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<i>Change of contact info?</i>	
Call 540-719-0690 or	
eMail theoffice	
@smlassociation.org	

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer is here, and we're all excited to be outdoors with those that we love. SMLA's summer is turning out to be a busy one. All of our programs are in full swing with our volunteers accomplishing each and every task in a timely manner. We're all working hard as the Steward of the Lake protecting YOUR waterfront investment.

You probably noticed our water looks exceptionally clear this year compared to 2020. Is it really better? Is it coincidental? Is there scientific data to back up this observation? Here's our analysis. COVID restrictions prevented stream monitoring in 2020, but in April through May 2021, the results from Save Our Streams monitoring indicated a better rating than stream samples showed in 2019, with only three of sixteen streams rated unsatisfactory this year. Likewise, Water Quality Monitoring started its 35th year in May, and results are also very positive through three sampling events. Water clarity is measuring much better than the same time last year, chlorophyll *a* is down which means lower algae production, and NO samples have contained E. coli bacteria.

While we are always thrilled to see clear, clean water, we must ask ourselves, "Why? What has changed since a year ago?" Think about it. What did we have in late winter/early spring last year? Two high water events. We might be inclined to believe that plenty of rain is a good thing, and that's usually true if it comes in moderate, occasional periods. But these heavy, long rains scoured the watershed, streams, and shorelines causing significant sediment, nutrients and pollutants to drain into our lake. It takes time for the sediments to settle, for nature to capture and use the nutrients to make algae and feed the grasses, and for pollutants to dissipate, break down and either be absorbed into the sediments or flow over the dam. Hence, our lake had more algae and more suspended sediments. Without the burden of excessive runoff this year, SML is easily handling a more "normal" volume of these stressors.

Looking back at the 20-year trend, we will see that some years are better than others. But the overall trend over the past decade has been that phosphorous has been creeping up, Chlorophyll-a has been creeping up, and water clarity has been creeping down. We certainly should be enjoying the fact that so far this year the numbers are all looking quite good, but we should not lose sight of the fact that one year does not make a trend. This is why SMLA works so hard to monitor our lake, educate our residents, and encourage them to use best management practices (BMP), like planting shoreline buffer gardens and ensuring their marine heads are pumped out routinely. These BMPs go a long way to mitigate the already excessive biological and chemical oxygen demands during heavy, high water years.

Do enjoy our clear, clean lake this year, but please continue to support our mission to protect the water of SML and promote safe recreation. Let your neighbors and friends know what we do. Our volunteer teams are working hard and need your assistance as they strive to keep SML....the Jewel of the Blue Ridge.

Kindest regards,

John Rupnik

John Rupnik, President

 * *SMLA is seeking new members to serve on their Board of Directors for the*
 * *2022-2024 term. Should you need additional information or wish to volunteer to*
 * *serve your lake community in a most important way, please submit your name*
 * *and phone number via email to theoffice@smlassociation.org. We'll contact you.*
 * *****

New Lake Maps are here! We have updated marinas, restaurants, and business partners on the map; plus GPS locations for channel markers were updated in 2020, so if you're still using an old map, you'll want to replace it with this one! Look for it at marinas, in the SMLA office, or order online. smlassociation.org

We are located on Scruggs Road in The Plaza, lower level, by the Discovery Shop Annex, we are open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30 to 4:30 by Office Administrator Teresa Picking, and some other mornings by volunteers.

SMLA Receives Charitable Contribution in Memory of Larry Iceman

The Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) has received a generous charitable contribution to honor the memory of longstanding SMLA leader Larry Iceman. This donation was presented to SMLA President John Rupnik by Mr. Iceman's widow, Beatrice Iceman, on the two-year anniversary of his passing. Larry was passionate about the responsibility all homeowners have to protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake. He believed that we should all be stewards of our lake and backed up his belief with tireless leadership in SMLA since retiring in 2004.



John Rupnik was stunned by Mrs. Iceman's generous contribution but not surprised—knowing the Iceman family. John noted that, "Larry Iceman was a rock serving as a foundation Board member for many years. He served our watershed steadfastly through many leadership roles that included directing the Water Quality Monitoring initiative, Lake Clean-up, Chair of the Lake Council and President of SMLA. He has been profoundly missed."

To commemorate Larry and this donation, the SMLA Board of Directors has designated the conference room in the SMLA office as the Larry E. Iceman Memorial Conference Room. A plaque, created and donated to SMLA by former BOD member and former WQM chair Mike McCord who actually took over that position from Larry, has been placed above the threshold of the conference room for all to see—reminding us of Larry's contributions to SMLA and the lake.

Each year, as a part of AEP's License requirements, TLAC and SMLA, participate in a formal review of inputs regarding invasive aquatic vegetation on SML. Part of SMLA's requirements are for a team of divers to make observations of the presence or lack of invasive aquatic vegetation in specific areas that had previously been known to produce this vegetation. We could use another qualified diver for our volunteer team. SMLA has most all the basic diver's equipment and tools for one diver. Training will be provided on vegetation types of interest. For more information, please contact the SMLA office at (540) 719-0690.

SOS Water Quality Results Show Significant Improvement

Save our Streams has completed its spring testing series at 16 stream sites in the SML Watershed. The biological method used, which involves taking a sample of macroinvertebrate species from the streams, is a nationally accepted protocol. While we will have a more comprehensive picture of stream health once we complete our fall testing in October, these preliminary scores, when compared with the previous results from 2019, show a clear upward trend.

Average Stream Scores: Scale: Unsatisfactory/0-7; Gray Area/8; Satisfactory/9-12
2019 (Annual)—**8.3**
2021 (Spring)—**9.2**

By Category
2019 (Annual): Unsatisfactory—**4** Gray Area—**9** Satisfactory—**3**
2021 (Spring): Unsatisfactory—**3** Gray Area—**3** Satisfactory—**10**

Initial Conclusions

The upward direction of scores is clearly encouraging.

- The good results are likely due in part to a change in DEQ/SOS protocol which aims at giving a stream a chance to "show its best face;" that is, the new semi-annual testing in spring and fall is likely to show better results than the quarterly testing plan used previously. In the summer, results are perhaps more likely to be affected by weather events, which can erase macroinvertebrates from stream bottoms, and sudden hatches, which can spike insect counts. In the winter, insects are harder to find and the chances are better for a non-qualifying sample.
- There has been less highway and pipeline construction going on in the immediate area of our testing; hence, less silt, and silt is likely to reduce stream quality. Moreover, there have been no reports of chemical spills or livestock straying into streams, incidents of which have harmed water quality in the past.

All in all, a very good start for water quality monitoring this year.

Geoff Orth, Save Our Streams Chair

Five top tips from SML WATER SAFETY COUNCIL



1.) Use life jackets while boating. Make wearing one a must for children you have aboard and a strong recommendation for adults. A skipper or mate, while donning their own PFD, can simply say, “We really prefer that everyone on the boat wears a life jacket...can I get one out for you?” At the very least have one for every passenger on deck where it will be quickly available. And remember that you, as the skipper, have every right to REQUIRE that PFDs are worn anytime you feel it is called for—bad weather, limited visibility (think nighttime!), towing or being towed, holiday weekend traffic. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to keep everyone safe, thus your prerogative to insist on life jacket use. SML Water Safety Council sells nice signs that remind children to wear life jackets on the dock as well. Get one for only \$10. at the SMLA office.

2.) Never Swim Without a Partner. Whether from shore, off the dock or off the boat, use the old “buddy system” from your summer camp days to be sure someone is paying attention to every swimmer. And designate a responsible adult as the official “watcher” of children swimmers. Don’t just presume “someone” will take on that role.

3.) Get Educated. The Virginia Boater Education law is now eight years old, and we’ve seen the accident rate plummet. There’s no doubt that educated/aware boaters are safer boaters. If you or your loved ones haven’t yet attended a Boat Virginia course, get scheduled. Anyone who’s on the water needs to have working knowledge of the boating basics the course covers. Everyone who attends learns something. Remember: You don’t know what you don’t know!

4.) Maintain a Proper Lookout. This is so important it’s stated in both the International and Inland Rules of Navigation. Just as in driving, operator distraction is a major contributor to boating incidents. If your boat has an attentive lookout stationed, you have a chance of avoiding a collision with a boat that doesn’t. Every operator is obligated to act to avoid a collision with another boat. Scan the waterway, anticipate potential dangers, clearly show your intended course and stay well clear of other vessels, obstacles, navigation aids, docks and swimmers.

5.) Know the Rules of the Road. Boats being overtaken and boats ahead crossing from your starboard side (right front) have the right of way. Reduced visibility calls for reduced speed. Running lights are required during periods of low visibility—darkness, fog, rain. Keep to the right in channels, leave plenty of space when overtaking, and don’t “fall in line” with boats towing skiers or tubers.

Bonus Tip: Know and Maintain Your Boat/Equipment. Even relatively new boats can suffer burnt out running lights and other deficiencies. Arrange for a Vessel Safety Check of equipment and systems every year. Schedules of organized inspection events can be found at area marinas...or follow the “Boating Safety Checks” link at <http://www.cgau.org/> to arrange an inspection of your boat and PWCs nearby or at your own dock. It’s FREE, and it provides great peace of mind.

Pat Massa, WSC Chair

Take Pride in Smith Mountain Lake 2021 Final Debris Collection Data Report

A modified version of the Take Pride in Smith Mountain Lake was held this year. Debris collection supplies were provided to individual groups that planned their own events.

Take Pride in Smith Mountain Lake is a joint project of SMLA, TLAC and the SMLRCOC. Many thanks to those groups and individuals who participated.

From: Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission

Date of Cleanup: May 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021

Number of Individuals to participants: 166

Estimated Number of Miles Covered: 48.5

Estimated Pounds of Trash Collected: Approx. 32,534 (16.27 tons)*

Estimated Number of Bags Reported: 190

Most Unusual Items Picked Up: 39 ft. tree, paddle boat, gas can, Taylor Tuff buoy, toilet seat, auto tire with rims, cigarette lighters, lumber with carpet attached, dock material, flipflop

Only 16 of the 18 events submitted debris collection reports. This data was compiled from these submissions and information provided by the dumpster vendors.

In addition to debris removed during the Take Pride in Smith Mountain Lake event, AEP removed a total of 260 tons of debris during the month of May (110: Lake Crew, 150: Contractor).

**Note: Estimated Pounds of Trash Collected include trash bags, plus loose debris collected from the lake.*



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

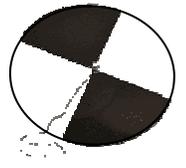
Creating awareness and providing learning opportunities allows SMLA to extend knowledge and action outward through our community with the result of better lake protection. Our volunteer education force reaches out to learners of all ages in a variety of ways to share knowledge that will result in action. The SMLA Environmental Education Committee is comprised of members, local educators, retired teachers, and Virginia Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners who are concerned about the environment of our lake community.

The Environmental Education committee is hopeful that we will bring our message to schoolchildren by sometime next school year and to summer campers in 2022. If you are interested in building understanding about Smith Mountain Lake's environmental health with both children and/or adults, please contact Tara Poelzing, Environmental Education Chair, at tara.poelzing@westernvawater.org to learn more about how you can volunteer.

BUFFER LANDSCAPING announces our new brochure, *Protecting Your Waterfront Investment*, providing information about appropriate watershed management—specific to the Smith Mountain Lake watershed, and now available in the SMLA office. Stop by and pick up your copy. Let's remember that clean, clear, safe water is a responsibility we all share. In fact, we don't have to travel far to see lakes experiencing very troubling issues associated with improper watershed management. At SMLA we are committed to not becoming one of those lakes! Won't you **JOIN US!**

SML WATER QUALITY MONITORING 2021

The chances are that at some point you have noticed boats on Smith Mountain Lake with crew members dangling a 25' length of hose in the water or lowering a black and white Secchi disk over the side of the boat. If so, you have witnessed one of the 58 lake residents who collect water samples, prepare algae filters, and take water clarity readings from 84 sites around the lake. This is part of an ongoing collaborative effort by The Smith Mountain Lake Association and Ferrum College to monitor the overall health of the lake by taking bi-weekly measurements of key indicators throughout the summer. Scientists at the Ferrum College Water Quality Lab perform an analysis of the collected samples while also performing their own bacteria sampling, algae sampling, and water temperature depth profiling at various sites around the lake.



- Having recently completed the third bi-weekly sampling session of 2021, we can report that all indicators have been very favorable!
- In each of the three bacterial sampling sessions conducted by Ferrum College so far this year, all locations tested have been within the Virginia Dept. of Health (VDH) standard for recreational waters.
- Water clarity, as measured by a metric known as Secchi depth, has improved by an average of 40% over the same period last year.
- The concentration of Chlorophyll-a in the lake, an indication of the extent of algae growth has decreased by an average of 85% compared to the same period last year.

The concentration of Phosphorous in the lake, an indication of the level of unwanted nutrients in the water, has decreased by an average of 17% compared to last year.

All of these factors can be influenced by the amount of heavy rainfall we receive in a given year, which affects the amount of pollutants being washed into the lake from surrounding properties. While we can't control the weather, lake residents can have an impact on the amount of pollutants reaching the water, by avoiding fertilizers that contain phosphorous, and planting a buffer of vegetation other than grass close to the shoreline to help stem the flow of nutrients into the lake.

Tom Hardy, WQM Chair

Do you shop at Kroger or Amazon? Do you know that at NO COST to you, they will donate 5% of your eligible purchases to SMLA? It's quick, easy, and again, it won't cost you one cent! Just sign up once a year with Kroger and use your Kroger card when you shop! With Amazon, you must remember to sign up once and purchase from Amazon Smile (all the same great merchandise at the same price). Email theoffice@smlassociation.org and we'll send you step by step instructions if you want some help. Please take a little time to help us to help protect the lake!

🌀 Please support SMLA Business Partners! 🌀



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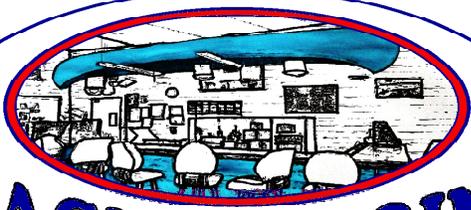
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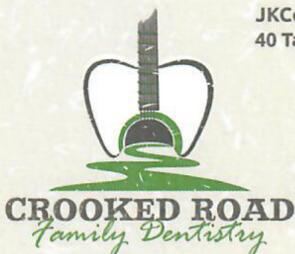
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