

# NEWS RELEASE



December 18, 2023

## For Immediate Release

SMLACommunications@gmail.com

### The Smith Mountain Lake Association Asks the Community to [make a SPLASH](#)



The Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) is inviting everyone who enjoys Smith Mountain Lake to [make a SPLASH](#) by donating to help keep it clean and safe. This summer's Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Swimming Advisories on the Blackwater and the increase in boating incidents on SML are trends that need to be reversed.

"Everyone who enjoys Smith Mountain Lake can help protect it," stated Bill Butterfield, SMLA's President. "No one wants harmful algae, injuries, or anything else to damage the lake's reputation as the *Jewel of the Blue Ridge*. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 to protect SML - today and for future generations. We're asking all lake lovers to make a financial donation to help safeguard SML. Please [make a SPLASH](#)," continued Butterfield.

All donations are tax deductible and 100% invested in programs to keep SML clean and safe. The following are examples of how funds will be used:

- Purchase laboratory grade microscopes and supplies for identification of cyanobacteria,
- Set-up a local HAB monitoring program for rapid response to HAB reports,
- Expand SMLA's water quality monitoring program with more testing locations and sampling, and
- Amplify the importance of safe boating so everyone at the lake can safely enjoy it.

SMLA is also reaching out to the Commonwealth of Virginia for help. The Association is asking Governor Youngkin, the General Assembly, and Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to support a budget amendment that would fund a two-year study by Virginia Tech to investigate and respond to HABs at SML.

"We need more support from the Commonwealth to understand what's happening in the SML watershed and how to protect it from continued HAB activity," said Keri Green, Chair of SMLA's Lake Quality Council. "We have partnered with Ferrum College for 37 years to monitor water clarity, chlorophyll-a, and phosphorus in SML. I'm excited to complement this work by collaborating with DEQ and Virginia Tech. Our combined resources are necessary to evaluate and mitigate unwanted cyanobacteria in the lake," added Green.

"It is easy to embrace the fun of being at SML, but everyone needs to understand the risks," said Eric Cheney, Chair of SMLA's Water Safety Council. "Wear a life jacket, learn to properly navigate your watercraft, and be respectful of others," emphasized Cheney. To donate and [make a SPLASH](#), visit <https://smlassociation.org/donate/>.

SMLA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all volunteer organization, whose mission is to protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe recreation. SMLA is the longest serving advocate of the lake; administered by a Board of Directors with leadership from its Lake Quality and Water Safety Councils. These community volunteers and professionals lead dozens of initiatives that keep SML clean and safe. SMLA relies on donations, grants, and memberships to fund its programs.

Donate - Join - Volunteer. ***Be a Steward of the Lake!***