



For Immediate Release: November 18, 2024

Media contact:

Jill Kurtz, Communication Chair, Smith Mountain Lake Association
703-283-5813
communication@smlassociation.org

SMLA Presents Annual Awards to Lake Leaders

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE, VA – Smith Mountain Lake Association is recognizing five individuals and organizations for their leadership and community service. The annual awards program recognizes significant contributions to the Smith Mountain Lake community.

Melvin Johnston Citizen Volunteer Award Presented to Tom Hardy

Tom Hardy of Huddleston was presented with the Melvin Johnston Citizen Volunteer Award for his significant contributions to Smith Mountain Lake and the quality of life around the lake. Hardy leads the SMLA Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) program.

Hardy manages all WQM volunteers and activities and coordinates with the Ferrum College staff and students who analyze the samples. He also submits an annual DEQ Citizen Science grant application to fund the program.

SMLA President Bill Butterfield noted that Hardy's volunteerism is critical for the WQM program's success, and that the organization greatly benefits from his dedication and leadership.

Karl Martin Water Safety Award Presented to the SML Sail and Power Squadron

Recipient of the Karl Martin Water Safety Award is the SML Sail and Power Squadron. Commander Rich Faga accepted on behalf of the organization. The organization was selected by members of the SMLA Water Safety Council for outstanding contributions in advancing safety on the waters of Smith Mountain Lake.

Geoff Orth and Scot Mills Earn the Spirit of the Lake Award

Two individuals were honored with the Spirit of the Lake Award. Geoff Orth of Moneta is the leader of the SMLA Save Our Streams (SOS) program. Scot Mills of Rocky Mount, is the local organizer of the Wake the World Adaptive Program.

Orth was honored for fostering positive youth development through water-related programs and for promoting environmental awareness. He leads one of the largest SOS programs in the state.

He is both a certified Save our Streams monitor as well as a trainer for the program. He works closely with the Franklin County school system to assist with Creek Week for all Franklin County

400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100, Moneta, VA 24121



6th graders, and manages all the volunteers for two weeks of environmental education. He coordinates with the Master Naturalists and faculty of Ferrum College to assure the highest rigor possible in the monitoring and reporting about the SML stream health.

Mills was nominated for his contributions to the SML community through the Wake the World Adaptive Program, a program designed to allow disabled persons to safely participate in water sports. His enthusiasm to help others is unmatched and participants relate to him with ease and confidence. His adaptive events draw large crowds of participants and volunteers.

Ayers Farm Owner Byron Books Honored with Clean Stream of the Year Award

Byron Brooks of Glade Hill was awarded the Clean Stream of the Year award for his stewardship of Poplar Camp Creek, which runs through his farm. Brooks was selected by SOS members for his actions that have improved water quality in the stream.

More details about the SMLA annual awards program can be found at <https://smlassociation.org/annual-awards/>

About SMLA

The Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) mission is to keep Smith Mountain Lake clean and 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). It is an all-volunteer organization that relies on memberships, donations and grants to support programs that keep SML clean and safe.

Media



Tom Hardy of Huddleston, right, was presented with the Melvin Johnston Citizen Volunteer Award for his significant contributions to Smith Mountain Lake and the quality of life around the 400 Scruggs Road, Suite 2100, Moneta, VA 24121

lake. The award was presented by SMLA President Bill Butterfield.



Commander Rich Faga, left, receives the Karl Martin Water Safety Award on behalf of the SML Sail and Power Squadron. Presenting is Tom Merriman, SMLA Water Safety Council.