

June / July 2007



# Bulletin

**YOUR PRIMARY VOICE ON LAKE ISSUES**

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

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## ***LGA launches new Planning and Development Activity***

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 full Board of Directors asked the Executive Committee to initiate activity to determine if it is possible to promote consistency among the five counties and two states. In depth discussions were held and as a first action a Missions Statement was adopted as follows.

"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."

This activity must consider and include all parties with a stake in the future of Lake Gaston including developers, Real Estate Companies, Chambers of Commerce, Board of Commissioners and Supervisors, Area/Regional Economic Development Activities, Towns/Municipalities and Cities, and all residents in the footprint of Lake Gaston. The LGA is not attempting to interfere with the local governmental functions or entities currently in place. We are simply trying to promote action to 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).

Follow on actions taken after defining a Mission Statement included identifying a professional with experience in such matters who recommended that we identify baseline planning activities in the counties and outline potential goals, objectives and strategies.

So far five goals have been socialized including:

Goal A: Ensure development, within the jurisdictions where Lake Gaston is located (and on property adjacent to Lake Gaston), is accomplished with consideration to current environmental and life quality.

Goal B – Provide and maintain adequate county services and facilities to accommodate development and growth and to protect the public health and general welfare.

Goal C– Encourage development at a rate and in a pattern which can be efficiently and effectively served by existing and planned services and facilities.

Goal D– Sustain a transportation system that will address economic development and local travel concerns.

Goal E– Promote, expand and diversify the economic base and job opportunities in the five county area surrounding Lake Gaston in such a way that will maximize the employment of local workers while protecting the environment.

Some objectives and strategies have been developed for these goals. There has been no priority set to this point and it is evident that more goals will be defined in the future.

The Executive Committee recommended that a decision session for full board consideration should be held. The Officers recommended that the activity be discussed in general session which it was on April 4. At that meeting a motion was made, seconded and overwhelmingly passed to continue the activity and establish a committee for further action.

In the ensuing period action has been underway to organize the group that will continue the activity. Volunteers from the membership or the general public are welcome to volunteer their time and expertise. We anticipate that at least 3,500 hours of volunteer time will be required and likely some professional paid consultation as well. The more parties that participate, the more likely the activity will have a positive benefit to the Lake Gaston Community.

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

As I'm writing this I realize this is my final *President's Corner*. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your LGA President for the past three years. A lot has happened affecting the lake during this time and while not everything has been perfect, I'd like to think a great deal of the "happenings" have been positive.

I would like to leave you with a final thought. (I have many, but I thought I'd focus on just one!) Our lake is unique in many aspects however one really stands out. We are located in two states and five counties. So much of what dictates our future is based on decisions made in these seven governmental bodies. The good news is that more and more of our government officials realize the LGA represents a large contingency of voting residents and as a result, they are listening to what we say (not always, but we're making strides in that direction).

Your organization tries to keep its members informed about what is happening around the lake and what might materially affect our great asset—Lake Gaston. Having said that, we have on several occasions this year through our email advisory, put out the "call for help" for our members to show support for important issues. We really appreciate those who did step up to our request. However, I would strongly ask that each of us take an even greater interest in working with state and local governments on issues that affect our lake environment and safety. We will be successful in winning the "fight" for our lake's well being if we stay connected and become involved—whether we are full-time or part time residents.

I do believe your organization, with your help and with the direction provided by your dedicated Board of Directors, can make a positive impact in helping manage and improve our great asset. There is, however, much to be done and with our collective efforts we can continue to make improvements.

I wish to personally thank each of you for your support of the LGA. Please spread the word to your friends and neighbors and ask them to join our organization and to also become actively involved in the lake issues. As a larger organization with more voices, we can make an even bigger difference!

*Larry*

## **Boater Education, Virginia & North Carolina**

Over the past several years, a number of Lake Gaston volunteer organizations have been working toward the goal of introducing Boater Education in both states. The organizations involved & committed to this effort are; The Lake Gaston Water Safety Council, The Brunswick County Lake Gaston Water Safety Committee, The Friends of the Flotilla and the Lake Gaston Association.

Progress has been slow and compromise has been the word of the day. However, in the most recently adjourned session of the Virginia General Assembly, a boater education bill was passed and the Governor signed this bill into law. In the short term, what does this mean to the boating public?

The first year activity is about drafting an implementation plan. This is the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. DGIF will be supported in this drafting process by the Virginia Safe Boating Alliance (All of the Lake Gaston volunteer groups mentioned above are members of the VSBA). So, in the first year of the new Virginia Law, the impact to the boating public is minimal.

However, it is our recommendation that concerned boaters enroll and complete a certified safe boating course. Reasons for doing it now are: The sooner that you have this boating knowledge the better; and in future years it will become a requirement in the State of Virginia.

As the implementation plan comes to life, we will keep you posted as to the details and how they will affect you.

The Friends, LGWSC and the LGA have been working the same initiative in the State of North Carolina. While there has been some progress, the going is slow at best. North Carolina Wildlife Commission has been less than responsive and not what you would call supportive of a boater education law. Interesting....N.C. has hunter education, but apparently doesn't think that boating is a dangerous activity. State Representative Michael Wray has introduced a study bill and this should help in getting the ball rolling. But don't expect much action in the N.C. in the next 12 to 24 months.

## ***Help Needed for New Revegetation Project***

The notion of introducing desirable vegetation in and around the lake shoreline was reported as a result of the Environment Committee's March meeting held at Dominion Power's Roanoke Rapids Dam facility. It was suggested by Dr. Rob Richardson, NC State University and Rob Emens, NC Division of Water Resources, Aquatic Weed Control that certain emergent plants introduced along the shoreline could help to stabilize against wave erosion. Apparently, some plants that are planted along the shoreline will advance up onto the bank and/or into the water.

The committee has begun work on plans that will be submitted to Dominion for approval, and possibly financial support. Lists of plants and sites will be recommended. We have contacted NC & VA Cooperative Extension agents who are all willing to help us and expect to learn from our experience in this new undertaking.

Some sites that are being considered for pilot projects include Goin (aka Goat) Island in main lake and Rock Island in the upper reaches of Peahill Creek.

One of our lake residents near the mouth of Great Creek has been successfully planting water iris in rip-rap along the shoreline. While this particular plant may not provide a great deal of wave buffering on its own, it can beautify the rip-rap which serves to stabilize the shore.

**We are looking for other local expertise** regarding native emergent aquatic plants to help this committee put forth a viable program. Call chairman Bill Lindenmuth 434-636-4315 [Environment@LakeGastonAssoc.com](mailto:Environment@LakeGastonAssoc.com) with your comments/suggestions.

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## ***From the desk of the Executive Director ...***

June 30 and I will have completed my second year as Executive Director for the Lake Gaston Association (LGA). My position was introduced in July 2005 to promote the LGA so that our members and the surrounding communities knew what we were doing. I've used the weekly newspapers in each of the five counties to run my monthly columns on the last Wednesday of each month, and WZRU 90.1 and 90.5 FM airs my column on the first Tuesday. We use both the weekly and daily newspapers and local radio stations to publicize our monthly meetings and any special informative ones, like the Property Tax Forum this past January. And, we established an office where members and the public could call in or email the LGA for information. If I don't have the answer, I arrange for the appropriate LGA director to respond.

LGA's Board of Directors decided it was more appropriate to move our Bulletin and Website to the Executive Director's office and so disbanded the LGA's Communications Committee. For future surveys I will be assisted by an ad hoc committee.

Our June/July 2007 Bulletin is the 10th Bulletin since moving from the Quarterly Newsletter format in December 2005. You will notice that we have reintroduced the Board of Directors and we have settled on the horizontal column to make it easier to read online. We welcome your feedback on its content and value to you. Let us know what you enjoy reading about, or what you would like to read about. Contact me at (252) 586-6577; LGA, P.O. Box 656, Littleton, NC 27850; or [execdir@lakegastonassoc.com](mailto:execdir@lakegastonassoc.com).

For those of you who like to keep up with the LGA online through our website, we have made a tremendous effort to get all the missing committee minutes posted. It was a team effort thanks to the Committee Chairs and our Webmaster. To keep it that way, each month we aim to get all the committee minutes posted by the end of the fourth week for that month. The LGA monthly meeting minutes will continue to be a month behind as we prefer to post the approved version. The old date related material has been deleted (I hope) but I do need to have a better way of keeping track. A challenge. Having said all that ... we really do have a wealth of interesting information on our website, and links to other related organizations.

When you've finished reading this Bulletin you will have to agree with me that the LGA is working on some very interesting and important projects. Both Bill Lindenmuth and Jack Saunders are looking for expertise for their projects – you don't have to be a director to join one of our projects or one of our committees. Or, if you would like to be an LGA director contact Ron George at [georgebr@buggs.net](mailto:georgebr@buggs.net).

We are using emails more than ever to keep our members informed of what is going on in their counties or of interest to all our members. Please remember to keep us informed when you change your address.

*Maira*

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## ***Hydrilla Update ...***

Since our last Bulletin 7,680 sterile grass carp have been released into Lake Gaston. Half at Rte 1 Landing near Bracey, VA and half at NC Wildlife Resources Commission access at Stonehouse Creek on Hwy 903. A team of Virginia Tech Fisheries students implanted radio tags into thirty of the grass carp that will provide unique signals from each of the fish for approximately 600 days. Each tagged grass carp will be tracked by hand-held receiver about once a month and its GPS location recorded. (FYI: Grass carp are paid for by Lake Gaston Weed Control Council (LGWCC) and Dominion Power applies for permit to VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and NC Wildlife Resource Commission.)

LGWCC named Professional Lake Management (PLM) contract agent for spraying the noxious weeds in Lake Gaston for 2007. List of selected 2007 treatment sites can be found on LGWCC's website at [www.lgwcc.org](http://www.lgwcc.org) – click on *Reports & Surveys*. LGWCC now has a Public Affairs committee to help the public better understand their organization. LGA's Aquatic Weed Committee assisted with developing their flow chart to show how other organizations connect with the LGWCC. A series of articles will be going to the area lake newspapers from their Public Affairs committee, and their meeting agendas now set aside time for public comment. LGA has been notifying our members of LGWCC's meeting dates and receiving meeting agendas from the Council to send to our members. Flow chart and Press Releases can be located on their website under *Reports & Surveys*.

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## ***Public Safety Committee Pursues Boating Safety, Crime Prevention, Project Life Saver***

The LGA is supporting the introduction of Safe Boating Legislation in the North Carolina Legislature. We are attempting to benefit from the lessons learned from the Virginia experience and to establish contacts with other interested parties in North Carolina on the parallel with those who participated in the Virginia Safe Boating Alliance, such as the National Transportation Safety Board, BASS North Carolina, the US Power Squadron, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary and the NC Wildlife Commission. Hopefully there will be a great deal of consistency between the laws in the two states.

Rep Michael Wray has introduced a bill in the NC Legislature to study a Boater Safety Act. The proposal is still in consideration. Pete Deschenes and John Slaton are still working on finding additional supporters of such legislation including Commissioners of the NC Wildlife Resources and other participants who participated in the Virginia Boater Safety Training Legislation.

It would be very useful to hear from LGA members to know of their support for 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.

Chief Deputy Brian Roberts of Brunswick County met with the committee and provided an overview of the department and its recent history. Chief Deputy Roberts echoed many of the recommendations provided to us by Mecklenburg's Sheriff Danny Fox. He had several suggestions for reducing the risk of burglary and theft. 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. If you can, get a reliable security alarm system. The alarm noise can be sufficient to chase off potential thieves and/or vandals.

Chief Deputy Roberts also advised that the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department is sponsoring a new program named Project Life Saver, which provides a bracelet/anklet for persons suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's or otherwise need such care. The device radios the location and individual identification of persons so that the Sheriff's Department can more easily locate such persons needing assistance. Please call the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office for more information at (434) 848-3133.

## **Lake Environment Monitors Attend Annual Training**

The Annual Lake Environmental Monitor (LEM) Training Refresher was held on April 28, 2007. Twenty LEMs were present. Steve Hoyle from North Carolina State University gave a presentation regarding the identification of noxious aquatic weeds and native vegetation. James Beckley from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality gave a presentation explaining the equipment and methods for checking water dissolved oxygen (DO) content, clarity and pH factor. Jack Saunders of the Environmental Committee gave a presentation regarding the identification and feeding habits of the triploid grass carp. Portions of Steve Hoyle's and all of Jack Saunderson's presentations will be posted on the LGA website under the Environmental Committee page topic of LEMs. The LEM Checklist was also revised and will be updated on the website.

Steve announced that a grant had been approved for NC State to train 10-12 volunteers in July to track certain data for input to NCSU and the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council Technical Advisory Group.

James Beckley identified a "Mini-grant" program which can provide funding for test equipment and operations to document lake pH levels, dissolved oxygen and water clarity.

LEM County Captains were identified: John Cataldo in Brunswick, Tom Winebrenner in Halifax, Bill Lindenmuth in Mecklenburg, Jack Saunders in Northampton and George Kimble in Warren County. If you are interested in additional information or participating as a LEM please contact [jackdsaundersearthlink.net](mailto:jackdsaundersearthlink.net).

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## **Calendar notes ...**

**June 6 – LGA's monthly meeting**, 9:30 a.m. Lake Gaston Baptist church, Rte 903, one mile north of Eaton Ferry Bridge. Committee reports but no speaker.

**June 9 - LGA's Annual meeting** will be held at Lake Gaston Baptist Church, 9:30 a.m. coffee and pastries, 10 a.m. start/finish noon. Speakers: Dr. Rob Richardson, Assist. Prof. NCSU, "Aquatic Weed ID and Management;" Craig Ellison NC Cooperative Extension Agent for Northampton County, "Regulations and guidelines for pesticide use for noxious aquatic weed control on Lake Gaston."

**June 23 – America's Boating Course** taught by US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 93, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. \$30. [jhoexter@buggs.net](mailto:jhoexter@buggs.net)

**July 7 - Lake Gaston Annual Fireworks Display** at Eaton Ferry Bridge, approx. 9 p.m.

**July 11 - LGA's monthly meeting**, 9:30 a.m. at Lake Gaston Baptist Church (moved from the fourth). Guest speaker: Charlette Woolridge, Brunswick County Administrator on their budget process and setting of tax rate. This program will conclude the five county series stemming from LGA's January 6<sup>th</sup>'s Property Tax Forum.

**July 21 – America's Boating Course**

**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 [LakeGastonChamberofCommerce/www.lakegastonchamber.com/\(252\)586-5711](http://LakeGastonChamberofCommerce/www.lakegastonchamber.com/(252)586-5711). O'Sail is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that raises funds to benefit Lake Gaston. The Crossing is a primary fundraiser.

**August 18 - America's Boating Course**

**Attention Homeowners Associations!** Let us bring a 10 minute show and tell presentation about the LGA to your board or next homeowner gathering.

Newcomers to Lake Gaston or those with questions about their membership are invited to call the LGA office at (252) 586-6577 or send an email to: [members@lakegastonassoc.com](mailto:members@lakegastonassoc.com).

**A Special Thanks** to our **SUPPORTING Members** who will be contributing a higher level of Financial support in 2007 so the LGA can approach its mission and goals with greater scope and influence

Since our last Bulletin, many thanks to the following supporting members who have renewed/joined:

**Silver (\$100):** Karl and Elizabeth Groeger; Kelly S. and Eva Ann King; Mike Smedley

**Bronze (\$50):** Lisa and Wesley Aldridge; Joe and Ginny Coleman; Robert and Teresa Feild; Jack Hayes; Wayne F. and Jacqueline W. Hogge; Ruth and Gary Mock; Sea\\Tow Lake Gaston; Walter and Frances Williams; Robert Zucker;

**Thank you to all our members who renewed for 2007 and our new members too!**

**Note:** Following information is a status of all our members (at press time) who have renewed/joined for 2007: 1060 General Membership (\$25); 69 Bronze (\$50); 21 Silver (\$100); 1 Gold (\$250); 1 Platinum (\$500); and 33 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).

### ***Sea\\Tow Lake Gaston Special Rates for LGA Members***

The special membership rates we negotiated with Sea\\Tow for last year – Lake Card \$99 (instead of \$119) and Gold Card \$125 (instead of \$149) are still applicable for 2007. Your Sea\\Tow membership includes free 24-hour towing, fuel drops, jumpstarts, covered ungroundings, dock-to-dock tows and much more!

To take advantage of these deeply discounted rates, you must call Sea\\Tow Lake Gaston at (877) 452-4869 or fill out the application form on our website at [www.lakegastonassoc.com/Membership/SeaTow.htm](http://www.lakegastonassoc.com/Membership/SeaTow.htm).

These special rates are being offered by Sea\\Tow through LGA as a member benefit only. LGA has no financial or operational interest or involvement in Sea\\Tow and, therefore, offers no warranties or guarantees regarding Sea\\Tow or its Services.

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