

Smith Lake Environmental Preservation Committee (SLEPC)

March 2011

www.slepc.org

Membership Renewal Information

For annual members, the mailing label on this newsletter shows the last date your dues were received; membership renewal is due one year from the date shown. Lifetime Members are noted also. Thank you for your continued support!

Meeting with Elected Officials

Saturday April 9, 2011 -- 9 AM Dodge House Restaurant

The Smith Lake Environmental Preservation Committee has scheduled a meeting for Saturday April 9, 2011 at 9 AM at the Dodge House Restaurant located in Dodge City at 426 Al Hwy 69 S, Hanceville, AL 35077. Many of the local elected officials will be in attendance speaking about their goals, their ideas for Smith Lake, and other topics of interest. The meeting is open to the public so come on out to the meet-and-greet with the local elected officials and bring a friend. Many are newly elected and we look forward to working with them. For more information, call Deb Berry at (205) 915-8830.

As of today, the following officials have accepted the invitation:

Cullman County Sheriff Mike Rainey

Cullman County Commission Chairman James Graves

Cullman County Commissioner Stanley Yarbrough

State Representative Mac Buttram

**State Senator Paul Bussman is going to try to work it into his schedule

Stephens Foundation provides grant to SLEPC

Based on a request from Nelson Brooke, Black Warrior River Keeper, the Stephens Foundation provided SLEPC with a \$250 gift to support our efforts. We will put these

funds to good use in our endeavors to keep Smith Lake clean. Thanks to Nelson and the foundation!

River Hero Award Presentation

The Alabama Rivers Alliance selected SLEPC President, Deb Berry, as a 2011 recipient of their River Hero Awards for her continued efforts to keep our waters clean. Nelson Brooke nominated Deb and presented the award at the Alabama Rivers Alliance Water Rally on March 12, 2011 at Camp McDowell. The award was greatly appreciated and, based on the biography of other past and present recipients, was indeed a huge honor to be recognized as an Alabama Rivers Alliance River Hero!

SLEPC Flags are still available

Hopefully you will begin to see the new SLEPC blue and white flags flying on boats and on docks around the lake. Jimmy Wallace of Printers Alley and his wife, Elaine, helped to design the flag and Printers Alley handled the printing, shipping and delivery. In addition, Printers Alley donated 20% of the cost to the group and bought a flag! Thanks to Jimmy and Elaine! If you would like to thank them or have some printing materials or signs designed you can contact them at (256) 747-4932 or Printersalley@yahoo.com.

Smith Lake nominated as a Treasured Alabama Lake (TAL)

On December 28, 2010, then Alabama Governor Bob Riley executed an Executive Order directing the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) to “create an appropriate special designation recognizing treasured Alabama lakes”.

Lake Martin was first in line for the designation. A public hearing was held at ADEM in Montgomery on March 15th to accept comments on this new designation, the requirements needed to qualify as a TAL, and how the TAL would affect other uses of the water resource. SLEPC board members and friends, Ben Tingle, Eddie and Deniece Hand, and Deb Berry, attended the public hearing. In their comments to ADEM, Eddie Hand and Deb Berry nominated Smith Lake for the TAL designation. We also appreciate that Dick Bronson of Lake Watch of Lake Martin also nominated Smith Lake as a TAL. We will keep you posted on this effort.

Copies of the proposed rule and the summary of reasons supporting the revisions are available on the Internet at: <http://adem.alabama.gov/PubHearings/PubHearings.htm>.

Removal of Abandoned Structures from the Lake

Many of you probably noticed a lot of cleanup work going on around the lake over the winter months. The cleanup effort was financed by Alabama Power Company and was contracted out after a bid process was used to select a contractor to remove the structures and other debris. Approximately 300 abandoned structures were removed. Thanks to Alabama Power for their support and funding of this effort.

Moratorium on some shoreline activities for Smith Lake

According to excavating companies around the lake that install rip rap and other shoreline stabilization, the moratorium for placing rip rap, building seawalls or boat ramps, etc. along the Smith Lake shoreline is still in effect. Some emergency work is being allowed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is studying the effects that the above mentioned activities have on the endangered/threatened flattened musk turtle. Any questions should be addressed to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alabama Ecological Services Field Office, 1208-B Main Street, Daphne, AL 36526; Phone (251)441-5181 or web address <http://www.fws.gov/daphne/>.

Change at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office

Lt. Brett Holmes attended some of our SLEPC meetings and encouraged everyone to send him their email address so he could establish a quick way to communicate with folks around the lake regardless of where they lived. Many of you did this so I wanted to let you know that Brett has started a new job with the District Attorney's office. He is still around but the Sheriff's Department email address is no longer valid. Hopefully at the April 9th meeting, Sheriff Rainey will help us find an efficient way for lake residents and others to share information with his department and also for the Sheriff's office to share information with us as needed. Remember to keep your eyes open and report any suspicious activity to your local Sheriff's office.

Walker County Sheriff's office: (205) 302-6464 and (205) 384-7281

Winston County Sheriff's office: (205) 489-2115

Cullman County Sheriff's office: (205) 734-0342

11th Annual Mike Beasley Memorial Poker Run

The 11th Annual Mike Beasley Memorial Poker Run will be held on Saturday July 16, 2011. Proceeds are distributed to the Smith Lake Task Force, fire departments and other deserving organizations around the lake. Last years event raised \$30,000 so come on out and enjoy the fun for a good cause.

The Slide at Smith Lake Park is closed

According to a recent article in the Cullman Times, the slide at Smith Lake Park will be closed due to the expense of repairing or replacing a water pump. The pool, camp grounds and other facilities will remain open.

Save The Date – The State of the Lake Address and SLEPC Annual Meeting has been scheduled for October 29, 2011

The SLEPC Annual Meeting and State of the Lake Address will be held on October 29, 2011 at the Dodge House Restaurant at 9AM. Dr. Bill Deutsch and the rest of the Alabama Water Watch gang will be presenting the water quality data that has been collected by our volunteer monitors around the lake and discussing other activities of interest around the watershed.

Newsletter Sponsors

Our newsletter reaches hundreds of households and businesses with an interest in Smith Lake and we are always looking for sponsors. The sponsorships are \$220 and sponsors will

be acknowledged in each quarterly newsletter for at least one year. Let us know if you want to sponsor a newsletter!

Fall 2010 newsletter sponsor: Black Warrior Riverkeeper – This membership-based nonprofit organization's mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries, including Smith Lake. To report pollution, volunteer, donate, or learn more, call 205-458-0095, email info@blackwarriorriver.org, or visit www.BlackWarriorRiver.org. BWRk is proud to collaborate with SLEPC!

Fall 2009 newsletter sponsor: Alabama B.A.S.S. Federation Nation – For information about ABFN, contact Mike Macon, Treasurer and District 2 Director, at home (256) 352-7390; work (256) 352-2563; cell (256) 339-0981. Web site: www.albassfednation.com. ABFN is also a new SLEPC member; watch for their logo around the lake:

Summer 2009 newsletter sponsor: South Shades Crest Animal Clinic
*****Repeat Sponsor*****(205)987-4838 located at 2304 John Hawkins Parkway Suite 110, Hoover, AL 35244. **Dr. Susan Stark** is the owner and veterinarian for the clinic and is a lifetime member of SLEPC.

Thanks to all of our generous donors and sponsors!

Habitat Destruction around the Lake

If you have brush below the full pool line, you are encouraged to leave that brush for fish habitat which has been described as building birdhouses for fish. Alabama Power actually owns the property below the full pool mark which is 510 ft. mean sea level (MSL) so folks should not destroy habitat/land that is not theirs.

In addition, in order to minimize erosion, Alabama Power asks that folks not disturb the land below the 510 ft. MSL full pool line with trucks, all-terrain vehicles, etc.

Smith Lake Fishing Info

--**The Smith Lake slot limit for bass is 13 - 15 inches.** Any bass caught in the slot must be released back into the lake. The total length includes tip of nose to end of tail.

--The nine-inch crappie limit has been lifted for public waters of 500 acres or less. Since Smith Lake is 21,200 acres **the nine-inch limit on crappie remains in effect for Smith Lake.**

--The web site for Alabama Power's Fish Habitat Enhancement Maps with GPS information has been changed to <http://www.alabamapower.com/fishdata>.

State Boating Law Highlights

---All persons 12 years of age and older who operate a motorized boat in Alabama are required to have an Alabama vessel license indicated by a "V" Class placed on the driver's license.

---BoaterExam.com is a new online interactive course that may be taken for a cost of \$29.95. Upon passing the course, a certificate will be issued that can be taken to the local driver's license office so that the "V" can be added to the license.

---The Coast Guard Auxiliary currently has about 20 folks participating on Smith Lake. This is a service organization and not an enforcement authority. The Auxiliary offers Vessel Operation Classes for \$18.00 at various locations around the lake. For more information email John Kulbitskas at johnkulb@bellsouth.net.

---Smith Lake is surrounded by DRY counties and, therefore, not only does the legal blood-alcohol limit of .08 apply but also the laws associated with dry counties. It is our understanding, that ANY alcohol in a boat on Smith Lake can be considered a violation of the law. As always, the severity of enforcement is up to the discretion of the officer.

---Vessels passing head on should keep to the right. If you cannot see around a bend in the shoreline or a rock formation assume that there is a boat coming at you on the other side and stay well to the right.

---Scuba divers should always have a diver's flag flying on their boat. The flag should be at least 12 inches square, colored red with a two inch strip running diagonally from the top staff corner to the bottom fly corner. Boaters should stay a minimum or 100 feet away from the displayed flag.

---A properly installed kill switch must be attached to the driver of a moving vessel less than 24 feet long with greater than 50 horsepower.

---As of April 2003, stern lights (anchor lights) must be at least one meter above the navigational lights (running lights) and must be visible for two miles.

--The Alabama Marine Police recommend that lake residents place their 911 address somewhere that is visible from the water and that the letters and numbers be reflective and at least three inches high. This could help them identify a location easier and quicker.

Other News Around the Lake

--- As of January 1, 2009, vessels with heads (onboard bathrooms) must have a Marine Sanitation Device (MSD) inspection annually by a certified inspector. Inspections cost \$50. Fines for having a head that has not been inspected range from \$100 to \$1000; those caught discharging onboard waste can be fined up to \$10,000. To make an appointment with a MSD inspector contact Don and/or Matt Cagle at (205) 221-2232.

---Smith Lake Living is a magazine that includes various articles, advertisements and information about Smith Lake. You can purchase a one year subscription by mailing a check for \$15.00 to Smith Lake Living LLC, 788 Co. Rd. 97, Bremen, AL 35033 or you can pick up a copy at various advertisers locations around the lake. If you would like to place an ad, contact smithlakeliving.com

---An Alabama Power web site is available for lake level information:

<http://lakes.alabamapower.com> or you can access lake level information from our web site www.SLEPC.org. The 1-800-lakes11 number also provides lake information.

---Smith Lake now has a web cam. The camera is just south of Ryan Creek Boating Center and can be accessed through the Smith Lake Living Magazine web site: www.smithlakeliving.com.

---Remember to call Alabama Power's representatives BEFORE you begin a seawall, a dock or begin construction that could affect land below the water storage easement of 522 feet MSL (mean sea level). Call 205 384-7385 for permitting information and to make an appointment for an onsite visit.

---To receive Alabama Power's free *Shorelines*, which includes draw down information, estimated filling schedules, cleanup schedules, etc., write to Shorelines 12N-0980, Alabama Power Company, POB 2641, B'ham, AL 35291-0980. You can also view this publication at <http://www.alabamapower.com/lakes/shorelines.asp>.

---The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) oversees any land disturbance of one acre or larger or if the disturbance causes a water quality violation. ADEM's Decatur office handles this program for the Smith Lake area. (256) 353-1713.

---Cullman County PALS (People Against a Littered State) LITTER HOTLINE! If you see someone littering, you can make a report by calling the hotline at (256) 775-4706. Their web site is <http://home.bellsouth.net/p/pwp-cullmanpals>.

---Cullman County now has several locations for recycling used motor oil. For a complete list of locations call 1-800-452-5901.

---Cullman County Sanitation Department will pick up old appliances such as washers, dryers, refrigerators, etc. This service is free of charge to residential customers. Call (256)287-1142 for pick-up.

Requests

Please secure items on your docks such as buckets, rafts, and chairs to prevent littering the lake.

With the low lake level, please watch for islands just above and below the surface.

Keep an eye out for dock and foam dumpers and report them.

Web Sites of Interest

-Smith Lake Environmental Preservation Committee's at www.slepc.org.

-Smith Lake Living Magazine at www.smithlakeliving.com

-Black Warrior River Keeper at www.blackwarriorriver.org

-Alabama Water Watch's at <http://www.aces.edu/dept/fisheries/aww/aww/index.php>

-Winston County Smith Lake Advocacy, Inc at www.wcslai.blogspot.com

- Smith Lake Civic Association can be contacted via email at johnkulb@bellsouth.net

-The Clean Water Partnership for the Warrior basin at www.warriorcwp.org.

-Cullman Co. PALS at <http://home.bellsouth.net/p/pwp-cullmanpals>

-Alabama Dept. Conservation and Natural Resources web site for online purchasing of hunting and fishing licenses is www.outdooralabama.com.

-**Alabama Department of Public Health** web site for statewide fish consumption advisories is www.adph.org/tox.

-**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** web site for information about relicensing, commercial permit applications, etc. is www.ferc.gov. Smith Lake file number is P-2165.

Board and Committee Contact Information

2010 Board of Directors re-elected at November 2009 Annual Meeting:

Debbie Berry, President - (205)823-0015; email: debbiecberry@aol.com

Ben Tingle Vice President – (205)608-1291; email: TBtingle@aol.com

Becky Gray, Treasurer - (256)747-6262; email: beckyg@hiwaay.net

Eddie Hand, Secretary - (256)287-1545; email: ehand@att.net

Edwin Calvert, Director At Large - (256)734-9337

Committee Chairs:

Jerry Gray, Membership Committee - (256)747-6262; email: jrg@hiwaay.net

David Gilbert, Nominating Committee - (256)287-1269 or DWGRUST@aol.com

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SERVE ON THE SLEPC BOARD, HAVE NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD, OR WOULD LIKE TO SERVE ON A COMMITTEE PLEASE CONTACT US.

Membership Information

The Smith Lake Environmental Preservation Committee (SLEPC) was formed in 1995 as an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) non profit organization with the goal of preserving and enhancing the water quality of Smith Lake and its tributaries for people, recreation, fish and wildlife thru education and volunteer efforts and by working with officials and agencies and other organizations with similar goals.

Please join us in our endeavors to preserve Smith Lake and its tributaries. **All donations are tax deductible and very much appreciated.**

Individual Membership Dues: Business Membership Dues:

\$20 for a single annual membership Annual membership \$50

\$30 for a couple annual membership Annual Supporting membership \$100

\$100 for a single lifetime membership Annual Patron membership \$500

\$200 for a couple lifetime memberships

\$250 for a couple steward lifetime memberships

Please help us defray expenses and continue our efforts by making your check payable to The Smith Lake Environmental Preservation Committee.

Mail to: c/o Deb Berry 860 Alford Avenue, Hoover, AL 35226-1963

Sincerely,

Debbie Berry, President
860 Alford Avenue
Hoover, AL 35226-1963

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[Water Quality](#) [Fishing Information](#)