

Smith Mountain Lake Vessel Pump Out and Education Program 2021 Final Report



**A cooperative program provided by:
Virginia Department of Health
Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission
Smith Mountain Lake Association**

Final Report Prepared by: Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission

Introduction

In late 2020, the Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission (TLAC) was asked by the Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to once again partner with their organizations for the administration and operation of a sewage pump out program on Smith Mountain Lake in 2021. The proposed program would continue to rely on the use of two trucks to handle the vessel pump outs. TLAC accepted this invitation to partner with the two agencies to handle the administration and personnel portions of the program for the 2021 boating season. TLAC subsequently entered into an agreement with the SMLA, and a separate agreement with the VDH for the management of this program.

Overview

The 2021 program operated from May 22, 2021, thru September 12, 2021. TLAC hired four seasonal staff members to man the equipment and provide the pump out services. These employees worked each Saturday and Sunday during the period, in addition to a three-day weekend on Memorial Day and Labor Day.

The program operations were regularly reviewed by the TLAC Vessel Pump Out Committee. The Committee was made up of two SMLA representatives and two TLAC office staff members. The administration, oversight, and recordkeeping for the program was handled by the TLAC office staff. The weekend oversight of the pump out operations was handled by both TLAC representatives and Vessel Pump Out Committee representatives from the SMLA.

Financial

In November of 2020, TLAC submitted a grant proposal to the VDH to secure funding for the 2021 pump out program. This proposal was approved and the VDH agreed to provide 75 percent of the funding required. A grant reimbursement request was submitted by TLAC to VDH at the end of the program.

In addition to program operations, VDH's grant included a 75 percent share of costs for the administration of the program. TLAC contributed the local match of 25 percent for program administration. Office staff tracked all hours utilized for program oversight and recordkeeping.

The SMLA contributed the local match of 25 percent required for the program operations. The initial contribution of \$3,241.79 was provided to TLAC in July 2021. A second contribution of \$155.70 was requested from the SMLA at the end of the program. The 2021 program finished under budget.

The total known expenditures for this year's Pump Out Program are \$22,089.97. VDH's 75 percent of the approved grant costs was \$16,567.48. The SMLA's 25 percent of the approved grant program operation costs was \$3,397.49. TLAC's 25 percent of administration costs was \$2,125.

Equipment and Operations

The equipment utilized for the program included two F-150 Ford pickups equipped with 125-gallon storage tanks plus three 25-gallon manual sewage pumps on dollies. The second truck was used when the volume of scheduled pump outs necessitated a second crew, and as a back-up vehicle in the event of mechanical failure of the first truck.

The TLAC employees traveled to Bayside Marina at Smith Mountain Lake to board the truck(s) and visit marinas each workday. The marinas to be visited were determined by telephone calls received on a pump out program cellular telephone, and appointments made by TLAC office staff if calls for reservations were received Monday through Thursday. Other appointments were scheduled by the pump out crew leader using the same cellular telephone during each weekend. Additionally, the employees offered pump out services to other boaters at the marinas where they were already providing scheduled pump outs.

The 2021 pump out program serviced boaters at 12 of 13 participating marinas.

Education

One of the program goals was to have the pump out staff members visit with boaters and distribute program information, promotional items, and pump out service schedules. During the program, 586 people were recorded as being present on the boats at the time pump outs took place. This number is not indicative of the actual number of new people educated about this program because many of those individuals were present at more than one pump out, and thus were counted on numerous occasions.

TLAC staff prepared literature and assembled promotional items to be distributed to those utilizing the vessel pump out services. The literature prepared included a 2021 SML Pump Out Guide, a handout describing the pump out program's contact information and schedule as well as informational brochures about No Discharge Zones and boat head basics.

Program Totals

The program operated 17 weeks during the 2021 boating season for a total of 37 days. During the boating season 5,576 gallons of sewage was pumped out through this program, with an average of 18.1 gallons per pump out. Seventy-eight (78) boats were pumped out multiple times for a total of 308 pump out services performed.

Summary

The 2021 Pump Out Program, with a partnership among the three agencies, TLAC, VDH and SMLA worked well even with the lingering challenges of the pandemic and was successful in preventing the potential release of 5,576 gallons of raw sewage into Smith Mountain Lake. The program was well utilized by the boating community, and they seemed most appreciative of the service. TLAC continued to collect data this season that had not been gathered in the years prior to TLAC's involvement to assist the organizations involved with determining the viability and necessity of the program for future years.