



SMLA LAKE MATTERS

Smith Mountain Lake Association

STEWARD OF THE LAKE

Fall/Winter 2021



President's Message: Over 300 Volunteers Assisted Smith Mountain Lake Association in 2021

As 2021 calendar year draws to a close, the SMLA Board of Directors and I would like to extend a hearty "Well Done" to our extraordinary, dedicated and unselfish volunteers who offered their time and resources to support the many programs and projects that sustain SMLA's mission. The challenges of a continuing pandemic impacted SMLA operations, but we managed to accomplish many of our goals in support of SMLA's mission: to protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe and responsible recreation. Each of our program/project accomplishments follow. For additional information on our programs and projects please see our website, www.smlassociation.org:

Protecting Our Lake Water:

Our 35th year partnering with Ferrum College for Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) reveals a healthy, clean lake with no reports of e-Coli contamination. This year we linked our algae reporting tool to the VA Dept of Health (VDH) tool and database to assist SMLA volunteers to pinpoint algae blooms and determine local trends. Tom Hardy and a majority of his 58 WQM volunteers extended the monitoring season into the fall for clarity and temperature. These data points give us a better understanding of the impacts of, and correlation with temperature, rainfall and



Save Our Streams returned in 2021 to collect data on the health of the streams that feed SML. Geoff Orth and his 33 volunteers, including many local Master Naturalists, monitored streams for pollution-intolerant macro-organisms. The spring results revealed excellent results, and fall monitoring showed mixed results. Overall, most of our streams are of acceptable quality, several due to the sustainable management practices of some of our larger farms in Franklin County.

The Vessel Pump Out program removed 5,576 gallons of waste from 308 boat marine heads as part of a cost-sharing program with Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission (TLAC) and the VDH. George Morrison, a TLAC Board member, SMLA Board member and volunteer, managed operations of this highly successful vessel pump out program. Our pump out efforts effectively eliminate the hazards associated with these boats dumping raw sewage in to our lake water that would dramatically diminish water quality.

Multiple communities and other concerned citizens comprised a task force of 166 volunteers to collect and dispose of over 16 tons of debris helping to keep your lake clean. In collaboration with TLAC and the SML Regional Chamber of Commerce, the annual Take Pride in Smith Mountain Lake event reemerged this year, again in a modified format due to Covid restrictions. Our efforts provide an essential contribution to AEP's overall debris removal program that has to date removed over 1,835 tons of debris from the main channel, and major tributaries and large coves.

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Buffer Landscaping, with three teams of Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists, completed 28 free Buffer Landscaping Assist Visits. These visits, organized by Bob Hastings, help homeowners assess and design their shoreline buffer garden. These gardens are the best way for homeowners to share the responsibility to reduce lake pollution, and they go a long way to avert toxic algae blooms. Waterfront residents are beginning to listen to our lessons on using buffer gardens to limit nutrient and pollution runoff into our lake.

Volunteer divers, boat drivers and spotters conducted several dive events, determining the efficacy of the grass carp. The carp, that were originally introduced to harvest invasive lake weeds in locations historically known to have them, are nearing their end of life. Thus, it is important to determine if the dormant hydrilla and other seeds are germinating.



Joanne Houpt and her crew of 8 volunteers reported no weeds were found. Citizens residing at or near the dive sites were elated with the success of the project that freed their coves of congestion caused by the weeds.

Raising homeowner awareness of their septic system's impact on lake water quality. An overwhelming majority of lake residences are still on septic systems. Over the past two to three years, the lake has experienced a large turnover in home ownership. Many new owners are unaware of the idiosyncrasies of their septic system and educating them on septic system types, operation, and care/maintenance is a goal of SMLA. Thanks to Joanne Houpt whose instructive articles in local newspapers assist homeowners with their responsibilities.

The threat of invasive species is real; incidents of select invasive species inoculation may be found in water bodies of surrounding states. Bill Butterfield, with support from the DWR, has continued to educate our residents on the encroaching invasive species. Vigilance and quick action are key to prevent and mitigate potential threats to the lake.

SMLA partnered with the SML Regional Chamber of Commerce and AEP to educate residents on water management policy and practice. In the wake of the third high water event of 2020, lake residents were quite frustrated and concerned about how lake water was being managed. The webinar offered residents an opportunity to query AEP regarding these events. Chuck Sinex, an SMLA Board member with significant hydrology and modeling experience, provided technical assistance to ensure an effective exchange.

Promoting Safe and Responsible Recreation on the Lake:

The Water Safety Council continued to participate in and lead a variety of boating and recreational safety activities. Pat Massa and his 26 volunteers, supported two no-wake July 4th fireworks celebrations, provided numerous boater safety classes and conducted scores of courtesy safety inspections. Volunteers served on a state-wide committee to address possible resolution to abandoned and derelict boats. They also were represented on the TLAC navigation committee to develop options for reducing the hazards associated with wake surfing. Safe boating and recreation are of paramount concern, and they have continued to broaden their education to boaters and water enthusiasts.

SMLA's lake map provides both residents and visitors with an ability to navigate the lake safely. This year the map was updated to include new or repositioned channel markers, new communities and associated roads, and new restaurants and other businesses, many of which are SMLA Business Partners. A small SMLA Board subcommittee that included assistance from SMLA's representative on AEP's Aids to Navigation Committee – Randy Stow – worked to update this map and provide it in time for the summer season.

SMLA and the DWR deploy Mossback fish habitat structures. On two separate deployments, Bill Butterfield and his 19 SMLA volunteers joined Dan Wilson from the DWR to protect hatchling gamefish from larger prey. While SMLA provided the manpower, AEP offered their barge to execute this task. Maintaining a healthy fish habitat encourages excellent sport fishing in our lake.

Our results demonstrate the value volunteers bring to the SML community. As president of SMLA, but mostly as a homeowner, I humbly thank all of our hard-working volunteers. Listed below are the volunteers who assisted in these endeavors and continue to amaze us with their dedication and unselfish service they exhibit – even throughout the pandemic. I would be remiss if I did not recognize the many stakeholders, Business Partners and organizations who provide both monetary and in-kind support for SMLA programs.

Continued

This is a great organization! My two-year tenure as President is coming to a close, and I wish all the best to my successor who will be elected at our December Board of Directors meeting. I am certain this individual will receive the same outstanding support that I have received from the Board members during difficult times under pressing conditions. I am confident of SMLA's bright future as the new President works to promote SMLA's relevancy to our residents, businesses and community at-large. We are all in this together!

With your support SMLA will remain an effective and outstanding Steward of the Lake.

John Rupnik, President, SMLA

OUR 2021 VOLUNTEERS

AQUATIC VEGETATION

COMMITTEE INSPECTION:

Travis Clements
Callista Gibson
John Scott
David Ward
Alex Axtell
Joseph Long
John Rupnik
Joanne Houpt
Dave Olson
Todd Ohlerich
Dave Moylan

BUFFER LANDSCAPING:

Robin Cowan
Steve Gardner
Paul & Beth Paulter
Bob Hastings
Ann Fouse
Rick Watson
Lee & Jean Borgman

HABITAT:

Michael McDonald
M.R. McCorkle, Jr.
Rodney Lewis
M. Jay Far
Greg Eigenfeld
Randy Stow
Richard Millar
Ron Barrett
Posie Magurn
Steve Gardner
Paul Pautler
Bill Butterfield

SAVE OUR STREAMS:

Dorian Albano
Lee & Jean Borgman
Peter Brinckerhoff
Amy Chattin
Lynne Decker
James Harvey
Randy Holden
Doug Horne
Charlotte Hubbard
Connie Hylton

SOS Continued

Don Kelso
Bill & Carolyn Koontz
Frances Lash
Alicia McGeorge
Jim Mann
Geoff Orth
Bob & 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

TAKE PRIDE IN SML:

166 people from communities, organizations and individuals

WATER QUALITY

MONITORING:

Eric Anderson
Cindy Bresson
Peter & Chris Brinckerhoff
Bill & Carol Butterfield
Gael & Smith Chaney
Mark Earnhardt
Sam & Gale Easter
Fred & Sandy Flowers
Steve Gardner
Rex & Rose Goodnight
Gary & Mary Ellen Gross
Tom Hamlin
Tom Hardy & Patti Croft
Ken & Jean Hurt
Daphne & Ron Jamison
Jim Jensen
Don & Sandy Kelso
Bill & Carolyn Koontz

WQM Continued

Robert & Valerie Leonard
Rusty MacMullan
Jerry Mallen
Mike & Gail McCord
Jerry & Colleen McNulty
Mac & Janie McWilliams
Mike Mutchler
Carol & Gary Noesner
Ken Ralph
John Rupnik
Larry Sakayama
Robert & Maureen Sanders
Tom Scott
Phil Servidea
Houston Snoddy
Randy & Judy Stow
Bob Toone
Sue & John Trinchere
Rick Watson

WATER SAFETY COUNCIL:

Duane Amos
Chris Bechtler
Deedee Bondurant
Barry Bridges
Mike Bumpass
Art Cournoyer
Tim Dooley
Bruce Dungan
Rick Ellett
James Hale
Jerry Hale
Mendy Harmon
Neil Harrington
Pete Lewis
Patrick Massa
Tom Merriman
Mark McGlothlin
Mike Mutchler
Jeff Prowse
Trevor Ruble
James Slaughter
Charles & Rhonnie Smith
Neil Sturman
Randy Stow
Shannon Zimmerman

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

John Rupnik, President
Bob Hastings, Vice President
Jeanie Gorman, Treasurer
Gail Phipps, Corp. Secretary
Roger Blankenship
Bill Butterfield
Gale Easter
Tom Hofelich
Tom Hardy
Neil Holthouser
Joanne Houpt
Brian Key
Pat Massa
George Morrison
Geoff Orth
Rob Sanders
Chuck Sinex
Lorie Smith
Mike Streff
Edgar Tuck

SMLA OFFICE:

Teresa Picking
Gale Easter
Joanne Houpt
Paul Marx
Bill Picking
Debbie Samsa
Sue Trinchere

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Cindy Bresson
Barbara Jordan
Sara Streff

SMLA STAKEHOLDERS:

American Electric Power/
Appalachian Power Company
Bedford Reg Water Authority
SML Regional CoC
Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
VA Dept of Env. Quality
VA Department of Health
VA Department of Wildlife Resources
Western VA Water Authority

SMLA, in Cooperation with DWR, Protect Fish Habitat at Smith Mountain Lake

As a steward of Smith Mountain Lake, Smith Mountain Lake Association's mission is to protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe recreation. One of the many ways SMLA strives to achieve its goals is to work with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources in preserving beneficial fish habitat. This article is intended to provide an update of the cooperation between the DWR and SMLA and serve as a reminder of the work involved in assuring Smith Mountain Lake will continue to be a recreational "go to" sight for fishing.

During the summer of 2017, a group of property owners in conjunction with DWR initiated a project of installing plastic milk crate structures at various privately owned docks as part of a long-term effort to restore nursery habitat lost to shoreline development at Smith Mountain Lake. DWR has confirmed that these structures have served as an effective nursery for young fish to survive. A total of 264 crates were assembled in different configurations and anchored in and around 11 docks. DWR personnel recorded GPS coordinates. These crates were purchased and paid for by Appalachian Power. In 2020 there was a plan to further this project by installing additional milk crates. However, due to the pandemic this project was delayed.

In the same year, 2017, the installation of artificial fish habitat structures was initiated. These structures, made from recycled materials, were placed in shallow water depths. They were installed at 35 locations across the lake. Workers gathered to assemble the structures (purchased from Mossback Fish Habitat) and install them at various locations. Fish hiding Legacy Mats along with Tree structures were applied at these open water and dock locations. GPS coordinates were recorded by DWR and success has been periodically monitored.

On October 19-20, nineteen volunteers, organized by the SMLA, assisted DWR personnel in assembling, placing and sinking 80 Mossback structures at Smith Mountain Lake. These structures were once again funded by Appalachian Power.



Mossback Assembly on AEP Barge



Crew Loading Mossback Structures on Boats for Launching

Appalachian Power continues to distribute copies of the brochure, "Guidelines for Fish Habitat/Enhancement along Shorelines at Smith Mountain Lake," in all mailings of permits from AEP'S Shoreline Management Group. Property owners or agencies are able to make an application via AEP'S website, www.smithmtn.com. In 2020, two permits were issued allowing for the five installations of artificial and natural fish habitat structures at residential docks in Smith Mountain Lake. AEP also distributes copies of the Smith Mountain Lake Association's Lakeshore Buffer Landscaping in its mailings.

We want to thank our volunteers this year for the placement of the 80 Mossback structures at SML. Should you be interested in helping with this effort in future years, please contact TheOffice@smlassociation.org or call 540-719-0609. Someone will be in contact with you.

Bill Butterfield, *SMLA Fish Habitat Committee Chair*

NAVIGATING THE TYPE OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS AROUND SML

Septic systems aren't exactly something people think much about, until they are having problems such as slow drains or water back-up or even septic odors seeping into their home. Failing systems can be costly to repair, and when within proximity to our pristine lake waters they can contaminate the lake where you recreate, and where many get their drinking water.

So, what are the types of septic systems found as you navigate Smith Mountain Lake (SML)? The Conventional Onsite Sewage System is the most common, which means treatment works consisting of one or more septic tanks with gravity, pumped, or siphoned conveyance to a gravity distributed subsurface drain field. Owners of conventional systems are recommended to have the septic tank checked, and pumped if necessary, about every five years. In Franklin County, five-year inspection is a requirement. Alternative Onsite Sewage Systems (AOSS) are another septic system found near SML. Alternative onsite sewage system means a treatment works that is not a conventional onsite sewage system. AOSS systems are designed to overcome problematic site conditions such as poor soils, shallow bedrock, shallow water table, and limited area. AOSS designs are utilized where conventional septic systems are

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Continued: not capable of meeting regulatory requirements to protect public health and water resources. AOSSs utilized in the SML area generally consist of aerobic, fixed media filter treatment units that provide advanced or enhanced treatment of septic tank effluent. Fixed-media systems distribute the primary effluent over a material (or media) that contains solid surfaces that can be populated by aerobic bacteria and other microorganisms. Void spaces within the media allow the movement of both effluent and atmospheric air, exposing the effluent, media surfaces, and resident microorganisms to atmospheric oxygen. The fixed media can consist of sand, peat, textile, plastics, coconut husks or other media. AOSSs are more expensive than conventional onsite sewage systems. Virginia Department of Health regulations require periodic inspection and maintenance of AOSSs be completed by a licensed Operation and Maintenance Provider. Owners of alternative systems are required to have the system inspected and maintained at least annually. As a homeowner it is your responsibility to make certain that your system is operating properly.

If you have a system that has an alarm on it, do not just shut off the alarm if it goes off. The alarm is a signal that your system very likely is not operating properly and should be inspected by a reputable, licensed sewage system operator. Do not risk your system or potential water contamination. Please be a responsible homeowner; know when your system was last inspected and/or pumped. Have your septic system inspected annually if an AOSS or at minimum, every 5 years if a Conventional Onsite Sewage System. Also, if you own a boat with a toilet or "head" on board, have it pumped and never, never empty it into the lake.

Septic systems are somewhat out of sight and out of mind. Take the time to review the last time your system was inspected. The cost of an inspection is certainly a drop in the bucket compared to replacing a failed system. Proper care and maintenance can, in the end, save you a lot of money and help protect the lake from contamination.

Thank you to the Virginia Department of Health for valuable information that assisted in writing this article. Go to their website at <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/> for more information regarding septic systems.

Joanne Haupt, SMLA Septic System Education

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

It has been more than 3 months since the Water Quality Monitoring teams of SMLA and Ferrum College completed their summertime monitoring of water quality at Smith Mountain Lake. The results of these sessions have been regularly posted throughout the summer on the SMLA Facebook page, with copies sent to SMLA members, and published in the Smith Mountain Eagle. We hope you have found these updates informative of the activities undertaken to ensure that our lake is a clean and safe place for you to enjoy.

But this year we have not stopped our efforts simply because the summer is over. A motivated group of SMLA volunteers have been continuing to perform certain WQM activities beyond the summer and well into the fall. Through these efforts we hope to learn more about the dynamics of the lake as we head into the cooler, less busy months.

We already know that water clarity is affected by several variables, including rainfall, temperature, wind, sunlight, fertilizer use, and boat traffic. Extending the taking of water clarity readings into the fall months may help us to better understand how important some of these variables are.

Additionally, water temperature profiles are being taken at depths from 1 to 25 meters (80+ feet). This enables us to follow the changes in the thermocline (the depth at which the warm surface layer of water meets the cool lower layer, forming a barrier that inhibits mixing of the two layers). Seasonal changes in the thermocline contribute to the timing of lake turnover, which helps replenish oxygen that has been depleted from deeper water and has important implications for aquatic life.

We are very fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers that contribute their time and boat gas to gather important water quality data, for 35 years and counting.

SMLA INSPECTS LAKE FOR INVASIVE WEEDS

The Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) Subsurface Aquatic Vegetation Committee (SAVC) volunteers recently conducted sub-surface aquatic vegetation inspections at SML. We are happy to announce no invasive aquatic vegetation was found growing at any of the eight sites inspected. Each inspection team consisted of a volunteer boat driver, an observer and two divers. Inspection depths ranged from 2-1/2 feet to 15 feet. There was no sign at all of re-growth of former invasive weed beds at these sites, but SMLA plans to re-inspect the same sites next year. Why the same sites you may ask? This is done for consistency of data. Seeds in aquatic vegetation beds can regenerate the beds if no longer being kept in check by the sterile Triploid Grass Carp that were introduced to the lake for the purpose of controlling these beds. Since the true lifespan of these fish is not known for sure, observation of the weed beds helps us determine whether the Triploid Grass Carp are still doing their job, which they appear to be. In addition to another SMLA inspection in 2022, AEP is currently scheduled to perform their next five-year full lake submerged aquatic vegetation survey in 2023. The photo provided, compliments of Bob R. Pohlad, PhD, is from the Smith Mountain Lake Water Quality Project in 2012 and show what the former invasive Hydrilla bed in the vicinity of Crazy Horse looked like at that time. Should lake residents encounter a questionable weed bed or wish to support this organization through becoming a member and/or volunteering, contact SMLA by emailing TheOffice@smlassociation.org.



SAVE OUR STREAMS ANNUAL REPORT, 2021

Water input to the lake comes from more than just the Roanoke and Blackwater rivers. Many smaller streams can carry pollutants and a significant amount of sediment into SML. Monitoring the health of these streams is critical to the understanding of the quality of stream water that drains into SML. SMLA collaborates with the local Virginia Save Our Streams Program (VA SOS) and the Blue Ridge Foothills and Lakes (BRFAL) Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program to conduct water quality monitoring of small streams that feed into the lake. Certified volunteer monitors (“citizen scientists”) collect and identify fresh water aquatic macroinvertebrates (a.k.a. “bugs”) that live on the bottom of a stream (benthic area) on a semi-annual basis. Information on the diversity and number of bugs found is used to determine the quality of water flowing through the streams and to monitor water quality over time. The data collected is entered into Virginia’s SOS database and used by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in assessing the overall quality of Virginia’s streams and rivers and to identify specific problems that may need to be addressed.

The VA SOS data from streams feeding into Smith Mountain Lake complements the SMLA/ Ferrum College Water Quality Monitoring Program (WQMP) that has set the standard across the nation for a volunteer lake monitoring program for over 35 years. Expenses for our SOS project, generally



for equipment replacement, came from the same sources as Water Quality Monitoring funds.

According to our SOS Program’s founder, Dr. Don Kelso, while “there is no single way of encapsulating the quality of the water, the quality of the habitat, or the robust-ness of the community of organisms...,” VA Tech considers our monitoring protocol the best available. Moreover, our data is accepted by Virginia’s Department of Environmental Quality and will become part of their annual report. However, since DEQ won’t be publishing its statewide report until early next year, the data for our watershed as depicted below should be seen as preliminary. This year, 16 streams in our watershed were included in SOS’s annual survey. Three, and four-person teams of certified monitors, who base their findings on a count of macroinvertebrates, conducted a total of 32 monitoring events. Their 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.

<i>Year</i>	2019	2021
Sites Monitored	16	16
Acceptable (9-12)	3	6
Gray Area (8)	9	5
Unacceptable (0-7)	4	4
Unable to Determine*	0	1

**Based on insufficient data, since fewer than two valid monitoring events took place*
N.B. The 2020 monitoring season was cancelled by DOE due to the pandemic.

Area Results

	<i>Acceptable</i> 2019/2021	<i>Gray Area</i> 2019/2021	<i>Unacceptable</i> 2019/2021	<i>Unable to Determine</i> 2019/2021
SML Northern Shore (Bedford Co.) (3 sites)	2/1	0/1	1/0	0/1
Gills Creek Area (3 sites)	0/1	2/1	1/1	0/0
Hardy Road Area (3 sites)	0/0	3/1	0/2	0/0
Upper Blackwater (2 sites)	0/2	2/0	0/0	0/0
Lower Blackwater (3 sites)	1/1	1/2	1/0	0/0
Pigg River (2 sites)	0/1	1/0	1/1	0/0
Total	3/6	9/5	4/4	0/1

Notes

- Overall, the number of fully acceptable sites doubled from 2019 to 2021, while the overall average of 8.2 remained almost unchanged.
- The fall 2021 samplings yielded lower scores than in the spring, as the drought noticeably decreased water flow rates. Clearly, aquatic bugs need water to survive.
- The high ratings for the Upper Blackwater sites are notable, because they reinforce the conclusion that the Blackwater River upstream from the MVP pipeline crossings is in good ecological condition.
- The Lower Blackwater sites, including one just downstream of the planned MVP pipeline crossing, showed some increased sedimentation, possibly resulting from the earthmoving activity associated with the ongoing pipeline construction.

Conclusions

- The general health of the streams in our watershed is good.
- Fluctuations in the rating of a given stream can be due to a variety of factors, such as an abnormal shift in stream conditions (i.e., a temporary construction project; a nutrient spill from a farm or golf course; or cattle straying into a stream).
- Fluctuations in the ratings of multiple streams are most often caused by weather variability, such as a result of flood or drought.
- In most of the above cases the stream or streams have proven resilient and reverted to their mean the following year.
- As degradation of water quality due to major construction, water pollution, or climate change is an ever-present possibility. Our best defense is to continue a vigorous water monitoring program to identify downward trends before they become both more difficult, and costly to address.

WATER SAFETY COUNCIL: Winter Boating

Well it looks like winter weather has arrived in southwest Virginia. Boating doesn't have to stop. This can be an excellent time for fishing and hunting plus there are few other boaters to disturb your activities. But before going, the Smith Mountain Lake Water Safety Council would like you to think about some precautions and preparation that will reduce some cold weather risks.

Start with clothing. Think layers so that adjustments can be made during the day or evening. A good base layer is important. The best outerwear will not keep you warm if the first layer is not right. The trick is to keep you dry by wicking the moisture away so choose thermal long underwear in polypropylene or wool blends or one of the many new materials. Wool socks are also a plus. Then add layers of non-cotton clothing of wool or fleece and top it off with a wind and water-resistant outerwear that will breathe. The idea is to keep the warmth in but not to trap body moisture and get all clammy. Hands will need water-resistant insulated gloves and your head will need an insulated cap or watch cap. At boating speeds, slip on hoods and balaclavas are sometimes still cold, so another choice might be a sport utility mask. Staying warm is not just for comfort but is key to safety as it helps in staying alert and making good decisions.

On the very outside, wear a life jacket. A good life jacket is a "must-have" and a "must-wear" item. Choose one that is adjustable and a comfortable fit over your winter outerwear. Your summer life jacket may not fit well over winter layers and comfort is important here. Another option here is a float coat. But whatever the choice, wear it.

Before departing, leave a float plan with someone. Mainly it's just a description of the boat, who's aboard, where are you going, and when do you expect to return. This obviously is a great help if something happens and assistance becomes desirable or necessary.

Check out your boat and be sure to keep distress signals aboard. There are a number effective signal options. For daytime, an orange 3 foot square distress flag or orange smoke flares are effective. A strong flashlight or strobe light are good on lakes and rivers at night. Horns or whistles are required equipment and a cell phone, protected from the water, is a great addition.

None of us plan to fall into the water, but it happens. Think about a re-boarding plan. This is something that must be done quickly and without swamping the boat. Usually a re-board over the stern is best. Then dry clothing is needed. A change of clothing in a drybag (SealLine, etc.) should be part of your winter gear. A great way to do this is to put the clothes, socks and old sneakers into one of the vacuum sealed bags to make a compact package and store this in the drybag.

Be vigilant for the signs of hypothermia in yourself and others and, if occurring, take appropriate action. The early signs are typically:

- Tense, numb or weak muscles;
- Feeling fatigued or exhausted;
- Uncontrollable shivering;
- Slurred speech or blurred vision.



With a little attention to extra preparation, you should be ready to continue your boating activities, while others are content to be inside sitting by the fire. Be safe out there.

A LAKE NETWORK—Subdivision Volunteers Needed

A recent survey of lake residents shows that email is their preferred method to get important information about issues related to the SMLA mission to protect the water of SML and promote safe recreation. This was by a wide margin over other media and social media channels.

And while the lake association can communicate to our members who have provided email addresses, we have no way to communicate with the larger lake population—the 14,000 + property owners on or very near the lake through their preferred method of email.

As a result, we turn to local media, such as the Lake Magazine, Laker Newspaper, and SML Eagle and social media such as Facebook and Nextdoor to communicate about our programs and alert property owners to threats to their safety —high water events, algae blooms etc. However, each of these methods have limitations, and are not the residents' preferred communication method of email.

For the past few months, we have been running a test of a lake network in a select number of subdivisions on the lake. The concept is very simple—when we find information that we think is of value to our neighbors, we send it to our group of subdivision leaders who then forward it to the members of their neighborhood. This allows us to reach everyone in the subdivision who has an email address, and it also has the benefit that the email comes from someone that folks in the neighborhood already know and trust.

Our test so far has involved 6 of the approximately 266 subdivisions on the lake. These include Beechwood West, Boardwalk, Park Place, Sandpiper Bay, Village East and Cedar Key Estates. We now have enough experience and are ready to scale this to the entire lake.

We are looking for SMLA members who would be willing to volunteer to be a subdivision leader for our lake network. The commitment would be to take SMLA approved communications we send and resend it to your community. We anticipate that this would be no more than 1-2 message a month (unless there are emergencies) and that this would take no more than 30 minutes a month. All communications would be high quality information and you would be the final say whether to resend to your community.

Please consider assisting us to spread the word about the good work that SMLA does. If you are interested in helping, please contact the SMLA office at TheOffice@SMLAssociation.org, or 540-719-0690, or contact Mike Streff at streff79@comcast.net or 703-599-3723.



Smith Mountain Lake Association
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Moneta, VA 24121

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☞ SMLA Recognizes, Celebrates & Thanks our 2021/22 Business Partners & Organizations ☜

AEP

Bank of Botetourt

Bedford Regional Water Authority

Bridgewater Pointe Condos (CUOA, Inc)

Capps Home Building Center

Crazy Horse Marina

Crooked Road Family Dentistry, PC

DebBeran Properties

Deer Creek Neighborhood Assoc.

EDO Grill & Sushi Inc

Environmental Construction Solutions

Ferrum College

Four Seasons Pest Control

Gangplank Pointe CUOA, Inc

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JBohnBishop

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Lindsey A. Coley, Attorney At Law PLLC

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Parker Design Group

Perimeter Roofing VA

Perrow Management Corp

Roanoke River Valley Log Homes

Ronnie Mitchell & Son Landscaping & Hardscapes

Seal-Tite Basement Waterproofing Co.

SeaTow

Seven Oaks Landscapes/Hardscapes

Smith Mountain Marine Service

Smith Mt Lake Marine Vol Fire & Rescue

SML Regional Chamber of Commerce

SML Writers

"So Little Time" Book Club

Southern Landscape Group

State Farm, Debbie Robbins, Agent

Stone Circle Capital

TBS Construction, LLC

TLAC

Vicki Millehan Real Estate Inc.

Virginia Realty Group/Porter Realty

VitaZen

Webster Marine Center

Weichert Realtor-Bridges & Co

Western Virginia Water Authority

Westlake Automotive

Wingfield Septic Systems & Grading