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Smith Mountain Lake Association Announces Water Quality Alliance

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE, VA – Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA), in partnership with the Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce (SMLRCC), Tri-County Lakes Administration Commission (TLAC), and Ferrum College, have formed the Smith Mountain Lake Water Quality Alliance (SMLWQA) to protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake.

“Last year’s Harmful Algal Blooms, and the Virginia Department of Health’s subsequent Swimming Advisory on the entire arm of the Blackwater, negatively affected tourism and business,” said Andy Bruns, SMLRCC Executive Director. “This group will work to address the water quality concerns of all stakeholders.”

While HABs have become more prevalent in U.S. lakes over the past few decades, SML has been touted as one of the cleanest lakes in the eastern half of the United States and, until recently, free of HABs.

“Our members, volunteers, and Board of Directors are committed to keeping SML clean and safe,” said Bill Butterfield, SMLA President. “This alliance is another example of how we are working with the lake community to protect SML.”

The alliance also includes residents, businesses, professionals, and county and state agencies. The goal of the working group is to educate and advise residents and visitors on:

- The history of Harmful Algal Blooms, or HABs, on Smith Mountain Lake
- Steps being taken to better understand and characterize our watershed
- Prospects for future HABs
- Best practices for keeping Smith Mountain Lake clean and safe

“It’s rewarding for everyone when our community, businesses, and local governments combine resources and work together,” said Lorie Smith, TLAC Board Chair. “SML is considered the Jewel of the Blue Ridge, and we must preserve it for generations to enjoy.”

About SMLA

The Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) mission is to keep Smith Mountain Lake clean and
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safe. SMLA is the longest serving advocate for the SML community. Activities help to retain the pristine beauty of Smith Mountain Lake and the vibrant local economy. SMLA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3). The all-volunteer organization that relies on memberships and grants to support programs that keep SML clean and safe.

About SMLRCC

The Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce mission is dedicated to promoting tourism and growing business for its members and the community.

About TLAC

The Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission (TLAC) serves as the administrative department for the counties that surround Smith Mountain Lake and Leesville Lake; Bedford, Campbell, Franklin, and Pittsylvania. The Commission manages lake planning duties as assigned by the respective Boards of Supervisors. TLAC also works in coordination with area residents, businesses, local and federal organizations, on various community programs and projects.

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