



SMLA LAKE MATTERS

Smith Mountain Lake Association

STEWARD OF THE LAKE

Fall 2022***President's Message:***

Having published the SMLA AHOY newsletter each month I am sure you do not want a lengthy article from the SMLA president. I thought I might summarize a few of the key moments since our last newsletter from the board of directors.

First let me say what a pleasure it is to work with so many dedicated board members. These volunteers never cease to amaze me in how much time and effort they contribute to protecting the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promoting safe recreation.

We began our water quality monitoring this season on May 25th with five sites exceeding the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) bacteria standard for recreational waters and one site on July 15th. What I learned from these two occurrences was that we have a challenge with getting the word out to the public to refrain from going in the water at these locations. Press reports can take a week to get published and we knew we needed to have a better way of communicating this information quickly to the public.

We decided that our website would be the only real way for the public to receive this type of information on a real time basis. In May, we embarked upon a project to update our SMLA website with this issue as one of our key drivers. Our goal is to provide the greater SML community with a “go to” website that they will want to frequent often for up to date water quality, safety, lake community events and SMLA news. It is a work in progress.

By now you should all be aware that we zeroed in on the need to increase our membership in the SMLA. We are beginning to see the fruits of our labors in promoting membership but we have a great deal of work to do. As I have said in every AHOY publication; our membership holds the keys to unlock our potential for growth. We need your help and are grateful when you recruit your non-member friends, associates and business partners to join us.

Our board members have published numerous articles this quarter. The need for buffer gardens, the state of subsurface

vegetation in SML, the work and results of our water quality monitoring, our save our streams published their spring results and our water safety council has been active in submitting articles promoting water safety. We hope you are finding them in the Smith Mountain Eagle, Laker Weekly, Laker Magazine, on our web site, www.smlassociation.org and Facebook page.

The vessel pump out program (VPOP) is actively working to make sure the lake is kept clean and providing a great service to boat owners on the lake in need of pumping out their boats.

We have tried to revamp our business partner program and recruit new business partners. Working with the SML Regional Chamber of Commerce we sent out an e-blast to their membership asking local businesses to join the SMLA in keeping the lake clean, healthy and safe. We pointed out how these attributes attract full-time residents, entice visitors, and provide an environment for a strong business community now and in the future.

Our Water Safety Council (WSC) helped celebrate the July 4th fireworks by promoting no wake zones and we were excited to find that, our message through the local press of no water balloons during Pirate’s Day celebrations was really successful.

I personally want to invite you to our Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday September 29th from 6:30-8:00 pm at Trinity Ecumenical Parish. Doors open to visit table top displays and communicate with our BOD members and stakeholders at 5:30 pm. Please set aside this date and plan to be with us this evening. Of course I want to invite you to bring a non-member friend.

On behalf of the board of directors and volunteers I want to thank you for being a member of the SMLA and supporting our efforts to *Protect the Water of Smith Mountain Lake and Promote Safe Recreation.*

Bill Butterfield
President, SMLA

To effectively communicate with members and the Smith Mountain Lake community, SLMA is redesigning its website, www.SMLAssociation.org. We've launched a new homepage and have begun work to enhance the membership experience. Please visit the new site and share your feedback.

SLOW THE FLOW

The US Environmental Protection Agency has reported that runoff from lawns, roads and rooftops is a primary cause of pollution in our waterways. The easiest path for these pollutants to access our pristine water is across our grass. This problematic flow causes many issues with water quality, the most challenging being the growth of algae. With the recent water quality monitoring results showing some areas with elevated bacteria, I wanted to provide you with an actual example of a problem and potential action steps you might take to correct it.

They say "A Picture says 1,000 words."



All that fertilizer is going right into the lake!

Our all-volunteer, non-profit organization has been working on this mission for the past 50 years because **we believe that clean, clear, safe water is a responsibility not an automatic right.** If you would like to see more about what we're doing, please visit our website at www.smlassociation.org or join us on Facebook.

John Rupnik, Chair
Buffer Landscape Committee

An easy way to slow the flow.



Potential actions steps? Plant a *Buffer* garden at our shoreline. SMLA Master Gardeners will work with homeowners to develop garden plans that are designed to manage erosion and provide a natural buffer or filter that will keep harmful sediment, and pollutants out of our lake. If you're interested in getting started give us a call at 540-719-0690 or email us at theoffice@smlassociation.org.

The mission of the Smith Mountain Lake Association is to protect the water of SML and promote safe recreation.

Business Partner Program

We're pleased to announce that ***Kurtz Digital Strategy*** and ***Kauffman Travel Team Dream Vacations*** joined us as ***SMLA Business Partners***. Additionally, ***Phil Hager Insurance Agency*** and ***ML Realty*** have upgraded their memberships.

Our Business Partner program is the cheapest insurance a business can buy to protect the lake and local economy. ***Please join us in thanking all our Business Partners for helping keep SML clean and safe.***

Don't forget to shop at KROGER and AMAZON SMILE after designating SMLA to receive 5% of your total qualified purchases, all at NO COST TO YOU!
Contributions help us protect the water, safety and property values on the lake!

A LAKE NETWORK—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are you the person in your neighborhood who likes to make sure that everyone knows what is going on? Are you the local insider? Or do you know the person in your neighborhood who is?

We are looking for people who would be willing to volunteer to be a subdivision leader for our lake network. The commitment would be to take SMLA approved communications and resend it to your community. We anticipate that this would be no more than 3-5 messages a month (unless there are emergencies) and that it would take no more than 30 minutes a month. All communications would be high quality information and you would have the final say whether to resend to your community.

We are doing this because 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 lake 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.

For the past few months, we have been running a test of a lake network in a select number of subdivisions on the lake. And we have been getting great comments back from our neighbors. We would like to make sure your neighborhood included. Please join us in this effort. Contact the office if you are interested in helping. theoffice@smlassociation.org or 540-719-0690.

SMLA ANNUAL MEETING: September 29, 2022

We invite you to the Smith Mountain Lake Association's annual meeting on Thursday, September 29, 2022 at Trinity Ecumenical Parish. This will be our first in person meeting after two years of virtual meetings due to COVID restrictions.

The meeting will be from 6:30—8 PM. Doors open at 5:30 PM with exhibits highlighting our programs, along with exhibits from many of our partner organizations. We will provide light appetizers, desserts, water and coffee during the exhibits.

The program will highlight the association's accomplishments over the past year to protect the water of SML and promote safe and responsible recreation, discuss our plans for 2023, and include a panel discussion focused on water quality at Smith Mountain Lake. Additionally, we will present our four annual awards: for lifesaving on the lake; for efforts to keep the lake safe; for citizen volunteers in support of the lake; and our "spirit of the lake" award. There will also be door prizes.

The meeting is for SMLA members with non-members of the community also invited.

The meeting at the Trinity Ecumenical Parish, 40 Lakemount Drive in Moneta. Contact the SMLA office if you have questions about this meeting at theoffice@smlassociation.org or 540-719-0690. See our website at www.smlassociation.org for more information on the work that SMLA performs or how you can support our continuing efforts.

SAVE OUR STREAMS

Save our Streams will offer a special morning of training for those interested in volunteering for the program. Presented by SML master trainers from the Blue Ridge Foothills and Lakes chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists and the streams testing coordinator of the Izaak Walton League, Kira Carney, the program will begin at 9 a.m. at the Booker T. Washington National Monument on Saturday, September 10th. Training will begin with a classroom segment focusing on stream ecology, followed by on-site stream testing. Those interested in participating should contact Geoff Orth, SML area coordinator for SOS, at smlstreams@gmail.com.

WATER SAFETY COUNCIL: Dock Safety at the Lake

The summer heat is here, make your dock safer. First and foremost, if you are on a dock, in a boat, or around the water wear a life jacket (PFD). Earlier this summer a man working on his dock, was found floating face down in the water with no PFD. It is also always advisable if you are in, or around the water, have a Buddy with you.

For over forty-five years I have managed pools, waterfronts, and beaches. Equipment and training are lifesavers. The Boy Scouts of America has a lifesaving slogan. “Reach, Throw, Row, and Go.”

Reach with a leg, arm, towel, a reaching pole and if needed attach a shepherd’s crook for those unconscious, children, and animals. Most people drown within six feet of safety

Throw anything that floats for support. This could be a heaving line, a ring buoy, or make your own equipment with 60 feet of ski rope connected to a plastic gallon milk jug with four inches of water. Throw it past and feed it to them.

Row involves a watercraft. Have them hold on and move the one in need to safety. Trying to pull them on board could place the rescuer in the water. Using a boat for a rescue with a motor can be very dangerous. Throw a line to them and when they have it, turn off the engine, pull them in and pull them aboard.

Go can be very dangerous as well unless you are specifically trained. Keep a buffer between you and the victim that will float you both. While walking down the beach in Ocean City MD a woman screamed “help him.” Her husband who couldn’t swim blew out on a surf mat. I took a second mat out and pulled he and the two mats in. On the way back he asked if we could stop and rest. Someone who is actively drowning doesn’t recognize you as a fellow human being but an island to stand on or hold on to. Take a ring buoy with you, have someone on shore use the line to pull you both in.

Get advanced training!

Display your street address on your dock facing the water to guide EMS quickly to you in an emergency. It is best not to swim around a dock when there is a boat lift in the water. This could lead to electrocution and death. Look for another article soon on this phenomenon. If you are using your dock to dive from know the water depth and display it.

These are some hints on staying dock safe. If your organization would like a speaker on safety contact, TheOffice@smlassociation.org.

Patrick Massa-Chair, SMLA Water Safety Council

FALL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

You already know how important it is to be an SMLA member. Now we need your help in telling a neighbor!!

We are about to start our fall membership drive. Our promotion will include a reduced rate for the first year and include solicitations for membership in all media available to us.

The thing we are missing is you!

Most of us joined SMLA because of a recommendation from a friend or neighbor. Your endorsement is the most important part of our plan to increase membership.

So important that we will offer you a gift if you help us sign up a new member—a reduced rate on your next renewal.

As you talk to your neighbors, remind them that our lake will not remain clean and safe for recreation by accident, and that it requires the efforts of all of us. Membership and charitable donations support the good work of SMLA, so we need your help to continue our mission to protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe recreation.

Point your neighbors to our website at www.smlassociation.org for more information on the work that SMLA performs and how you can support our continuing efforts.

Or show them our brochure “Protecting Your Waterfront Investment—10 Simple Shoreland Stewardship Practices” located at <http://smlassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SMLA-Brochure.pdf>.

Or bring them with you to our annual meeting on Friday, September 29th.

And let them know that during our fall membership drive they can get one-half off their first-year membership.

Please talk with a neighbor today!

Membership Matters!

Water Quality Management

The passage of August marks the completion of the 36th consecutive year of water quality monitoring by the team of citizen volunteers at Smith Mountain Lake. Throughout the summer this group of 52 individuals collected water samples at 84 sites on the lake on a bi-weekly basis. These samples were analyzed by scientists at Ferrum College for the concentration of chlorophyll-a, an indicator of algae in the water, and phosphorous, an indicator of nutrient pollution in the lake. These results combine with water clarity readings taken by the citizen volunteers to determine the trophic status of the lake, a measure of the overall health of the lake.



Larry Sakayama and Mark Earnhardt run a sample of lake water through a filter that will measure concentration of chlorophyll.

A final report of the overall findings of the summer monitoring will be published later in the year, but preliminary results indicate that the lake remains in very good health, though there continue to be challenges to maintaining that health. The levels of chlorophyll-*a* for 2022 have been considerably lower than the average over the past 20 years. The levels of phosphorous in 2022 were also below the 20-year average. These are both favorable results. On the other hand, the indicator that measures water clarity suggests that water clarity has decreased compared to last year to a level that is slightly worse than the 20-year average.

This year we experienced an unusual number of instances of elevated E-coli bacteria in selected locations around the lake. In any body of water bacteria tend to increase following a period of heavy rain, as pollutants are washed into the water from the surrounding shoreline. The most common sources of these pollutants are agricultural run-off, wildlife feces, and septic tank failures. The pattern of short-lived outbreaks and a changing mix of locations suggests that wildlife feces were the primary cause in 2022. The best way to prevent these outbreaks is to avoid feeding wildlife near the lake (which also happens to be a violation of state law) and planting a buffer garden of native plants along the shoreline which serves to filter and slow the flow of runoff into the water while discouraging geese from gathering in your yard.

Finally, although the extensive water sampling that occurs during the summer months has wound down for the year, the SMLA continues to monitor the water quality of the lake through the ongoing collection of water clarity and temperature readings by a subset of the citizen volunteers; reviewing satellite images of the lake for indications of harmful algae blooms; and responding to reports of suspicious algae blooms submitted by lake residents through the SMLA web site.

Tom Hardy, WQM Chair

Our Business Partners contribute awesome door prizes to our Annual Meeting year after year; things like Silver SML Charms for pendants or bracelets, Beautiful Fall Décor for your home, patio or dock, a complete water conservation kit , plus Gift Cards and Certificates for FREE goods and services!

SAVE THE DATE: September 29! (more info on pages 3 & 8)

Bring your neighbor along and you both get an extra Door Prize ticket!

Long time Door Prize contributors have been Haywood's Jewelers, LakeScapes Nursery, Moneta Farm & Home Center, Vita Zen, Westlake Automotive Services, Mariner's Landing Golf & The Landing Restaurant, plus new contributions this year from Bedford Regional Water Authority and Lake Life Marine Services!

Boat Propellers...A Hidden Danger

Consider this: A typical three blade propeller turning at 3200 rpm can inflict 160 impacts in just one second. And a typical recreational boat propeller can travel from head to toe in less than one tenth of a second.

So here are a few tips for safety around your boat's propeller:

- Before starting your boat, walk to the stern and look in the water to make certain there is no one near your propeller.
- Never allow passengers to board or exit your boat from the water with an outboard or inboard/outboard engine running. Some props continue to spin slowly even in neutral, but the bigger danger is someone accidentally engaging the gearshift with a swimmer in the water. This can easily happen from carelessness or if a passing wake causes someone aboard to lose their footing and fall against the gearshift.
- Educate passengers about the location and danger of the propeller. Recently a swimmer cut his foot severely on a non-spinning propeller blade, requiring an ambulance transport from a nearby dock. This can happen from trying to use the engine shaft as a boarding ladder (always a bad idea!) or from inadvertently kicking the propeller while swimming near the stern of the boat.
- Take extra precautions near boats that are towing skiers or tubers. Don't follow in the wake behind boats towing skiers, boarders or tubers.
- Never permit passengers to ride on the bow or the front of a pontoon boat outside of the railing, gunwale, transom, seatbacks or other locations where they might fall overboard. Unfortunately, this has happened at our Lake.
- Never reverse your boat to pick up someone in the water. Circle back.
- Wear your cut off switch lanyard so if you are ejected from the boat the motor will stop. When hit by a large wake at Lake Anna a family found themselves in the water. The boat continued motoring, killing the father and injuring the rest of the family. A properly-worn cut off switch lanyard would have prevented this tragedy.

Patrick J. Massa, Chair, SML Water Safety Council

SMLA Volunteer Appreciation Day 2022

Our lake association is powered by our volunteers!!

They do all the work that brings alive our mission to protect the water of SML and promote safe recreation.

They take water samples, monitor streams, patrol no wake zones at fireworks, clean up during "Take Pride" activities, write news articles, design buffer gardens, dive to look for invasive species, monitor the lake for debris, volunteer in the office, and hundreds of other tasks needed to support our work.

One of the ways we thank them is with a volunteer appreciation day.

After several years of this event being impacted by the pandemic, we will again hold an in-person volunteer event.

This year's event will be an Oktoberfest celebration, on ***Friday, October 28 from 4-8 PM, with Dinner at 5 PM.***

The event will be at the Boardwalk Subdivision Pavilion, 760 Boardwalk Drive, Moneta Virginia 24121.

All SMLA volunteers will receive an invitation to attend.

Thanks to our volunteers for all they do to help keep our lake clean and safe for recreation.

SMLA Upcoming Events**September**

20 – Tuesday **SMLA Board Meeting:** 9 AM, 400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100

29 – Thursday **SMLA Annual Meeting:** Exhibits open at 5:30 PM, program starts at 6:30 PM, Trinity Ecumenical Parish, 40 Lakemount Drive in Moneta. Appetizers, desserts, coffee and water served during the exhibits.

October

18 – Tuesday **SMLA Board Meeting:** 9 AM, 400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100

28 – Friday **SMLA Volunteer Appreciation Day:** Oktoberfest celebration, 4-8 PM, Boardwalk Subdivision Pavilion, 760 Boardwalk Drive, Moneta Virginia 24121

November

15 – Tuesday **SMLA Board Meeting:** 9 AM, 400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100

TBD – **SMLA Elections:** You will receive ballots to elect members to the SMLA Board of Directors.

December

20 – Tuesday **SMLA Board Meeting:** 9 AM, 400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100

WHAT/WHY IS THIS CAGE IN OUR COVE?

Since the 2013 introduction of 5,700 grass carp in Smith Mountain Lake to reduce the impact of invasive weeds, the lake has been completely devoid of submerged aquatic vegetation. The carp not only consumed their favorite food—the invasive hydrilla weeds that clogged coves and precluded safe swimming and boating—but after eating the hydrilla, they also consumed ALL vegetation in the lake. Fishermen have often voiced their concern that our fish habitat has been seriously impacted. While the fish population continues to be excellent, vegetation, indeed, makes the prospect of catching fish much better as it serves as a hideout for them waiting for bait to “swim” by on the border of the vegetation. This matter was covered nicely in the December 2, 2021 edition and updated on December 14 edition of the Laker Weekly.

Right: John Rupnik, an SMLA Board member and Buffer Landscaping Committee Chair, prepares the frame for the test bed cage.



The Smith Mountain Lake Association received a grant from Appalachian Power Company to design and plant a buffer garden on the 5th Tee box at Mariners Landing. Award of the grant required SMLA to plant underwater vegetation in the area to promote fish habitat. While the buffer garden pilot project is in the planning and permitting stage, the underwater planting has been completed on August 25th with water willow housed within a wire cage in a cove adjacent to the 5th tee box. Water willow has been introduced in several coves on the lake, and it grows quite well. But water willow survives from the shoreline down to about six inches of water, after which it becomes food for the grass carp. Six inches of water is insufficient to serve as habitat.

So why is a wire cage needed to support the growth of these plants. A good question!

Left: David Gay, an SMLA Board member and representative on the AEP Habitat Technical Committee, transplants water willow within the test bed.

John Rupnik states that “our primary objective for this test bed is to create a simple “bell ringer” to determine when the sterile grass carp are no longer controlling or impacting aquatic vegetation. Appalachian Power’s Habitat Plan requires periodic full lake surveys to assess the state of lake’s underwater vegetation—an expensive effort. “While we know the grass carp will limit aquatic vegetation for at least 10 years after stocking, we really can’t pursue planting native vegetative until we know the carp will not consume all the new plantings,” says Dan Wilson of the Department of Wildlife Resources. Next year, after the plant rhizomes have reestablished and sprout their new shoots, SMLA will remove the cage and prepare a new bed of water willow. The original bed will be observed to determine if the grass carp are eating the plants. If so, the new bed will serve as a test bed for the following year—and so forth until the water willow survives in water greater than six inches. While deer and turtles are known to feast on water willow, their eating habits are different than that of the grass carp and will be apparent. Grass carp are a different species than the common carp that are also prominent in the lake. However, common carp do not eat underwater vegetation.

But if the water willow is not consumed, then the residents and regulators now can confirm that the grass carp are at least on the decline, if not gone—an important milestone. At that time lake managers and regulators need to be alert for signs of new invasive aquatic vegetation and develop a modified plan to manage it—hopefully a plan that has less impact on fish habitat.

The mission of the Smith Mountain Lake Association is to protect the water of SML and promote safe recreation. Our all-volunteer, non-profit organization has been working on this mission for the past 50 years because **we believe that clean, clear, safe water is a responsibility not an automatic right.** If you would like to see more about what we’re doing, please visit our website at www.smlassociation.org or join us on Facebook.

John Rupnik, Chair
Buffer Landscape Committee



Above: The completed test bed.



Smith Mountain Lake Association
400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100
Moneta, VA 24121

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SAVE THE DATE!
September 29th
SMLA Annual Meeting

Smith Mountain Lake Association 2022 Annual Meeting

WATER SAFETY MATTERS

Thursday, September 29 from 6:30–8:00 PM

Trinity Ecumenical Parish, Moneta, VA

Doors open at 5:30

Enjoy Coffee and refreshments from 5:30—6:30 while you talk with representatives from 10 SMLA Committees and 8 Stakeholder Groups.

Program, Presentations, and Door Prize Drawings from 6:30—8:00

Long time Business Partners who have been contributing Door Prizes are:
Haywood's Jewelers, LakeScapes Nursery, Mariner's Landing Golf & The Landing Restaurant,
Moneta Farm & Home Center, Vita Zen, Westlake Automotive Services
plus new contributions this year from:

Bedford Regional Water Authority and Lake Life Marine Services

This event is FREE and Open To The Public!

Please see page 3 for more information on the Annual Meeting.

Our Mission: To protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe recreation