



LBCA

October 2010

Newsletter

Water, Water, Everywhere . . .

. . . reminding us how important water is to life and how we must be good stewards of the water entrusted to us . . .



Since our last newsletter, we have greatly expanded our approach to the water issues that can impact Lake Burton. This newsletter will offer our most in-depth analysis to date of the water issues affecting Lake Burton. There are two areas of concern that need to be monitored: water quality (pollution) and water quantity (interbasin transfer [IBT]). On these issues, we are working with a number of different groups and individuals: Georgia Power Company; Tallulah River Watershed Council; Lake Burton Club (formerly Waterfall); State Senator, Jim Butterworth; and State Representative, Steve Allison. Additionally, Bill Russell, one of our current directors, has been appointed as chairperson of the LBCA's new Water Quality Committee.

We have asked for and received comments from several of these persons and organizations. Rather than interpreting their positions on these issues, we have determined it best to publish their comments verbatim. Please read the articles in and enclosures to this newsletter carefully as there is a great deal of important information presented.

1) A letter from State Senator Jim Butterworth. The issue of interbasin transfer is a political issue which is why

we have asked Senator Butterworth for his help and guidance.

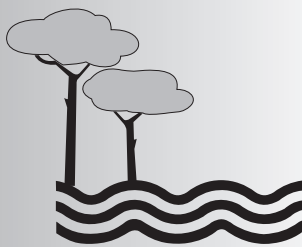
2) An update from our Water Quality Committee chairperson, Bill Russell. Bill explains where we stand and his outlook and plans for the future.

3) An article from the Tallulah River Watershed Council. The TRWC was formed several years ago by Tom Fischer, a past director of the LBCA. The LBCA and The Lake Rabun Association have both given financial support to the TRWC. The TRWC water quality group is headed by Mike Walters and Jim Pope, both past directors of the LBCA.

After you have considered these enclosures, we hope you will have a better understanding of the issues and the amount of time and effort that is being spent to protect Lake Burton.

Finally, if you see a problem, hear a rumor (and there are plenty being spread), or have a question, please call any officer, director, or past president. We want all of our members to have the true facts about the quality and the quantity of our lake's water.

Linda Dixon





Tallulah River Watershed Council

The Tallulah River watershed is a spectacular setting nestled into the foothills and mountains of the southern Appalachians. For decades, the watershed has offered property owners and visitors magnificent residential and recreational opportunities and enjoyment. However, as more and more people have discovered the beauty and attraction of the area, increased residential, recreational, and infrastructure development have put added pressure on the ecological stability of this majestic watershed. Without ongoing proactive actions, it appears to be especially easy for manmade lakes with extensive shoreline development to become polluted. Even in today's era of environmental regulations, a recent EPA survey of the nation's lakes ranked forty to fifty percent of the lakes that were assessed as already significantly impaired.

The Tallulah River Watershed Council (TRWC) was formed in 2006 under a slightly different name by resolution of the Lake Burton Civic Association. The purpose of the TRWC was and remains to identify, understand, and address potential threats to the watershed that continue to emerge. Since the TRWC has limited resources and budget, with no statutory legal authority, the manner by which it addresses potential threats is to work cooperatively with watershed constituencies, including civic, community, and governmental organizations, as well as Georgia Power, to identify means of mitigating or averting negative developments. The TRWC has assigned specific responsibilities to five task forces: Watershed Master Plan, Water Management, Water Quality, Communications, and Industry and Government Affairs. Following is a brief description of the focus of each task force:

Watershed Master Plan: This task force is working to develop a long-range plan that guides orderly growth and progress throughout the watershed – a plan that sets parameters for things such as land

use, flood and erosion control, density, shoreline management, scope and concentration of future development, water usage, steep slope development, management and conservation targets, guidelines for landscaping with respect to native habitats, etc.

Water Management: Major focus has been devoted to the recent threat of interbasin water transfers (IBT) from the Tallulah River watershed to the Atlanta metropolitan area in order to deal with potential shortfalls resulting from a judge's ruling in a landmark lawsuit. The proposed IBT, which has been rejected for the present, would have diverted 50 million gallons of water daily from Lake Burton to the Chattahoochee watershed, ultimately headed for the Atlanta metro area. The IBT could be revived in the upcoming legislative session, and if approved, would have major negative consequences on the landscape and lifestyles in the Tallulah River watershed.

Water Quality: Water in the Tallulah River watershed has long been viewed to be as pristine as that of any watershed in the country. Increased development of single residences and residential communities, as well as highway construction and increased traffic on the area's many unpaved roads threaten water quality and, whether valid or not, perceptions of diminished water quality have been reported.

There are three categories of pollution that can diminish water quality: chemical infiltration, biological infiltration, and sedimentation influx. The task force is focused on understanding current levels of water quality, how to become aware of future threats to that quality, and what strategies can be deployed to protect water quality for the foreseeable future.

Communications: This group is responsible for ensuring that the various civic groups in the watershed are knowledgeable regarding the work and progress of the TRWC, and are thus able to





have input into the direction and activities of the TRWC. It also will focus on crafting "Guidelines for Responsible Residency," informing residents via the various associations of "best practices" for responsible landscaping, construction processes, leaf removal, pressure washing, deck staining, etc.; and will communicate findings regarding water quality levels.

Industry And Government Affairs:

This task force will develop, maintain, and exercise ongoing relationships with elected/appointed officials of our city, county, state, and federal governments as well as with all commercial industries within the Tallulah River watershed.

The Council is composed of duly-elected officers, task force leaders, representatives appointed by the civic associations, and officials from Georgia Power and the U.S. Forest Service who offer non-voting liaison assistance. With the temporary abandonment of an IBT from Lake Burton to the Chattahoochee River watershed, the issue that has gotten much attention is water quality, and the remainder of this article will describe actions the task force has been taking to fulfill its mission.

The first step was to meet with experts in water quality and testing from Georgia Power. The task force learned that Georgia Power tests water at numerous points throughout the watershed a minimum of three times per year (beaches are tested for fecal coliform weekly during the "beach" season). The number of tests varies by location, but at least 13 items are tested at each location (e.g., turbidity, phosphorous, alkalinity, fecal coliform, etc.). Georgia Power test results through 2009 show ups and downs in some items tested but reveal no significant long-term deviations from the base year of reported data (1992). It should be noted that accumulated sediment is not one of the baseline items tested.

The next step was to determine what a robust testing regimen should include, and the task force met with a department head at Georgia Tech who is an expert in assessing water quality to develop a deeper under-

standing of testing procedures. A meeting and a follow-up conversation were held with the Department of Natural Resources' biologist on-site at the fish hatchery, to learn of issues/activities of concern to the DNR. The biologist is primarily focused on fish health and reported of several "fish health tests" that were conducted over the years on various fish species. No significant concentrations of any pollutant (other than low levels of mercury arriving via wind currents from remote industrial sites that resulted in a mild warning about limiting consumption) were found in the tests. It should be noted that the last such test was conducted in November, 2006, and the task force urged DNR to conduct another test soon. Meetings have been held with officials of the Lake Burton Club, formerly the Waterfall Country Club, under new ownership since April. The new owners have been made aware of, and have investigated allegations of pollution of Lake Burton waters from improper practices by the former owners. The meetings were oriented to understanding how the new owners viewed past practices, how they intend to operate the golf facility and surrounding residential properties, what safeguards they intend to implement, etc.

A meeting was held with the Georgia Environmental Protection Department to determine what legal requirements cover commercial operations within the watershed, what the history of compliance with such regulations has been, and how extensively EPD monitors activities within the various watersheds throughout the state.

Several follow-up discussions have been or will be held with Georgia Power officials regarding developments since the task force commenced operations and possible changes/improvements Georgia Power might consider to enhance the extensive testing regimen it is currently conducting.

The task force contemplates wrapping up its activities and presenting recommendations to the TRWC by year-end.





19th Annual LBCA Golf Tournament

A beautiful, sunny day greeted more than sixty golfers who gathered at Kingwood Golf Club & Resort on August 20th for the 19th Annual LBCA Golf Tournament. We owe a great deal of thanks to the following who volunteered their time and talents to making this year's tournament a success: Manning & Jim Holmes, Tees Booth, Linda Dixon, Jim and Janis Stapleton, Caroline White, Peter Anzo, Jamie Dunlap, Becky Callahan, Amy Giles, Bill Russell, Cyndae Arrendale, Ranny Whitney, Stella Ivie, Bill Bomar, Gwen Fink, Sheriff Frank Andrews, and Kingwood Resort.



As always, the purpose of the tournament was to raise funds for our volunteer fire departments to use in the purchase of necessary equipment to continue to serve our county. In spite of the economic slowdown, the event exceeded last year's results – thanks to the generous sponsors and players!

Prizes were awarded to the foursomes for two flights consisting of eight teams each. "Long drive" and "closest to the hole" awards were also made.

Tournament organizers Sam Dixon and Bob Fink express their thanks to all who made this event such a success – including the following who made donations to this worthy cause:

Anchorage Boat Dock
Frank Bachelder
John and Julie Barnett
Bill Bomar
Steadman Burgess
Dick and Nancy Burrell
Thomas and Becky Callahan
Lynn and Bill Cochran/Schroder
Community Bank & Trust
Bob and Lynn Cowhig
Bill and Jill Dahlberg
Deal's Appliances
Jerry and Carol Demery
Dillard House
Herb and Gail Entrekin
Bill Gignilliat
Carl and Ann Gross
Habersham Metal Products Co.
H & E Automotive
Bob and Becky Hunter
Jeff Jackson
Sid & Martha Kollme
Massage Envy
McDonalds
Jon and Sharon McMillan
Bruce and Anne Merrill
Mori Luggage & Gifts
Mountain Heritage Bank
Mountain Lakes Medical Center
Mountain Lakes Security
Mountain Patrol
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Rees & Frances Phenix
Rabun County Bank
RE/MAX of Rabun
Gayle Schwantes
Jim and Susan Shepherd
Silvio Development Company
Strategic Stewardship
Ferdinand & Margaret Stent
United Community Bank
W.C. Dixon Agency Inc
Mike and Joan Walters
Waterfall Country Club



LBCA In Georgia Mountain Laurel

Enclosed you will find a reprint of an article written by Tracy McCoy, editor of Georgia Mountain Laurel Magazine. All of our members can be proud of the positive impact that the LBCA is having on the lake and in the community. To be

recognized by an independent source for some of our "good deeds", makes the time and effort our members donate worthwhile. Thanks to all that contribute!