



October / November 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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P&D Produce Influence Zone Map for Starting Point

The Planning and Development Committee appointed a subcommittee to initially draft a map of the potential boundaries of the area we wish to influence within the five counties. The Map Sub Committee led by Roland Beauchaine, reported on the options which were reviewed and then presented the proposed initial map with the philosophy used to map the boundaries. The P&D Committee approved a motion to use the proposed map as our starting point to be refined over time; it is referred to as the Planning and Development Influence Zone (PDIZ).

The Committee also agreed to consolidate the major objectives (into five) and then rank them. Ranked and combined list is as follows:

1. Mapping of designated commercial and private future development areas, avoidance of mall sprawl, and set asides for greenways, trails and bike routes. Guide proposed ordinances for creation of buffer zones, requirements for "Streetscape", prevention of siltation, and the creation of protected areas around waterfront and wetlands.
2. Consistent planning and zoning for the development of single family, multi-family and high density housing in a manner complementary to the rural atmosphere and environmentally sensitive area. Planning and zoning should address minimum lot sizes, building height and infrastructure impacts.
3. Description/definition of permitted signage, inoperable vehicles and below standard buildings/housing and elimination plan for non permitted and condemned signs, vehicles and buildings.
4. Define role & review process for 'land development task force' and rezoning requests vis-à-vis county governing bodies.
5. Preservation of the Rural atmosphere and guidelines for protection of the Environmental Quality of the Lake.

The Committee also addressed the fact that Ken Krulik would no longer be able to participate on the Committee since becoming the Warren County Planner. Roland Beauchaine to make some initial contacts to identify a person or persons to close this void. If there are members or acquaintances that have experience in community/county development and planning who would be willing to work on this activity please contact us through jackdsanders@embarqmail.com.

The Committee determined that it would next try to assess the baseline situation for the first Objective above by identifying and reviewing existing county zoning maps, planning maps, the Shoreline Management Plan map and the Flood Insurance Rate Map of the areas coincident with our draft Planning and Development Influence Zone. A volunteer to perform this was identified for each county. We also will try to see if there is anyone that has really good computer skills or computer mapping experience that could help with this activity.

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.

President's Corner

You know, sometimes we forget about how much we depend on other people. One of the events that brought this to mind was a recent meeting of the Public Safety Committee. Jack Saunders Safety column will give more specifics about the details of this meeting. The invited participants of this meeting, Public Safety and Fire and Rescue people from Northampton and Warren Counties shared with us some of their problems and frustrations. I would like to talk about the people that we depend upon for our essential services.

You may (or may not) be aware that in rural areas such as ours we are served by volunteers for many of our services that in large cities are provided by paid professionals. Sitting there, listening to these people made me proud to meet them. These are people that risk their lives to save you and me, and our loved ones - without pay.

What can we do to help these people do their job? We can insure that they have the resources that they need to do their jobs well. All of the volunteer services receive a large percentage of their funding from contributions. So, when you are stopped on the road for a contribution during fund drives or asked to buy stew or raffle tickets by volunteers, please dig deep. Go to the Commissioner or Supervisor meetings and speak up for adequate funding for equipment. You can make a difference.

We also owe other people that take time out of their lives to do public service such as serving on county boards, or organizations like the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. You can pay back what you owe by volunteering yourself. Not everyone has to be able to carry an unconscious person out of a burning building. They also need people who can drive a truck or even answer a phone. Contacts for these agencies that all need help are listed on the LGA web site.

John

Public Affairs Committee Focuses on County Planning & Zoning Information

Starting with the October 3rd LGA monthly meeting, the Public Affairs Committee will invite the Director of Planning/Zoning from each of the five lake area counties to speak on the current and future plans in their county and specifically address how these plans may affect the lake area. The October speaker will be Mr. Robert Hendrick, Mecklenburg County Zoning Administrator. He will be addressing cluster home developments, sign ordinance and sedimentation control among other topics. We hope you can join us each month to hear how the county plans may affect development around Lake Gaston.

In addition, the Public Affairs Committee will continue working on the ongoing objective which is staying abreast of political activities in each of the five counties surrounding Lake Gaston and the NC/VA State level where these activities might impact the area. We are hosting a Political Forum in Mecklenburg County on October 18th at 7:30 p.m., at R.T. Arnold Library, 100 East Danville Street, South Hill, VA. We have invited the following candidates:

Virginia Senator Frank Ruff (R), District 15 (Mecklenburg and Brunswick (part)) is being contested by Robert Wilkerson. Sheriff Danny R. Fox is being contested by Robert W. Hawkins, Jr. Commissioner of Revenue candidates: Robert L. Hendricks, Joseph E. Taylor, Annette M. Tucker, Jay Jennings, Timothy A. Mull and Meade Pratell. Treasurer: Sandra P. Langford and Tammy W. Johnson.

Details of the forum will appear in local newspapers. Anyone interested in working with this committee or who has information that may be beneficial to this committee, please contact Moira Underwood, LGA Executive Director, at (252) 586-6577 or execdir@LakeGastonAssoc.com.

LGA Volunteers Working With NCSU to Study Aquatic Weeds

Lake Gaston Association's Lake Environment Monitors (LEMs) are participating in the Fall 2007 Lake Gaston Mapping Project led by Dr. Rob Richardson and his team from North Carolina State University's Aquatic and Non-cropland Weed Management section of the Crop Science Department.

LEMs will be the ones collecting data for the University. During September and October they have been asked to map the most common and problematic aquatic weeds in Lake Gaston – Brittle Naiad, Cobomba, Chara, Coontail, Egeria, Eurasian Watermilfoil, Hydrilla and Lyngbya (Blue-Green Algae). During November and December they will focus on floating mats (size, location). Data collected will be sent back to Dr. Richardson and his team for compilation.

At a recent training session held at the Central Rescue Squad building in Gasburg, VA, LEMs learned how to identify the aquatic weeds by handling samples and studying their characteristics, and how to map and record sightings. The LGA was issued three pocket PCs that each contain a GPS and excel spreadsheet. Some LEMs will use a protected paper spreadsheet and GPS, as there are more LEMs than pocket PCs.

As this project will be conducted from boats, or kayaks on Lake Gaston, Dr. Richardson's team produced a laminated catalog of photographs and descriptions for each of the aquatic weeds they are looking for, and the pocket PC will be used while housed in a waterproof and floatable cover that can be worn around the neck, or held securely by a hand strap. Two rake heads, secured back to back, and tethered to a rope will be used to gather specimens.

Each LEM has an area to work in and will gather data every 200 feet including Way Point data from GPS, identification of aquatic weeds present, length of longest Hydrilla stem, and depth of water. The information will be recorded on spreadsheets in pocket PC. Measuring water clarity and temperature will be optional.

According to Dr. Richardson, the data gathered in the Fall 2007 Lake Gaston Mapping Project will be used to formulate future management decisions. The information gathering is being performed under a grant provided to Dr. Richardson and members of his staff from NC State University. The LGA Environment Committee is pleased to have the opportunity to be involved with providing useful scientific observations through their Lake Environment Monitors.

LEMs have started gathering data and members of the NCSU team have been out in the boats with them to observe the collection and recording process. Progress can be followed by reading Lake Environment Committee reports on our website or attending our next monthly meeting on October 3. A display board with photographs of the project in action will be found on the membership table every month.

For more information about this project and/or joining the LEM team, contact Jack Saunders at jackdsauanders@embarqmail.com or (252) 537-3624.

Public Safety Meets With Emergency Services Personnel

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. State Representative Michael Wray participated in the September LGA Monthly Meeting and reported the efforts to get a study Bill funded for Boater Safety Legislation in North Carolina; the bill died in committee. We were unsuccessful in getting a member of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission or State Senator Berger to attend so far. We continue contacts at Lake Norman, Lake Wiley, Bass, and others. We still would like to have Rep Wray sponsor an initial meeting in Raleigh late in the Fall.

It would be very useful to hear from LGA members to know of their support for such legislation. We continue to encourage all members and their guests to both become trained in Safe Boating Operation, but also to practice Safe Boating.

At our September Committee meeting, our guests Mr. Tim Byers, Emergency Services Director, Northampton County; Northampton County Sheriff Wardie Vincent; Ms Venecia Harris, E911 Supervisor, Warren County; Warren County Sheriff Johnnie Williams; from Warren County EMS - Dennis Pascall; Roanoke Wildwood VFD President Bob Whitehead; and RWVFD Chief Stuart (Butch) Garnett.

The 911 phone record of the 7 Aug PWC accident was reviewed and reinforces what we have heard in the past. The initial communication with the 911 center is key to starting the appropriate response. Information provided should be as complete as possible to start the right response and to have the response made to the proper location.

We also were provided a complete description of the steps taken when a call is received at both 911 communication centers and then who they contact. We also discussed the issues with communication from the communications centers with first responders. Despite many studies and some improvements to the communications equipment and relay facilities, there are still many gaps in communication coverage and some equipment compatibility issues. The participants learned that isolated improvements in one jurisdiction or district may in fact cause problems in neighboring jurisdictions or districts. This occurs due to frequency interference and the fact that radio waves do not stop at county or fire district borders. What is needed for communication improvements in the counties around the lake is an overall integrated systems approach which addresses each of the counties complete coverage requirements without impacts to neighboring jurisdictions. This is not a problem which will disappear overnight or by hoping.

The use of cell phones to contact emergency services was also addressed specifically. The issue with use of cell phones is that there are few cell phone companies with full service in the area and in many instances the phones are in roaming mode. The closest some of those phones can be located is the nearest tower that the signal hits. Without a number of nearby towers, there is no good method for GPS location. It is very important when calling 911 from a cell phone to very clearly identify the specific location one is calling from and to ask where the 911 center answering is located. **The 911 center can contact the appropriate center.**

There are a number of other suggestions that were gathered from the participating experts and LGA participants.

1. All full time residents, part time residents and renters should have the appropriate 911 information posted on or near the phone; items to include E911 address (recommend noting the spelling or number of words in street name such as Flat Rock – two words), nearby major road or intersection (Vincent Lane), subdivision (if applicable), county, and relative position around the lake (NE Quad, on Pea Hill in VA for instance).
2. Be as specific about the reason for the call (such as grass fire, house fire, auto accident, potential heart attack, boating accident, severe cut, burglary, suspicious vehicle). This is extremely useful to the communication center being able to dispatch the appropriate response.
3. Participate in your local government. Attend public forums and Boards of Commissioners/Supervisors to keep aware of what is being discussed and to make your concerns known. (Concerns are more likely to be positively addressed if described as a need of all county citizens and not just one area. Participants should also be courteous and constructive in remarks.)

From the Desk of the Executive Director ...

Since our August/September Bulletin I had a great opportunity to report on an exciting new project we have with North Carolina State University and Dr. Rob Richardson's team. I sure had my fill of taking pictures during that training session. We've included a copy of the press release in this issue. I had enough good action photos to send a different one to each of the newspapers. I did add a paragraph to let you know that since the training, the Lake Environment Monitors had been out gathering data. Also, Bruce Johnson took members of Rob's team out on the lake for the day so they could see how the gadgets they had provided the team worked in real conditions. I understand that Patrick Dempsey, one of our Mecklenburg County directors (and a LEM), is writing a computer program to make data entry easier to input into the Pocket-PC.

The Fall Mapping Project as it is called, is very exciting. And as a homeowner on Lake Gaston who has to deal with floating mats in the Fall, like a lot of our members, I'm really excited that mapping and measuring floating maps is included in this project.

Unfortunately, I couldn't join Bruce on his day trip of gathering – a missed photo opportunity – because I had a previous engagement. But, there will be more "field" trips. I want to be able to share the aspects of gathering the data with you through the local newspapers. We also put copies of our press releases on our website.

Remember to let us know when you change your email address as we don't want you to miss the monthly informational emails we send out. For those of you that do have an email address, and prefer not to share it with us, please reconsider because you are missing some very useful information from the counties on, Public Hearing details; County Commissioner/Supervisor agendas; Planning Board agendas, Budget Work Sessions, etc. As well as information that is of interest to all our members on, lake level advisories, information from the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council and their meeting agendas; Legislature information; LGA monthly meeting reminder and speaker details, etc. It's about six emails a month. Rest assured we keep your email address confidential to the LGA. Send your email address to memrec@LakeGastonAssoc.com and we will add it to our membership record.

Moir

Aquatic Weed Committee Updates LGA Plan

During the past three months the Aquatic Weed Committee has set its priorities and acted on a number of issues. The LGA Recommended Lake Gaston Management Plan for noxious weed management has been reviewed and revisited based on additional information gathered during 2007. Major input came from reports presented at the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Society (SCAPMS) annual meeting and current data being generated by Virginia Tech's grass carp tagging & tracking study. Original Plan dated February 15, 2006 can be viewed on our website at www.lakegastonassoc.com/Weeds/WeedPlan.htm.

The Committee agreed to update and reissue the Plan. The updated Plan will be available by the first of October. It will then be presented for consideration to the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council (LGWCC); Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board and the Technical Advisory Group. The updated Plan will continue to emphasize the utilization of additional grass carp to a stocking level of 15 grass carp per vegetated acre and the consideration of considering this biological tool as the primary tool in the management of hydrilla.

We recognize and appreciate the work of the LGWCC Public Affairs Committee. We will continue to support their efforts to more effectively communicate with the Lake property owners. Also, we will continue to coordinate our responses to specific inquiries from LGA members.

The LGA Website will be updated to include a synopsis of the SCAPMS meeting and encourage all interested LGA members to review this information. Also, please note the article in this Bulletin regarding the activity of the LGA Lake Environment Monitors. A lot of work by a number of actively engaged volunteers focused on the mission of protecting and improving the quality of our Lake Gaston.

Calendar notes ...

October 3 – LGA monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m. – Lake Gaston Baptist Church.

October 4, 11, & 18 – St. Paul's College and Brunswick Times Gazette host political forum for Brunswick candidates at 7 p.m., at St. Paul's College, Chicago Building, Lawrenceville, VA

October 5, 6, & 7 – "Oliver" at Lakeland Theater Company, Mosby Ave, Littleton

October 6 - Lake Gaston Lions Annual Seafood Festival. Stanley Road across from Wildwood Nursery and Garden Center, Henrico, N.C. Gates open at 1 p.m. Tickets for all you can eat and drink are \$25 & must be purchased before the event. Tickets may be purchased from the Lake Gaston Gazette and many other businesses in the area. For more information, contact Paul Meloney, Lake Gaston Lions Club Seafood Festival, at (252) 586-9866.

October 6 - 95th Squadron Big Bird & Scale RC Model Airplane Fly-in at the Club's field just off Hwy. 46 in Gaston, N.C. Free admission for spectators. Registration/landing fee for pilots is \$10. Registration begins at 8 a.m. For more information, contact John Underwood, (252) 586-4702.

October 18 – LGA hosts Meet the Candidates Forum for upcoming elections in Mecklenburg County at 7:30 p.m. at the R.T. Arnold Library, South Hill, VA

October 20 – Local NAACP hosts political forum for Brunswick candidates from 5 – 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, VA

November 6 – Election Day!

November 7 – LGA monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m. – Lake Gaston Baptist Church.

November 17 – Lake Gaston Holiday Boat Parade and Festival at South Shore Realty.

Register your boat with Lake Gaston Gazette at (252) 586-2700 or Lake Gaston Chamber of Commerce at (252) 586-5711. Entry fee: new unwrapped toy. 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. Festival & Chili Cook-off, 6 p.m. Boat Parade.

November 22 – Thanks Giving Day!

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 new members who joined at **Bronze (\$50)**: James and Donna Strobel, and Al and Nancy Veeck

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

1099 General Membership (\$25); 71 Bronze (\$50); 21 Silver (\$100); 1 Gold (\$250); 1 Platinum (\$500); and 37 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.

Attention Homeowners Associations!

Members who join through their Home Owner Associations receive a \$5 discount off our General Membership dues.

We have relaxed the 'all' must join to receive the group discount to the majority."

Contact us for further details.

HOAs joining now - memberships good through 2008

For details call (252) 586-6577 or email execdir@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!



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