

April / May 2007



Bulletin

YOUR PRIMARY VOICE ON LAKE ISSUES

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

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

On Saturday June 9, 2007 we will be having our annual meeting.

Again this year we are fortunate to have with us well respected experts presenting information on current and planned noxious weed treatment for Lake Gaston. We also will hear about the status of triploid (sterile) grass carp in the lake. Current requirements and procedures for noxious weed treatment based on state statutes will also be reviewed.

During the business portion of our meeting we will be hearing from our committee chairs about activities they have been engaged in over the past twelve months and will briefly discuss their plans for the future.

Not only is this a time to hear information concerning lake issues but also it is a time to offer your thoughts about activities your association should be involved with or working on in your behalf. Also, come meet your lake neighbors!

While noxious weeds (mostly hydrilla) occupy our thoughts during the recreational season, there are many other issues that are important in maintaining and improving our treasure in and around Lake Gaston.

This issue of the bulletin contains information of importance concerning our Annual Meeting so please take a moment and read it carefully.

Our Annual Meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. with registration and delicious homemade goodies provided again by our neighbors and friends, Judy and Pete Peters. The meeting will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. and will conclude about noon. At the conclusion of our meeting we will have drawings for beautiful door prizes provided by supporters of the LGA.

Again this year we will be meeting at the Lake Gaston Baptist Church on River Road (Rte. 903) just north of Eaton Ferry Bridge. I hope to see many of you at our meeting, but if I don't, I hope you and your family have a safe and happy summer.

Larry

LEM activity

There has been very little activity over the cold months, but the planning for Spring Lake Environment Monitor Training is underway. Not all of the speakers have been lined up, but Saturday, April 28 has been selected as the date, and the training will be at Eaton's Ferry Grocery and Grill on Hwy. 903, from 8:45 a.m. to noon.

We intend to have refreshers on identification of noxious aquatic weeds, some examples of native vegetation, information on triploid (sterile) grass carp, and updated call lists for notifying proper authorities of sightings of sedimentation, failure to install erosion controls at construction sites and any dumping of pollutants into the lake.

If you plan to attend the training or are interested in additional information, please contact jackdsanders@earthlink.net.

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| President Larry Jolly Northampton | Secretary Joe Hoxter Brunswick | Aquatic Weed Bob Etheridge Halifax | Environment Bill Lindenmuth Mecklenburg | Communications Doug Hughes Northampton | Public Safety Jack Saunders Northampton |
| Vice President John Cataldo Brunswick | Treasurer Bill Lindenmuth Mecklenburg | Membership David Duxbury Warren | Public Affairs Co-Chair John Slaton Northampton | Nominating Ron George Brunswick | Executive Director Moir Underwood (252) 586-6577 |

From the desk of the Executive Director

Since our last issue we have held the first and second of a series of presentations by the five lake counties to address the questions of “How your tax dollars are spent and the tax rate is set” – these questions arose from our January 6 Property Tax Forum. First up was Northampton’s County Manager, Wayne Jenkins, at our February 7 monthly meeting. Northampton County property owners had recently received their revaluations and turned out in great numbers to get answers. Still ... at the end of the meeting there were questions that could only be answered by Northampton’s County Commissioners – for lake residents an hour’s drive to attend their monthly meetings. The LGA was able to work through Wayne Jenkins and the Commissioners agreed to come to the lake to meet their constituents. On March 15 a Special Called meeting was arranged to meet the Commissioners at the Lake Gaston Community Center that turned out to be an informative exchange/standing room only meeting.

Matthew Delk, Halifax County Manager presented March 7, and was also asked if he would ask the Commissioners to hold a similar meeting on the lake. The series continues with Linda Jones, Warren County Manager on Wednesday, April 4, and most likely Brunswick and Mecklenburg County Administrators on May 2 to complete the series.

Even though the next several presentations will be county specific, there still will be good general information provided that will be interesting for our visitors. We will continue to have discussions on such topics as noxious weeds, grass carp and other relevant lake issues.

This year’s Lake Gaston Fireworks display which will be on July 7th the Saturday after Independence Day. If you remember in our February/March Bulletin it was too early to know the date of this year’s display. The organizers of the event, Longbridge volunteer Fire Department do not set the date. The date is determined by the pyrotechnic company when they set their schedule around the end of February. So make sure you mark your calendar “Fireworks” on the seventh. Which reminds me that I need to make a donation towards the cost. I will admit that some years I have not given. The firework display we see is paid for through donations, which are accepted any time of the year and can be mailed to Longbridge VFD, c/o Kendra Pierce, P.O. Box 133, Vaughan, NC 27586, memo: Fireworks. You may want to consider an advertisement in their ad booklet which is not just for businesses – non-profits, property owner associations, and individuals advertise too, like surprising a loved one with a “Happy Anniversary,” spot. And, there is a special page dedicated to non-ads listing others that have made donations of \$10 or more. Deadline to be included in the ad booklet is April 20. For more information you can contact Roy or Kendra Peirce at (252) 586-4332.

Maira

Environment Committee and Dominion meet at Roanoke Rapids Dam

Bill Lindenmuth held his March Environment committee meeting at Dominion’s Roanoke Rapid’s Dam premises. Joe Peterson represented Dominion, and we hope that this will become an annual meeting with them. Also attending were Dr. Rob Richardson of North Carolina State University and Rob Emens of NC Dept. Natural and Economic Resources. Topics on the agenda were revegetation, erosion and sedimentation, boating safety legislation, water level stability, and buoys.

Dr. Richardson, assisted by Rob Emens, presented on the options of revegetation of the types of good native plants that could grow where hydrilla has been eradicated. In areas of hydrilla eradication, other noxious weeds and algae are taking their place, and they are not pleasant – especially the algae, called Lyngbia, which is smelly and slimy. The idea is to put in a good native plant before another noxious weed can take over.

Native plants can also be used for erosion control of the shoreline on Lake Gaston, a topic of concern to both Joe Peterson and the LGA. It was suggested by Dr. Richardson that certain plants that would grow along the shoreline could help to stabilize further erosion. Apparently some plants that are planted along the shoreline will advance up onto the bank. As the shoreline belongs to Dominion, a plan will be proposed and submitted to them, plants recommended and test sites located.

Regarding mile marker buoys that are drifting or have lights out (which also includes those in front of the dam), Joe reported that every Monday morning he gives instructions to his work crew as to which buoys need attention, and their goal is to try to have them fixed by the weekend. Buoys needing attention should be reported to us at (252) 586-6577 or safety@LakeGastonAssoc.com and Jack Saunders, LGA’s Safety Committee chair, will report to Dominion and follow up on problem resolution.

Other topics of the meeting will be reported by Bill at our April 4 meeting and follow-on statuses at future monthly meetings.

Public Safety Committee stays very busy

The Public Safety Committee took a leadership role sponsoring the Safe Boating Legislation during the recent session of the Virginia General Assembly. General Assembly passed the legislation and it awaits signature by the Governor. Virginia Board of Game and Inland fisheries has until July 1, 2008 to submit the proposed and final regulations under the provisions of the legislation. The LGA will sponsor a public forum to provide information in the future as soon as there is more information to convey. LGA will also support 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.

It would be very useful to hear from LGA members to know of their support for such legislation. North Carolina has the 11th highest number of registered boats and PWCs as compared to Virginia at 19th 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.

Besides the Coast Guard auxiliary training dates which have been published in the last Bulletin and are posted on the LGA website, the NC Wildlife Officers will be conducting training in Halifax on May 12 and June 9 (call (252) 533-2847) and in Jackson on May 19 and June 16 (call (252) 534-1303). There is no listed class on the Virginia DGIF website for Brunswick or Mecklenburg counties, but there are many listed in the Norfolk Virginia Beach/Mathews/Gloucester areas of Virginia.

In addition, the Boat Owners Association of The United States (www.BoatUS.com) offers an online course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). One disadvantage of the online course is that some states do not recognize the online course as meeting certification requirements. The U.S. Power Squadron also administers a course, but it is not available on line. All states recognize the courses conducted and certifications issued by the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Boat and PWC owners should keep in mind that many insurance companies offer a 10% reduction upon successful completion of the course by the owner.

The Committee also was pleased to receive a visit from Sheriff Danny Fox of Mecklenburg County at our most recent meeting. He had several suggestions for reducing the risk of burglary and theft. First he suggested neighborhoods 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. He suggested this not be done after a rash of burglaries but before such events occur. That might avoid any incidents if suspicious activity is noted. Also, he suggested that items not be left out 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. His office is willing to work with individuals and groups to make suggestions for improved security.

Sheriff Fox also recommended that homeowners place the street number in the yard or on the home and not just in the street. This is important particularly where residence mailboxes are clustered and it is not clear which of several houses may be the one looking for an emergency response. In Mecklenburg County, the 911 system identifies the call location for both landline telephones and most cell phones (most newer models incorporate GPS chips.)

His message for the upcoming recreation months is to be safe, use Personal Flotation Devices, look out for each other and don't operate boats or vehicles under the influence. Deputies will be on the lake when they can, and his department has two boats and two loaner Personal Watercraft. Their major objective is Visibility to boaters that law enforcement is present on the lake to encourage responsible behavior.

A message from the Nominating committee

The Nominating committee will be nominating the following individuals for terms as Directors of the Lake Gaston Association at the annual meeting in June:

Warren County: Laura Kolb as a 1st Term Director who has been serving in a fill-in position; John Boyle as a 1st Term Director who has been serving in a fill-in position

Northampton Count: Ralph Domach as a 2nd Term Director, upon completion of his 1st Term

Mecklenburg County: Barbara Burgdoerfer as a 1st Term Director who has been serving in a fill-in position; Bill Bryant as a 1st Term Director who has been serving in a fill-in position

Additional names of candidates may be nominated by petition bearing the genuine signatures of a least 15 members in good standing. Petitions must reach the chairman of the Nominating Committee by May 25. Ron may be contacted at (434) 636-5471 or by email at georgebr@buggs.net.

There are also other Director vacancies in Halifax, Brunswick and Mecklenburg counties.

Amendments to the LGA By-Laws

The LGA Board of directors will be recommending some changes to the By-laws that were last amended on June 12, 2004. The proposed amendments are procedural amendments as to how the organization operates, i.e. redefining quorums at meetings, establishing a more flexible date for annual meetings, redefining how one can apply as a member to the LGA, etc.

The existing and proposed By-Law amendments will be available at the Annual Meeting to review prior to voting on the amendments. They will also be available on the LGA website, www.LakeGastonAssoc.com. You may also direct questions directly to Larry Jolly (252) 535-2933 or jollys@lgaston.org

Special presentations at Annual Meeting

We plan to allow time during the meeting for comments from those present at the meeting, i.e. questions, observations about lake activities, suggestions for LGA involvement or lack of involvement in lake issues, etc.

However, if any member would like to make a special presentation they must notify the LGA by May 30, 2007. This notification must be submitted in writing, stating the topic of the presentation to John Cataldo, P.O. Box 217, Gasburg, VA 23857 or by email to johnandpatcataldo@earthlink.net. This is required by the LGA By-Laws and helps in developing the meeting agenda and allocating time for the meeting.

Weed Control Council selects contractor, orders grass carp

During its March 14 meeting, the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council awarded Professional Lake Management, an aquatic weed treatment applicator company from Milford, Mich., the contract to perform public aquatic weed treatment on Lake Gaston for 2007. The council received bids from two other contractors, Foster Lake and Pond Management and Aquatic Nuisance Plant Control (ANPC), who previously held the contract for eight years. This is the second consecutive year that PLM has won the contract.

Contract Committee Chair Wayne Carter told the Council that Foster's bid was \$70/acre, nearly twice the other two, and that PLM came in at \$50/acre for each treatment. ANPC's bid was \$54/acre per treatment. It is expected that 800 total acres will be treated, and four treatments will be required. PLM will also be paid a \$25,000 administration fee for its work. Cygnet Enterprises, Inc., the parent company of ANPC, was the low bidder to provide the necessary chemicals for this year's treatment.

PLM owner Chris Cheek told the council that he expected to have a proposed treatment plan ready for the Council's approval by mid April. The Council scheduled its next meeting for Wednesday, April 18, to consider the treatment proposal. PLM will also be available for private treatment and can be reached through its Web site at www.prolakemgmt.com, or locally by calling (252) 586-5977.

In other action, the Council voted to order 7,720 grass carp. The number is based upon a recommendation by the Lake Gaston Stakeholder Board's Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG based its recommendation on 3,100 acres of weed as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the last TAG meeting, and an assumed mortality rate of 20 percent. TAG Chairman Rob Richardson, assistant professor of Aquatic and Non-cropland Weed Management at N.C. State University, told the Council that this number should bring grass carp to a level of 10 fish per infested acre, as recommended by the Lake Gaston Stakeholder Board. Richardson said approximately 20 of the fish will be implanted with radio tags, and will be tracked to provide better data on movement and mortality rates of the fish within the lake.

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:

Platinum (\$500): Professional Lake Management
Bronze (\$50): Anthony and Julie Strange, Greg and Mary Veraa

Note: Following information is a status of our members (at press time) who have renewed/joined for 2007:
 891 General Membership (\$25); 61 Bronze (\$50); 18 Silver (\$100); 1 Gold (\$250); 1 Platinum (\$500); and 28 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.

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



P.O. Box 656 ~ Littleton, NC 27850

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