operate the water level of Lake Gaston are: normal 199.50 feet mean sea level (msl) with a low of 199.00 feet msl and a high of 200 feet msl. If they plan to operate below or above the low and high levels, they have agreed to contact us so that we can let our membership know of the situation and when the water level will return to normal. Our President and Lake Environment Chair wear pagers 24/7 issued by Dominion for this reason. There are exceptions to this "rule," for example, during spawning time from approximately mid-March and mid-June the level of Lake Gaston can exceed 200 feet msl because of spawning requirements in the Roanoke River below the Roanoke Rapids Dam.

From an LGA members point of view if the water is between 199.50 and 199.00 feet msl, depending on where their boathouse is located, this lower level can severely impact the ability to get their boat or jet ski into the water. An example of lower water occurred on July 4 when the water was at 199.10 feet msl which was still within the operating guidelines for Dominion Power i.e. not low to them. In our next meeting with Dominion we will ask that they consider keeping the water at 199.50 feet msl if a Holiday occurs during the week as they have agreed to keep the water level at 199.50 feet msl from Fridays at 6 p.m. until Sundays at 6 p.m. during the summer months.

We try to be proactive with noticing when the water is "low" so that we can call the Roanoke Rapids Dam operator and get a status. Most times the water is already "coming up" when we call. If we are told there will be a delay in the water returning to normal, we will get the details and email our members. If you have difficulty getting your boat or jet ski into the water, you may want to call the Dam Operator direct at (252) 535-6169 for the status and they will tell you when the water will return to normal.

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## ***Planning and Development Committee Gets Down to Business***

The LGA has formed a planning and development activity in response to member inputs in the last full survey which indicated that members wanted: additional amenities and services, to maintain the rural atmosphere and essential emergency services. The Mission Statement adopted is: "To promote action by the two states and five counties bordering Lake Gaston to adopt practices to ensure that sound land use and development practices are employed and guide future development in an efficient and serviceable manner which is protective of Lake Gaston's predominantly rural and ecologically sensitive character." Anyone who is interested in participating or with comments may address them to [jackdsaunders@earthlink.net](mailto:jackdsaunders@earthlink.net).

Brunswick County has recently updated its planning document and two copies are being purchased and a review completed prior to the next meeting. Pete Deschenes and Roland Beauchaine had identified what they felt were the most important points of the Warren Plan and had accomplished some coordination with the other county participants. Some of the key topics of the plan:

1. Residential, single and multi family building requirements including minimum lot size, maximum density and building height limits.
2. Commercial areas both on and off water.
3. Buffer zones around all waterfront and wetlands.
4. Greenways, parks, trails and bike routes.
5. Mapping of designated commercial vs. private future development
6. Guidelines for environmental protection
7. Suggested process for rezoning requests
8. Description / definition of below standard buildings and elimination plan
9. Define role & review process for 'land development task force' vis-à-vis county governing bodies

The Committee also has recognized a need to quickly address what areas our efforts will address or what are the physical boundaries of our prime interest. The relationships we have with county governments and planning boards are considered very important. It is also critical that we keep in mind what priorities the LGA membership has.

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## ***Public Affairs Committee Continues to Pursue Members' Priorities***

At the LGA meeting on Wed. July 11<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Charlette Woolridge, Brunswick County Administrator, presented a review of their budget process and setting of tax rates. This presentation concluded the five county series as a result of LGA's Property Tax Forum in January 2007.

Mr. Jim Thornton of Dominion Power will be the guest speaker at the LGA meeting on August 1<sup>st</sup>. He will review Dominion's progress on shoreline management and public access areas. Questions and answers will follow.

We will continue to focus on our MEMBERS' high priority survey items, and will maintain a working rapport with local and state political infrastructure. We will also manage the list of focus items to identify and address issues of the LGA membership and report results on a timely basis.

## ***Aquatic Weed Committee Update***

LGA's Aquatic Weed Committee is most grateful for the leadership and involvement of Directors Bob Etheridge and Tom Winebrenner who both have served two terms and are leaving the LGA Board. Our thanks to Bob and Tom. Any LGA members that are interested in helping out with this Committee, please contact John Cataldo at [johnandpatcataldo@earthlink.net](mailto:johnandpatcataldo@earthlink.net).

First and second public treatments have been completed by Professional Lake Management. Private treatments using contact herbicides are in process. Members are reminded to contact Dominion Power and advise them of the areas that they have privately contracted to have treated. This is a requirement! Remember that your ability to contract for the treatment of hydrilla is a privilege and we need to comply with this reporting requirement.

The Aquatic Weed Committee is also assisting the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council's Public Affairs Committee. They have been charged with the responsibility for improving communication relative to LGWCC activity. Keep your eyes open for monthly Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in the local media and check out the Website at ([lgwcc.org](http://lgwcc.org)). This Website is also hotlinked to the LGA Website at ([lakegastonassoc.com](http://lakegastonassoc.com)) and vice versa. We have included their latest PSA in this Bulletin.

The grass carp are active. Over 7,000 additional grass carp were stocked earlier this year. Added to the grass carp already in the Lake, the density objective of 10 grass carp per infested acre has been realized. If you spend some time on the Lake, watch for bare circles in the hydrilla growth., this is a pretty good sign of grass carp at work. Efforts are continuing to determine the total number and age profile of grass carp in the Lake. The results of this study will help determine future stocking programs.

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## ***Public Safety Committee Asks, "Do you support boating legislation?"***

The LGA Public Safety Committee continues to support North Carolina Legislative action for Boating Safety Training parallel to that passed in the last session of the Commonwealth of Virginia's House of Delegates and Senate. Over the next several months we plan to push for a conference among interested organizations throughout the state. Having a Boating Safety Training requirement in Virginia but not North Carolina will certainly pose some difficulties downstream for boaters who travel over the multi-jurisdictional waters of Lake Gaston. Of interest is the fact that the Lake Gaston Water Safety Council at its July 25 dinner meeting is hosting Charlie Sled who was one of the leaders of the Virginia Safe Boating Alliance, which was instrumental in passage of the Commonwealth's new Boating Safety legislation. (The LGWSC has its monthly meetings at the Kennon House at 6:15PM the last Wednesday of the month. Interested parties should check the website at [www.lakegastonwatersafetycouncil.com](http://www.lakegastonwatersafetycouncil.com)).

Rep. Michael Wray has introduced a bill in the NC Legislature to study a Boater Safety Act, but it is not clear that the legislation will succeed this year.

It would be very useful to hear from LGA members if they support such legislation. North Carolina has the 11<sup>th</sup> highest number of registered boats and PWCs as compared to Virginia at 19<sup>th</sup> and North Carolina experienced 33% more fatalities in 2005 (last year for which complete statistics available). Overall nationally, accident data reflects that in 73% of all fatal boating accidents, the operators had no boater safety training. These statistics address whole states and not just Lake Gaston, just as the legislation would.

Sheriff Wardie Vincent of Northampton County met with the committee and provided an overview of the department and discussed recent activities. He said that unsecured All Terrain Vehicles are a recurring object of thievery. People leave the vehicles in a backyard or side yard and they get hotwired or towed off. He also warned about phone scams, such as one soliciting contributions for the sheriff's association. His recommendation was that no contributions should be made to phone solicitations of this sort. There is also a phone scam which attempts to get friendly with older citizens and then asks for bank numbers.

Sheriff Vincent also has units which patrol Lake Gaston, Roanoke Rapids Lake and the Roanoke River. He provided a common thread of advice to residents for keeping themselves and their property safe. First, work together and look out for each other whether by an organized Neighborhood Watch or by just keeping an eye out for each other's property. Neighbors should communicate with each other and let folks know where they will be and how to reach them. This should be done not after a rash of burglaries but before such events occur. If suspicious activity is noted, call your local law enforcement. Do not leave out items as an invitation to thieves. Do not leave boating and fishing items out where they can just be picked up by passersby. Leave a residence looking lived in and not closed up, obviously uninhabited. There is a Deputy who specifically is assigned to assist neighborhoods with Watch Programs. For additional information call (252) 534-2611.

## ***Third Phase of Hydrilla Treatment has Begun***

The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council's third application of herbicide in areas identified for publicly funded hydrilla treatment was scheduled to begin the week of July 23. A complete list of locations to receive treatment was available at the Weed Council's website at [www.lgwcc.org](http://www.lgwcc.org). The application schedule and aerial photos showing areas to be treated are available on Professional Lake Management's website, [www.prolakemgmt.com](http://www.prolakemgmt.com). Notices containing information about chemicals to be applied and any water use restrictions were placed on property owners' boat piers or docks prior to treatment. Additional information was also available on the Pro Lake Management website.

Professional Lake Management was contracted by the Council to apply chemical herbicide treatments to more than 1,600 acres of the most severely weed-infested areas. 1,565 acres will be treated with the herbicide Sonar and 47 acres will see the use of another chemical, Komeen. Sonar will be utilized in The Flats, Lizzard Creek, Popular Creek, Dogwood Branch, Lees Creek, Hubquarter, Lyons Creek, Smith Creek, Speckle Cove, Pretty Creek, Cold Springs, Hawtree, Poe Creek, Beaver Creek and Stillhouse Branch. North Point Cove and several public access areas will receive applications of Komeen.

About 1,400 acres of weeds will remain untreated by LGWCC in 2007 due to lack of public funds. Chemical treatment costs about \$450 per acre, and many residents and homeowners associations provide treatment of their own areas. All privately contracted applications are required to be reported to Dominion Power.

Questions regarding criteria for selection of treatment areas or other issues and concerns may be e-mailed to the Council at [wasay43@yahoo.com](mailto:wasay43@yahoo.com).

*(The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council is a non-profit organization comprised of representatives appointed by County Commissions in each of the five lake counties -- Halifax, Northampton and Warren in North Carolina, and Brunswick and Mecklenburg in Virginia. LGWCC funding is provided by the five counties, the State of North Carolina, Commonwealth of Virginia, City of Virginia Beach, and other agencies and organizations. For additional information contact Wally Sayko, Chairman, Public Affairs Committee, at [wasay43@yahoo.com](mailto:wasay43@yahoo.com) or (434) 636-5393, or visit [www.lgwcc.org](http://www.lgwcc.org).)*

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## ***Reflections from the "Past" President***

Because of the length of our Annual Meeting in June, I did not provide comments from the President. I thought it would be helpful to look back on a few of the things your organization was engaged in during the last twelve months. So here we go.....

- Management of mile marker buoy maintenance discussed with Dominion
- 2006 member survey discussed and contrasted to 2003 survey - results very similar (weeds continues to be #1 issue)
- Continued evaluation of LGAAlert System
- Hosted Northampton County Political Candidate Forum
- Staying on top of "Dancing Rock" Development to watch for potential issues
- Maintaining LGA's active support for community educational events - i.e. Warren County spelling bee and school tutoring programs
- Held Property Reassessment Forum with five counties invited. 250 people attended
- Addressed the request by Dominion to amend the "Settlement Agreement" approved contingent on approval by "Regional Partnership of Local Governments"
- Following request by LGA, Northampton County Commissioners met with lake residents in March
- Continue to meet with Dominion Power relevant to lake management issues
- LGA continues to be an active supporter of the Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board
- Letter to Chairman Glenn Barbour on proposed Lake Gaston Commission - not supportive of a "new" commission, rather use LGA as a vehicle to foster five county input
- Public hearing presentation to Brunswick County Supervisors on lack of public input on Poplar Creek restrictive buoys
- Several email advisories sent to LGA members on water level issues
- Letter to Warren County Commissioners supporting Sheriff Williams' request for additional officers for lake coverage
- Letter to all five county supervisors and commissioners supporting budget funding for: LGWCC funding at \$116,000 each, law enforcement, and emergency medical services
- Brunswick County Public Hearing presentation on keeping \$116,000 for LGWCC and we were successful!
- Letter of thanks to Honorable Kathy J. Byron for sponsoring Virginia House Bill 1627 for mandatory boater education and email request to LGA members in Virginia to show support of Bill by contacting their Representatives. Updates to members re Bill's progress and North Carolina's introduction of a similar Bill.

## From the Desk of the Executive Director ...

Besides keeping our members and the public informed of what the LGA is doing through my monthly columns in the five lake newspapers – Brunswick Times Gazette, Lake Gaston Gazette, Littleton Observer, Mecklenburg Sun and South Hill Enterprise – I plan to do more press releases to the area newspapers that focus on particular topics of interest that the LGA is engaged with. Having said that, my subjects – the Committee Chairs and their committees – are camera shy and have been bashful to share examples of the work they are doing.

So ... I've decided I need to put on my reporter's hat and join them in their activities so I can increase the number of press releases. I did this when Bill Lindenmuth (Lake Environment Chair), Jack Saunders (Lake Environment Monitor Team Leader), and John Cataldo (President), went for a training session given by James Beckley of Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Data Liaison. James instructed them on testing for *E. Coli* with a relatively new method using a special bacterial medium called "Coliscan" that provides citizen volunteers with a simple, efficient and inexpensive method for measuring *Escherichia coli* levels. Apparently *E. Coli* is just one of many kinds of fecal bacteria that inhabit the intestinal tracts of warm blooded animals.

James also taught them the finer points of using the secchi discs to measure water clarity using a bucket of dyed water. He demonstrated how to calibrate the secchi discs and each director had time to calibrate their own secchi disc before the class concluded. I took a great action picture of this activity which accompanied the press release. Knowledge gained from both classes will be shared with other members of their teams, and Coliscan kits will be purchased.

If you are interested in joining the Lake Environment Monitor team, please contact [jackdsaunder@earthlink.net](mailto:jackdsaunder@earthlink.net) for more information.

Other topics I see for future press releases, using secchi discs in Lake Gaston to test water clarity and observing data gathering of radio monitored sterile grass carp. And, there will be more.

## Calendar notes ...

**August 1 – LGA monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m.** – Lake Gaston Baptist Church. Guest speaker will be Jim Thornton, Technical Consultant, Dominion Virginia Power who will give an update on Dominion's Shoreline Management and Public Access projects. Q&A will follow.

**August 3,4,10,11,12,17,18, and 19 – "Broadway Review" at Lakeland Arts Center, Mosby Ave, Littleton**

**August 11 – O'Sail the Crossing 2007.** 9 a.m. Eaton Ferry Marina. A one mile open water swim/paddle across Lake Gaston. Swimmers or human powered vessels. \$20/entry, \$25 day of event, includes t-shirt & refreshments. Register at Lake Gaston Chamber of Commerce/[www.lakegastonchamber.com/\(252\)586-5711](http://www.lakegastonchamber.com/(252)586-5711). O'Sale is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that raises funds to benefit Lake Gaston. The Crossing is a primary fundraiser.

**August 11 - "Art Plunge"** - A one-day art show featuring local artists on August 11, on the grounds of Dockside Landing immediately following the CROSSING event. Participating artists this year are William Ward Moseley, Gail O'Neil, Jenny Fields, Pat DeJesu, Matt Gibson, Bobby Broadwell, Gail Rawlings Smith, Karolyn Hawthorne and Sandra Martin. Artists will be exhibiting pottery, jewelry, Lake Gaston originals and prints, as well as an assortment of other subjects in all mediums.

**August 18 - America's Boating Course** taught by US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 93, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. \$30. For more information contact Joe Hoxter at (434) 636-4151 or email [jhoxter@buggs.net](mailto:jhoxter@buggs.net).

**August 31 & September 1 – Littleton-Lake Gaston Festival in downtown Littleton** - Commences Friday night at 7 p.m. with a street dance featuring "The Castaways" in the Municipal Parking Lot on N. Main Street, and Festival continues Saturday from 10 a.m to 4 p.m. with activities for all the family. Don't forget to drop by the LGA booth and meet your LGA directors.

**September 5 – LGA monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m.** – Lake Gaston Baptist Church.

**September 21,22,28,29,30, October 5,6, and 7 – "Oliver" at Lakeland Arts Center, Mosby Ave, Littleton**

## LGA NEEDS YOU!

Your Lake Gaston Association is in need of directors. To insure that the LGA's work continues to preserve the quality of life that brought us to beautiful Lake Gaston, we need your expertise. Directors are currently needed in Brunswick and Halifax counties. Contact Nomination chair Laura Kolb at (252) 586-4705 or email, [laurakolb@embarqmail.com](mailto:laurakolb@embarqmail.com)

**Auditor's Report**

June 9, 2007

The Board of Directors  
 Lake Gaston Association  
 c/o Bill Lindenmuth, Treasurer  
 P.O. Box 656  
 Littleton, NC 27850

At your request, I have audited the financial records of the Lake Gaston Association for the twelve month period ended December 21, 2006.

My audit included review of the minutes of the membership and Board of Directors meetings held during the period of the audit; examination of the bank statements including examination of the bank copies of the cancelled checks; examination of the paid invoices and disbursements approved in the minutes; review of the cash receipts and deposits. I also traced transfers between the regular checking account and the Money Market account. All transactions appear to be properly recorded and disbursements are supported by invoices and/or authorization of the Board of Directors.

The cash balances of \$718.41 in the checking account and \$35,242.22 in the savings account were reconciled to the bank statements as of December 31, 2006.

The Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2006 appears to properly reflect the financial position of the organization as December 31, 2006.

Sincerely,  
 William E. Weaver, Auditor  
 Retired C.P.A.

**Stay up-to-date between Bulletins with Informational Emails**

In between our bi-monthly Bulletins we also send out information via emails (e.g. non-emergency water levels, public hearings, county agendas, lake legislatures, etc.) that endeavor to keep you up-to-date in your lake community. If you do have an email address but we do not have it in your membership database record, you may want to consider sharing your email address with us. Please rest assured it will remain confidential to us. Also, please remember to let us know when your email address changes.

**Thank you! to All Our Members Who Renewed for 2007 and Our New Members too!**

1092 **General Membership (\$25)**; 69 **Bronze (\$50)**;  
 21 **Silver (\$100)**; 1 **Gold (\$250)**; 1 **Platinum (\$500)**;  
 & 35 **Lifetime (\$250)**

Newcomers to Lake Gaston or those with questions about their membership

are invited to call David Duxbury, Membership Chair  
 (757) 719-4754, or send an e-mail to  
[Members@LakeGastonAssoc.com](mailto:Members@LakeGastonAssoc.com).

**Attention Homeowners Associations!**

New HOA memberships through 2008  
 Check our website [www.lakegastonassoc.com](http://www.lakegastonassoc.com) for details or  
 call (252) 586-6577

CHECK: If the information on the label below is incorrect, please advise. By Web: [www.LakeGastonAssoc.com](http://www.LakeGastonAssoc.com), By Email: [MemRec@LakeGastonAssoc.com](mailto:MemRec@LakeGastonAssoc.com) or By Mail: LGA Member Records at the address below. Thanks!



P.O. Box 656 ~ Littleton, NC 27850

Non Profit Org.  
 BULK RATE  
 Permit No. 2  
 Henrico, NC