

**Smith Mountain Lake
Vessel Pump Out and Education Program
2024 Final Report**



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

Final Report Prepared by: Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission

Introduction

In late 2023, 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 2024. 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 2024 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 2024 program began on May 18. The approved budget included five workers. One supervisor and four crew member applications were received; a total of three individuals completed the employment process, were hired and began work on May 18th to man the equipment and provide the pump out services. These employees worked each Saturday and Sunday in addition to Memorial Day on May 27th. Educational materials were given to each boat owner at the time of pump out service and were distributed to other boaters housed at several Smith Mountain Lake marinas. Additional educational materials were made available at marinas for interested boaters and visitors to pick up. Boaters were also provided educational materials using a email distribution list.

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

Financial

In December of 2023, TLAC submitted a grant proposal to the VDH to secure funding for the 2024 pump out program. This proposal was approved and provided 75 percent of the funding required. A grant reimbursement request was submitted by TLAC to VDH at the end of the program.

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 \$2,022.21 was provided to TLAC in May 2024. SMLA is responsible for a second contribution in the amount of \$1,415.04 based on actual program expenses.

The total known expenditures for this year's Pump Out Program are \$22,672.16. VDH's

75 percent of the approved grant costs was \$17,004.12. The SMLA's 25 percent of the approved grant program operation costs was \$3,437.25. TLAC's 25 percent of administration costs was \$2,230.79. VDH was responsible for truck storage and equipment repair in the amount of \$1,125.00.

Equipment and Operations

The equipment utilized for the program included two pickup trucks, a Ford F-150 and a Chevy Silverado, equipped with 125-gallon storage tanks plus three 25-gallon manual sewage pumps on dollies. The second truck was used as a back-up vehicle in the event of mechanical failure of the first truck. The second truck was available if needed should the number of service requests require more than one truck on the road. This truck was also used as part of an educational display at the Smith Mountain Lake Association "Day at the Lake" event.

The three TLAC employees traveled to Bayside Marina at Smith Mountain Lake to board the truck and visit marinas each workday. The marinas to be visited were determined by appointments made by TLAC office staff through calls and emails for reservations received Monday through Friday. Additionally, the employees offered pump out services to other boaters at the marinas where they were already providing scheduled pump outs. If time permitted, the crew visited additional marinas to offer pump out services.

The 2024 pump out program serviced boaters at 8 of 12 participating marinas. Experience over the years is that the number of participating marinas can fluctuate for various reasons. It appeared that contributing factors during the summer of 2024 were: boats moving from one marina to another and customers moving their boats to other lakes.

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, 295 people were recorded as being present on the boats at the time pump out service 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 multiple times. Also, pump out educational materials were distributed at the Smith Mountain Lake *Day at the Lake on June 8th* and at the *Smith Mountain Lake Business Expo on April 8th*, as well as displays at Smith Mountain Lake Association Membership meetings in 2023 and 2024.

TLAC staff wrote, designed and bundled educational literature for distribution to those utilizing the vessel pump out services. The prepared literature included a 2024 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. Visitors to TLAC website at www.tricountylakes.org can view extensive information about the Smith Mountain Lake Pump Out Program.

Program Totals

The program operated 15 weeks during the 2024 boating season for a total of 32 days. During the boating season 3,037 gallons of sewage were pumped out through this program, with an average of 16 gallons per pump out. Sixty-four unique boats were pumped out multiple times for a total of 193 pump out services performed. Overall, gallons pumped for 2024 were less than previous years mostly due to equipment issues. It is anticipated that new equipment will be available for the 2025 season.

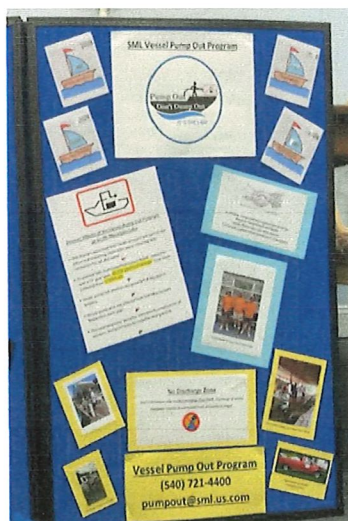
Education Outreach Initiatives 2024

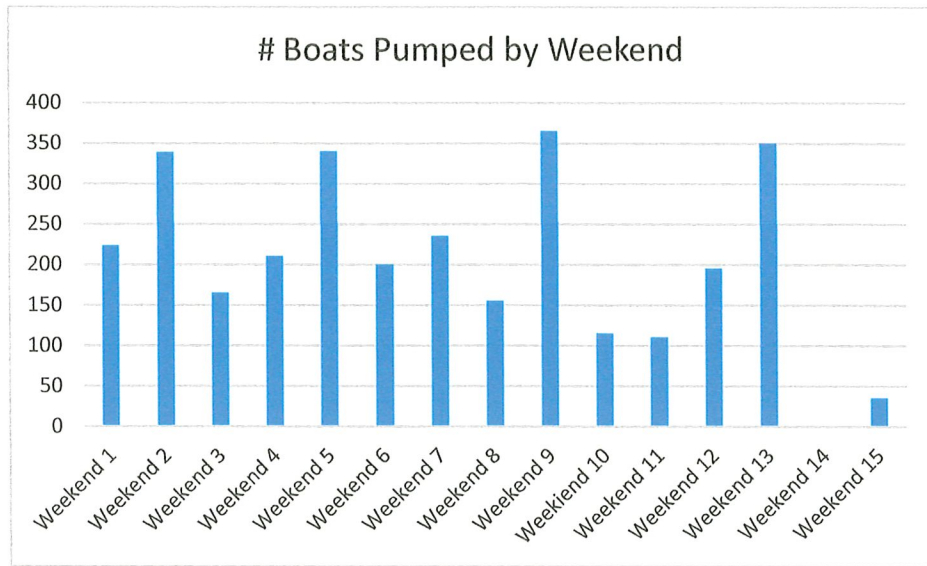
Display at *A Day at the Lake* sponsored by Smith Mountain Lake Association on June 8, 2024



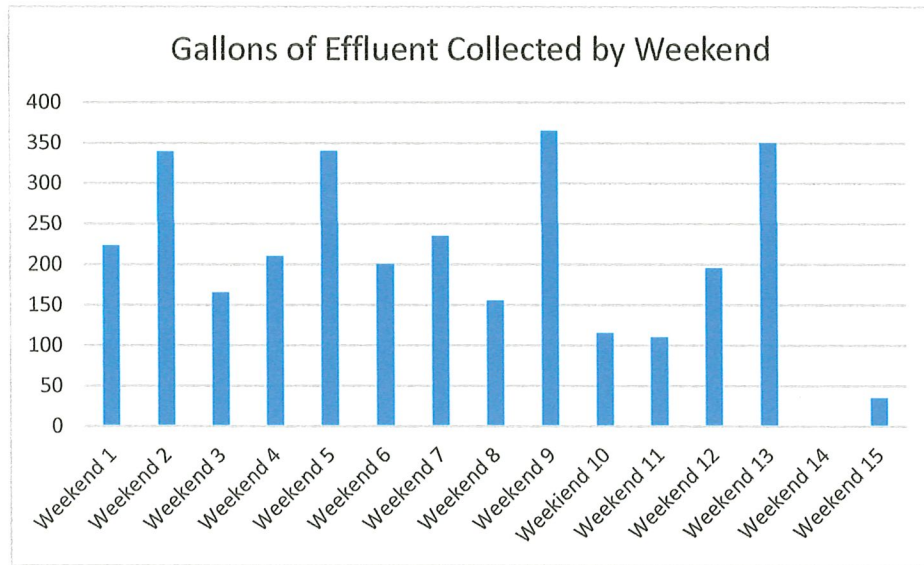
Display at the 2024 Business Expo

Vessel Pump Out staff had displays, distributed educational materials and promotional items, as well as answering visitor questions at Smith Mountain Lake Business Expo on April 9, 2024, and Smith Mountain Lake Association Annual Meeting on September 27, 2024. A vessel pump out truck and hand pump were on display at Smith Mountain Lake Association "A Day at the Lake" event on June 8, 2024.

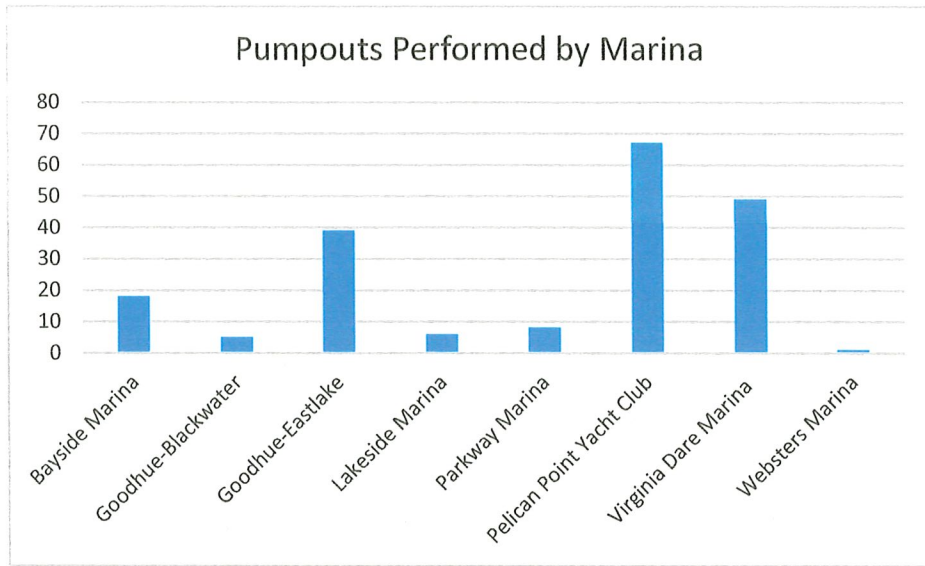




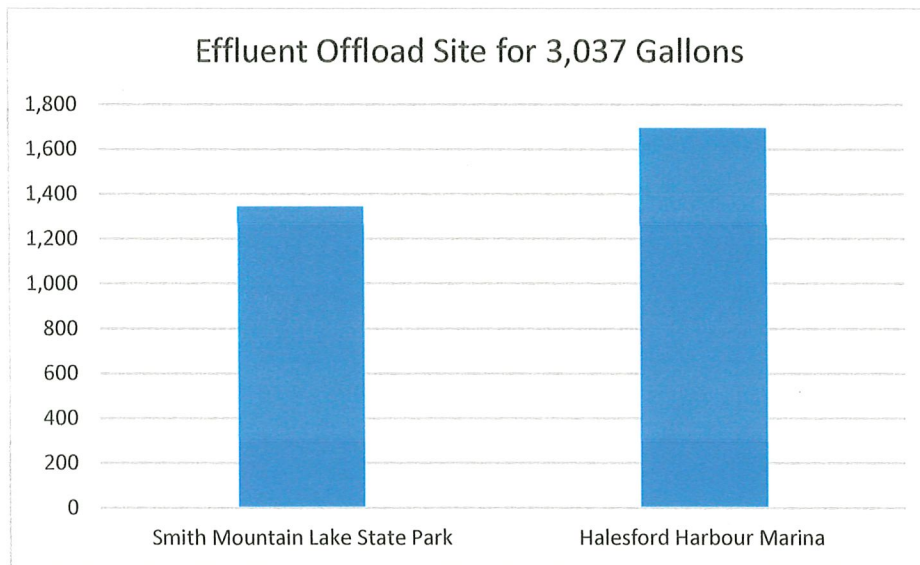
193 Boats Pumped in 2024



3,037 Total Gallons of Effluent Collected Over 15 Weekends in 2024



193 Pump Outs in 2024



Smith Mountain Lake State Park – 1,343 Gallons; Halesford Harbour - 1,694 Gallons;

Summary

The 2024 Pump Out Program, with the partnership between the three agencies, TLAC, VDH and SMLA worked well even with the challenging circumstances of securing necessary program staff and equipment repairs was successful in preventing the potential release of 3,037 gallons of raw sewage into Smith Mountain Lake. The 15-week schedule was well utilized by the boating community, and boaters were 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.

2024 Pump Out Field Crew



(left to right) Benjamin Blondino, Joshua Watson, and Thomas Murphy

2024 Administrative Staff



(left to right) Kristina Sage, Pete Heyroth, Team Leader, and Jeanne Harvey