



SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE ASSOCIATION

400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100, Moneta, VA 24121

www.SMLAssociation.org

Protecting the Investment of SML Residents

Lake Matters: Spring 2019

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Reporting Debris on SML and Leesville Lakes

If you spot debris on the lake, and want to have it addressed quickly go to:

www.smithmountainproject.com

- Find "Debris Report" under "Resources" on the right;
- Fill out the online form;
- Be as specific as possible describing the location.

Phone calls are acceptable, but online requests generate an email, which goes to the employees who are responsible for the removal of debris (including to their mobile phones) so issues can be addressed more quickly.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we are all anxious for spring to arrive, SMLA is preparing for our 2019 busy season. The winter months always provide an opportunity to catch up and prepare for the upcoming year.

As all of us know, we continue to experience high water events from time to time. SMLA is vigilant regarding water quality monitoring, encouraging property owners to practice proper landscape buffering and reporting of debris.

In the early part of this year, residents reported an increase in the amount of algae or 'green stuff' in the lake, especially along the shoreline. SMLA took quick and decisive action to investigate and gather samples. Fortunately, the samples were not found to be toxin-producing species.

Algae are present in all lakes and are essential to the ecosystem. In 2018, 26% of all algae found was found to be Diatoms, or good algae, which is the primary food source at the base of the fish food chain. Diatoms also increase dissolved oxygen in the water. Green algae are harmless and tend to dissipate in 24-48 hours. When there is little to no boat traffic to keep the water churned, as during winter months, algae does collect and is more visible. If citizens observe the appearance of a blue/green algae, please call SMLA and report it as soon as possible so samples can be taken. Blue/green algae block sunlight from entering the water and have potential to produce toxins. SMLA continues to work closely with DEQ on these matters.

We are gearing up for this year's Take Pride in Smith Mountain Lake event. Take Pride events will be held May 4th, 11th and 18th. Details are forthcoming. Please be thinking of getting your neighborhood or a group together to clear debris from your shorelines. These events are fun and are of tremendous benefit to lake safety and recreation. Save the dates!

SMLA participated in the Roanoke Boat Show this year, as well as in Roanoke Gives, a day of giving to charitable organizations.

In other business, the Board of Directors elected its 2019 Officers as follows: Lorie Smith, President; Jim Colby, Vice President; John Rupnik, Treasurer; and Diana Shoudel, Corporate Secretary. I offer my congratulations to these individuals and thank them for their continued work and dedication to SMLA.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to members for supporting our increased membership fees. As one would expect, not all members were in support. I have worked with those who have contacted us to share information and dialogue. I appreciate these opportunities.

I wish to extend a big 'thank you' to our volunteers! As I speak to groups in our community, grantors, partners, etc., it is my privilege to celebrate our volunteers. SMLA could not exist without the volunteer support we have received for 50 years. Thank you so very much!

Please let us know how we can assist you. SMLA is proudly positioned to support our members and community!

Respectfully submitted,

Lorie Smith

SMLA President

BUFFER LANDSCAPE

The fertilizer from lawns, oil and gas from driveways and roads, soil from building sites, litter, pesticides, sand and salt are polluting Smith Mountain Lake. In fact, the US Environmental Protection Agency reports that runoff from lawns, roads and rooftops is a primary cause of pollution of our waterways. Regardless of the type or source of a pollutant entering our lake or stream, the overall consequences to the **environment** may be the same. That is the elimination of the natural habitat of a stream organism, or the discharge of a chemical that interferes with a species' reproductive cycle.

The most obvious problem associated with runoff is the increased production of algae blooms. An algae bloom contributes to the natural "aging" process of a lake, and in some lakes can provide important benefits by boosting primary productivity. But in other cases, recurrent or severe blooms can cause dissolved oxygen depletion as the large numbers of dead algae decay. In highly enriched lakes, algal blooms may lead to **anoxia** and fish kills during the summer.

Blooms of toxic species of algae and cyanobacteria can flood the water environment with the biotoxin they produce. When toxic, blooms can cause human illnesses such as gastroenteritis (if the toxin is ingested) and lung irritations (if the toxin becomes aerosolized and hence airborne). Other cyanobacterial toxins are less drastic, and cause skin irritation to people who swim through an algal bloom. Toxicity can sometimes cause severe illness and death to animals that consume the biotoxin-containing water.

In terms of human values, the odors and unattractive appearance of algal blooms can detract from the recreational value our lake and may cause property values to decline.

What is Buffer Landscaping and why is it important? Creating a natural buffer landscape on your lakefront property is a way to reduce pollution of the lake and to enjoy multiple benefits including:

- Less maintenance

- Natural backdrop for your water view

- Filters the water runoff

- Provides a natural habitat

- Protects and in some cases, enhances property value.

Our Buffer Landscape Advisory Service Team (Blast) is made up of volunteers who are master gardeners. They will work with you for free to develop an area of trees, shrubs and perennials that will protect our lake while making your lakefront beautiful. Call us at 540-719-0690 or visit us at www.smlaassociation.org for more information.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

The 2018 Water Quality Monitoring Results Report has been finalized and posted to the SMLA Website and is available for you to view or download at : <http://smlaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2018-SML-Report-Final-Compressed.pdf>.

All Water Quality Monitors from 2018 have now been contacted to see if they would like to continue as monitors for the 2019 monitoring season. As soon as all responses have been received, individuals who are on the waiting list will be contacted if there are any available sites.

The annual training for the water monitors has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Wednesday May the 8th in the SMLA conference room. This will be followed by the customary homemade Strawberry Shortcake.

The monitoring schedule for this year has been finalized and distributed to all WQM monitors and the four summer interns from Ferrum College have been selected for 2019 and have already begun their training.

We look forward to another year of working with the great group of dedicated and selfless individuals who make up the SMLA Water Quality Monitors.

From 01-Dec-2018 to 28-Feb-2019 thirteen lake area households bought groceries at Kroger and designated SMLA to receive 5% of their eligible purchases!

So Kroger just sent us \$63.35! Now that's nothing to sneeze at!

But can you imagine what we could have received if more of **YOU** designated SMLA as your Kroger Charity? All you need is our NPO number: RF748, and your Kroger Plus Card. Just go to krogercommunityrewards.com click "Sign In/Register." and follow the instructions. If you would like step-by-step instructions please email smlalakematters@gmail.com, and don't forget to sign up and order from Amazon Smile too!

WATER SAFETY: Boating season is about to start – are we ready?

Can't wait to start boating? A little preparation will go a long way for an enjoyable and safe boating season. Think of this time as an annual physical exam for your boat.

After you uncover that boat, you first need to check to see if you have not had any critters that have been using your boat for a winter home and enjoyed chewing on the electrical wiring and seat cushions. That does unfortunately happen once in awhile. Hopefully, that is not your problem and you can proceed with a good cleaning.

Now, check on the fluids. Is the engine oil clean and full and looks like no water has entered? Next check the hydraulic and cooling fluids, if you have them. Move the steering and lubricate the connections. Rubber hoses must not be stiff and brittle; replace before they fail. If you have an outdrive, check the rubber boot between the outdrive and hull. A worn out boot can lead to sinking problems.

If you have at least five seasons on your battery, it is time to replace. Many times boat batteries don't make five seasons. Make sure your navigation lights are working even if you never plan on going out at night.

After the mechanical and electrical checks have been completed, pull out your boating safety equipment. Fire extinguishers must be showing "green" on the dial, or the "pin" must pop back if that is the design. Note – many "Kiddie" brand fire extinguishers have been recalled. Let the life jackets air out in the sun while you check to see that all snaps and buckles work properly and that each one is marked "Coast Guard Approved." Any jackets that don't meet that test must be removed from your boat.

Next, check to see if all of the gear that you keep on your boat is still there. Some may still be in the garage or loaned to someone else or taken by others without your knowledge. It is always best to have an inventory list of your boating gear.

This beginning season task may take a little time and money but if done completely it will make for a safe and enjoyable boating season.

And one last thing, please make sure that that you have your "Certificate of Number" (boat registration) as well as your "Virginia Boating Safety Education Certificate" on board. These documents are the first things that law enforcement will ask for when stopping your boat.

Have a great summer and let's all keep up the good SML safety record from last year.

PS, The Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Sail and Power Squadron will be holding their annual FREE, boating safety check weekend on May 18th and 19th at the Bridgewater Plaza docks and the Crazy Horse Marina docks.



SAVE OUR STREAMS ANNUAL REPORT, 2018

In its annual survey report of water quality, Smith Mountain Lake's Save our Streams unit reports that 16 streams in our watershed were surveyed in the calendar year 2018. Three- and four-person teams of certified monitors, who base their findings on a count of macroinvertebrates, conducted a total of 52 monitoring events. The ratings are based on the relative numbers of pollution-tolerant and pollution-intolerant species identified. Scores run from 0 to 12, from low to high, with a score of 7 and below considered unacceptable; 8 in the gray area zone; and 9 and above acceptable. This year's average score was a 9.

In the words of our regional stream health expert, Dr. Don Kelso, while "there is no single way of encapsulating the quality of the water, the quality of the habitat, or the robustness of the community of organisms..." our monitoring protocol is among the best available. One of the variables we need to work with is weather, which we cannot control, and this past year the total rainfall was roughly 50% above average. This had a major impact on the results, especially in late summer and fall, when many monitoring events had to be cancelled. Since the insects, snails, and crustaceans that we collect live on stream bottoms, clinging to sticks and rocks, it was often difficult to find sufficient numbers and a suitable diversity of species to obtain a valid sample, as frequent flooding often washed our target specimens and much of their habitat downstream. For that reason, we were unable to monitor numerous streams quarterly, which is our goal. Consequently, our raw results, which might otherwise indicate a deterioration of water quality, are somewhat misleading, as the unable-to-determine category included streams that might have graded out as acceptable with complete data.

Year	2016	2017	2018	
Sites Monitored	15	17	16	
Acceptable (9-12)	8	12	7	<i>*based on insufficient data, either due to fewer than three monitoring events or an insufficient number of specimens for a valid sample</i>
Gray Area (8)	4	1	4	
Unacceptable (0-7)	4	1	0	
Unable to Determine*	0	3	5	

Results by Area, 2017 vs. 2018

Area Results	Acceptable 2017/2018	Gray Area 2017/2018	Unacceptable 2017/2018	Unable to Determine 2017/2018	
North Shore (Bedford Co.)	3/0	0/1	0/0	0/2	(3 sites)
Gills Creek Area	3/2	0/0	0/0	0/1	(3 sites)
Boones Mill Area	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	(1 site)
Upper Blackwater	1/1	0/1	1/0	0/0	(2 sites)
Lower Blackwater	1/1	1/0	0/0	1/1	(2 sites)
Hardy Road Area	1/1	2/2	0/0	0/0	(3 sites)
Pigg River	1/1	0/0	0/0	1/1	(2 sites)

Executive Summary:

- Results from 2018 were good and largely comparable to those of the previous year. If one discounts the cancellations caused by rain, the results from 2018 were largely comparable to the satisfactory ratings of the previous two years.
- Despite volunteer turnover due to relocations and age-related "retirements," our overall team strength remained steady at between 42 and 45 volunteers, with six new members certified and an additional five in training.
- As the Mountain Valley Pipeline construction progresses through our area, it will be crossing environmentally healthy streams. In paying special attention to the effects of pipeline construction on the Upper and Lower Blackwater sites, we can conclude that initial results—largely before pipeline construction in the area had begun—indicate good water quality (eight samples with an average score of 9.6).
- Looking at the big picture, this past year gave us an idea of what the effects on the Lake would be if every year were as rainy as 2018. To give a single example, in all likelihood, algae growth and turbidity would increase in the Lake, due to increased runoff from agriculture.
- Most importantly, in the coming year we will continue to assess whether 2018's unusual weather pattern was a mere quirk, or a sign of impending climate change.

SMLA Office Hours :

The secretary is in the office on Tuesday and Friday from 9:00 to 5:00. We are open most Mondays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 1:00 (staffed by volunteers). The office is closed on Wednesday.

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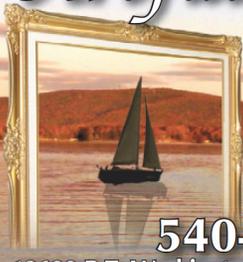
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SMLA members receive 10% off.


An AEP representative is in the SMLA office on Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:30.

This is an opportunity for property owners to ask general questions about shoreline management at Smith Mountain Lake.

No appointment is needed.

For Information about the Shoreline Management Plan go to www.smithmtn.com.

