

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Our Community of Volunteers

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Well, it's almost over. 2020 will be the year to remember...or not. 2020 will be known as the "lost year." It has presented all of us with substantial challenges, and yet it seems like just yesterday that we celebrated bringing in the 2020 new year. But in spite of the difficulties that many of us have experienced, this year is one that demonstrates how communities continue to rise up and support neighbors in need.

Under the restrictions of COVID-19 our local charities again have responded to the call to help assist local families in need with food and clothing. Businesses have used their kitchens and staff to prepare and distribute food to the needy. Select communities have pooled resources, equipment and volunteers to gather, remove and dispose of the debris from their coves. While not COVID related, after experiencing extraordinarily high water, neighbors all around the lake volunteered to rescue boats, personal belongings and mitigate dock damage, most without being asked. Not all, but most of this, is possible because of your charitable donations. We are a population of caring people, readily volunteering and donating for good causes.

SMLA is enormously grateful for those that volunteer their time and resources in support of our mission to *protect the water of SML and promote safe recreation*. Recently, I posted a full-page ad in the Smith Mountain Eagle to thank our numerous volunteers for supporting the organization and our projects. Because of these volunteers, we successfully executed and completed several of our marquee projects through the pandemic.

This organization is based on volunteers and their donation of time and resources. It takes your collective special efforts to organize, research, plan and execute projects that help our good cause. Your membership and your volunteer service are essential. Without YOU, SMLA has no structure, no meaning, no force. As you consider end of year opportunities to donate to local charities, please keep SMLA in mind and continue to support our membership, our projects, and our mission!

Here's to a healthy, happy and charitable New Year. Welcome 2021!

Kindest regards,

John Rupnik

John Rupnik, President

Please be sure to let us know if you have a change of address or contact information. You can reach us at 540-719-0690 or via eMail at theoffice@smlassociation.org

We are located on Scruggs Road in The Plaza, lower level, by Discovery Shop Annex.
The SMLA office will be closed for two weeks from December 24th through January 6th.
Office hours following this period will be Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30 to 4:30 by Office Administrator Teresa Picking.

Do you shop at Kroger or Amazon? Are you designating 5% of your eligible purchases to be donated to SMLA? It's quick, easy, and won't cost you one cent! Email theoffice@smlassociation.org and we'll send you step by step instructions. If you haven't checked lately, please make sure your contribution is coming to us. Help us to help protect the lake! Do it today!

VESSEL Pump-Out

SMLA works diligently to make sure effluent does not end up being discharged into our lake by pumping boats at participating local marinas, at no charge to boat owners, from mid-May until after Labor Day! Here is the final data for the 2020 season.

Sample: Weekend	September 12, 2020	Season Totals
Number of Boats Pumped	7	263
Total Gallons Effluent	225	5782
Average Gallons/Boat	32.14	21.98
Total Effluent for Season	5782	5782
Truck Mileage	131	1689
# People receiving educational materials	3	504

SMLA 2021-2022 Board of Directors Elected

On December 1, the SMLA membership approved, by ballot, the nominations for the Board of Directors for 2021/22.

Board members whose term has been renewed for another two years include: Bob Hastings—SMLA's Vice President, Buffer Landscape Committee Chairman, and prospective Marketing Director; Tom Hofelich—SMLA's Assistant Treasurer; Neil Holthouser—AEP's Representative to the SMLA Board; and Edgar Tuck—Bedford County's Representative to the SMLA Board.

Newly approved Board members include: Bill Butterfield; Jeannie Gorman; Joanne Houpt; Geoff Orth; Robert Saunders and Mike Streff. Their biographies were distributed with the ballots in previous correspondence and assignments are forthcoming.

Incumbent Board members having one more year in their term include: Lorie Smith—Franklin County's Representative to SMLA; Gale Easter—SMLA's Membership Chairperson and Newsletter Publisher; Brian Key—Bedford Regional Water Authority Representative to SMLA; Pat Massa—Water Safety Council Chairman; Tara Poelzing—Western Virginia Water Authority Representative to SMLA; Gail Phipps—SMLA Corporate Secretary and prospective Membership Chairperson; Chuck Sinex—Water Level Monitoring Chairman and Representative to the AEP Recreation Committee; John Rupnik—President; George Morrison—Nomination Committee Chairman and prospective Vessel Pump Out Program Chairman; and Tom Hardy—Prospective Water Quality Monitoring Chairman.

I wish to personally thank those departing Board members, each of whom have served with distinction and provided great contributions and perspective to SMLA's mission, functions, and projects. Departing members include: Victor Clarke—SMLA's first marketing Director; Mike McCord—SMLA's Director of the Water Quality Monitoring Program; Kelly Drinkard—SMLA's Treasurer; Randy Stow—SMLA Past President, Vessel Pump Out Program Chairman, SMLA's Representative to TLAC and their Navigation Committee Representative, Lake Map Chairman, and winner of the 2019 Melvin S. Johnston Award; Chris Bechtler—Representative to AEP's Debris Committee and winner of the 2020 Spirit of the Lake Award; and Doug Pafford—Weed Monitoring Committee. While their shoes will be difficult to fill, our newly selected members will be up for the challenge!

SMLA is always looking for motivated individuals wanting to contribute to our mission to *protect the water of SML and promote safe recreation*. If you are interested in serving on this "working Board" and participating in one or more of SMLA's important programs, please email your name and short bio to theoffice@smlassociation.org. We appreciate your interest and future contributions!

Thank you all! John Rupnik, President

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

The summer of 2020 has come and gone and it is time again to report on the health of our Lake. First I'd like to say how very proud I am of all of the SMLA water quality monitors and of the Ferrum College staff, who despite everything going on this year conducted the water quality program as "business as usual". I also want to thank those that help fund this program every year, including AEP, the Bedford and Southwest Virginia Water companies, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and of course, our SMLA members.

Here are the results of our 2020 Water Quality testing this year.

Bacterial Testing: Only one testing period had locations where the E. coli levels exceeded of the VDH standards for recreational waters. This occurred during the testing week of June 16th and this week was preceded by heavy rainfall. The locations with higher readings were in the area near Bay Roc Marina and in the cove near Crystal Shores Marina. It should be noted that the reading near Crystal Shores Marina was only slightly higher than the VDH standard. All of the other five sampling weeks had results that were well below the VDH standard. This is very good news.

Algae: Green algae was the predominate type of algae in the lake this year making up 73%, followed by Diatoms at 14% and Blue Green at 13%. The vast majority of the Blue-Green algae found in the lake are of the type that is NOT LIKELY TO PRODUCE TOXINS. Thankfully, blue-green algae counts weren't higher this year even though we had some algae blooms early in the season. In 2019 Diatoms were the predominate algae making up 56%, followed by Green at 32% and Blue-Green at 12%. Algae effects water clarity.

Secchi Depth/Water Clarity: As I know you have all observed, water clarity this year was not good. As a matter of fact, the water clarity in 2020 is the worst that has been seen in at least 20 years. When Green Algae percentages go up, water clarity does down.

Phosphorous and Chlorophyll-a: While Phosphorous levels were down from last year and the slope of the average shows it is going down slightly, they were still above the 5, 10 and 20 year averages. We should all continue to make efforts to reduce the amount of Phosphorous entering the lake since it is a major contributor to algae growth which is a major contributor to water clarity. Per Dr. Bob Pohl of Ferrum College, "I believe the Chlorophyll-a results are related to the higher numbers of green algae we saw this year. The numbers were highest early in the season with the flooding we experienced. That said, I think that the flush of so much organic material into the coves and the lake bottom have continued to add to the nutrient releases and the high green algae numbers again this year." To help mitigate the flow of nutrients into the lake, the SMLA has been promoting a Buffer Landscaping initiative, which provides lake residents with free consultation by Master Gardeners and Master Naturalist volunteers who will visit your lake property and assess how best to plant native varieties to absorb these pollutants.

Also contributing to decline in water clarity in 2020 was increased watercraft traffic all week long, not just on the weekends. Studies on water quality and clarity find that in heavily trafficked waterways, boats have a noticeable impact. The presence of vessels seems to increase the growth of algae and kick up sediments, both of which obstruct sunlight. The increase in boat traffic and watercraft that produce larger wakes stirs up more sediment, especially in coves, narrower fingers of the lake and shallower upstream areas.

New for 2020: The Smith Mountain Lake Association and Ferrum College have launched a new algae reporting tool. The link to the tool is shown here and is posted on the SMLA web site. By timely reporting of algae blooms via this tool, we will be able to analyze the instances and do source tracking to hopefully cut down on the nutrients being released into the lake causing these blooms.

We believe the implementation of a "Smart Lake" concept would benefit SML and we continue to drive toward that goal. Although SMLA's application for a grant from the Virginia Environmental Endowment to implement a Smart Lake concept using year-round remote sensors was not approved for 2020, we will be resubmitting an updated version for 2021. The manufacturer of the remote sensors, In-Situ, has loaned us a probe that is currently installed and being tested. We anticipate that our experience gained from the deployment of this probe will strengthen our case for the grant application in 2021.

In Summary, SML continues to have very low E. coli and very low Blue Green algae, making our lake one of the cleanest lakes east of the Mississippi. You can help keep our lake clean and clear by reducing what you put in the lake and by reporting, via the Algae Reporting Tool, any algae blooms you see.

This wonderful place called Smith Mountain Lake is a little piece of Paradise. You can help keep it that way. Help SMLA protect the water of SML. *Michael McCord, WQM Program Director*

SMLA Wishes to Thank all our 2020 Volunteers

For the past 50 years, SMLA members have volunteered to provide support to SMLA's numerous programs, positions and events. Covid-19 restrictions precluded me from thanking them in person, so I want to take this opportunity to personally acknowledge our volunteers and express my sincere appreciation for their efforts, albeit limited, during the past year. Each of them has actively supported the mission of SMLA to *protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe recreation*. Indeed, they collectively represent SMLA – the Steward of the Lake. By John Rupnik, President, SMLA



Water Quality Monitoring Volunteers: *Our volunteers are responsible for sampling our lake water at 84 locations six times per year from their own boats during the summer season. Results from these efforts reflect lake water quality trending data over the past 34 years.*

Eric Anderson, Cindy Bresson, Peter & Chris Brinckerhoff, Jim Buriak, Gael & Smith Chaney, Mark Earnhardt Sam & Gale Easter, Fred & Sandy Flowers, Steve Gardner, Rex & Rose Goodnight, Gary & Mary Ellen Gross, Tom Hamlin, Tom Hardy, Ken Harris, Ken & Jean Hurt, Daphne & Ron Jamison, Don & Sandy Kelso, Bill & Carolyn Koontz, Robert & Valerie Leonard, Rusty MacMullan, Jerry & Colleen McNulty, Jerry Malen, Mike & Gail McCord, Tom McDermet, Mac & Janie McWilliams, Mike Mutchler, Carol & Gary Noesner, Ken Ralph, John Rupnik, Larry Sakayama, Tom Scott, Phil Servidea, Diana & John Shoudel, Houston Snoddy, Randy & Judy Stow, Gale & Bill Taylor, Bob Toone, Rick Watson

Buffer Landscaping Assist Support Teams: *Composed of Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists who volunteer to assess landowners' waterfronts and advise homeowners of landscape options to reduce the flow of nutrients and pollutants into the lake.*

Robin Cowan, Kathy Scott, Duane Perry, Steve Gardner, Paul Paulter, Beth Paulter, Bob Hastings, Ann Fouse, Rick Watson, Lee Borgman, Jean Borgman

Save Our Stream Monitors: *While our volunteer monitors could not practice monitoring in the field due to Covid restrictions, these "critter counters" assisted in training new monitors and planning for future events.*

Dorian Albano, Jean Borgman, Lee Borgman, Peter Brinckerhoff, Amy Chattin, Lynne Decker, James Harvey, Randy Holden, Doug Horne, Charlotte Hubbard, Connie Hylton, Don Kelso, Bill Koontz, Carolyn Koontz, Frances Lash, Alicia McGeorge, Jim Mann, Geoff Orth, Bob Rasmussen, Karen Rasmussen, Stan Rowe, JoAnn Ruffin, Shearer Rumsey, Kurt Schoenberg, Glenn Siemon, Dale Stellhorn, Bill Wilber, Lyne Aigner, Guy Buford, Becky Frauen, JoAnn Fritz, Jennifer Helms, Linda Osborne, Beth Pautler, Kathy Smith

Water Safety Council members/volunteers: *The WSC is instrumental in maintaining both safety and responsible operation in water activities on the Lake.*

Captain Duane Amos, Chris Bechtler, Deedee Boundurant, Barry Bridges, Mike Bumpass, Paul Caldwell, Officer Brett Clawson, Art Cournoyer, Jane Crawford, Bruce Dungan, Jason Dunavont, Rick Ellett, Officer James Hale, Jerry Hale, Mendy Harmon, Neil Harrington, Robert Hastings, Pete Lewis, Patrick Massa, Tom Merriman, Sheriff Mike Miller, Mark McGlothlin, Mike Mutchler, Jeff Prowse, Rusty Richardson, Trevor Ruble, Officer Tyler Routon, Sergeant James Slaughter, Chuck Smith, Rhonnie Smith, Neil Sturman, Randy Stow, George Tawes, Ryan Walters, Major Bryan Young

Office Volunteers: *Our office volunteers work cooperatively with the Office Administrator to ensure the SMLA office is manned 4 days per week: Bruce & Wendy Dungan, Gale Easter, Debbie Samsa, Molly Merkel, Paul Marx, Joanne Houpt*

Board of Directors: *This is a working Board, not only providing the President guidance for policy and operations, but also leading most of our major programs. I am blessed to have these intelligent, devoted, caring and diligent volunteers to help run SMLA*

John Rupnik—*President*
Bob Hastings—*Vice President/Buffer Landscaping*
Kelly Drinkard—*Treasurer*
Gale Phipps—*Corporate Secretary*
Chris Bechtler—*AEP Debris Committee Rep*
Victor Clark—*Marketing*
Gale Easter—*Membership, Newsletter*
Tom Hardy—*Water Quality Monitoring Committee*
Tom Hofelich—*Assistant Treasurer*
Neil Holthouser—*AEP Rep*
Brian Key—*Bedford Regional Water Authority Rep*

Patrick Massa—*Chair, Water Safety Council*
Michael McCord—*Director, Water Quality Monitoring*
George Morrison—*Vessel Pumpout*
Doug Pafford—*Weed Monitoring*
Tara Poelzing—*Western VA Water Authority Rep*
Chuck Sinex—*Water Level Monitoring*
Lorie Smith—*Franklin County Rep*
David Smitherman—*Pittsylvania County Rep*
Randy Stow—*Vessel Pumpout Chair/TLAC Rep/Navigation Committee Rep/Lake Maps*
Edgar Tuck—*Bedford County Rep*

Other Volunteers:

Bob Camicia—*AEP Aquatic Vegetation Committee Rep; Stephen Quinnan—Invasive Species Chair; Jim Corp—AEP Debris Committee Rep/AEP Habitat Committee Rep; Cindy Bresson—SMLA Face Book Coordinator; Sarah Streff—SMLA Face Book Contributor; Barbara Jordan—SMLA Webmaster*

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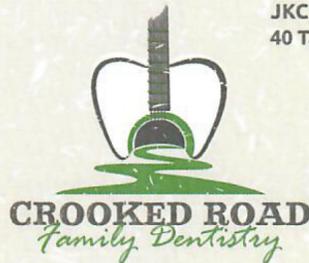
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Smith Mountain Lake Association Announces Awareness Initiative — Releases New Logo

My fellow SMLA members: I would like to share with you that for the past 50 years, our all-volunteer, non-profit organization has been doing extraordinary things to keep our lake clean and safe. However, very few lakefront homeowners, including some of our members, do not know what we do and why we need their support. Subsequently, we have launched this awareness campaign to help area homeowners better understand the mission and accomplishments of their organization. Key branding elements released today are the new Mission Statement and Logo.

SMLA works independently with our volunteer members and with area business partners to support lake initiatives that include water quality monitoring, buffer gardening, save our streams, invasive species, boating and water safety to name just a few. These initiatives all support the recently released Mission Statement—

To protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe recreation, and its logo that is found below. Please visit the SMLA website for more information on the work that SMLA performs and how you can support our continued efforts at www.smlassociation.org.



John Rupnik, President