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LAKE LINES

A Publication of Lake Martin Resource Association

www.LMRA.info

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We hope you have had an enjoyable summer and have had many opportunities to get out on the Lake. It's been an almost full pool lake since April 1 and, considering that we've had drought conditions most of the summer, we are very fortunate. We commend Alabama Power for their water management. In June, LMRA held its 35th annual meeting at Church in the Pines and 75 of our members attended. Members learned of the organizations activities and projects from our board members and heard talks about the Martin Dam Relicensing Project and boating safety. Also in June, we joined with Renew Our Rivers to clean up our lake and surrounding roads. In July, we completed the design of our website and launched www.LMRA.info. I hope you've had a chance to check it out. At several local events around the lake, we represented LMRA and presented our mission, goals and projects and signed up new members. Then in August we began the placement of the LMRA logo on all 350 buoys maintained by LMRA. We want the public to know that the membership of LMRA is responsible for purchasing, placing and maintaining these buoys. The Lakeside Address Sign Project has been well received and many of our members have placed these green and white signs on their piers and boathouses. It's been a busy summer.

We are working with Alabama Power to model our "shoulder months" proposal that calls for lake filling to begin on Feb. 15 and reach full pool on April 1 and the draw down to start on October 15. This proposal would allow much more use of the lake during the better weather months of the year. Our Board met recently with Alabama Power officials to discuss how to best address the modeling of our proposal. LMRA is taking a strong role with the Legislative Committee charged with the responsibility to formulate a state wide water management plan. We intend to focus on the economic impact that Lake Martin has to the State of Alabama. We are also active participants in the Martin Dam Relicensing process. Watch for notices of these meetings in the media and on the LMRA website. The public is invited and we need our members in attendance to show support for Lake Martin. On the environmental front, LMRA is about to kick off its "Report A Litterer" program. We want the lake community to know we are serious about littering.

Now, we are focusing on fall activities. LMRA continues to be an advocate for higher summer and winter water levels for we know this is of primary interest to our

I hope you can see from my comments that we are engaged in the process of "working for the betterment of Lake Martin". We also welcome your input and your participation in this process. Go to our website and send us your thoughts or you can e-mail me at cborden@LMRA.info. Until next time, see you on the Lake.

Charles Borden

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON WATER POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

The 2008 Alabama State Legislature established a Joint Legislative Committee to draft a comprehensive plan to manage the State's water. Such a plan is long overdue and could have provided guidance in the "Water Wars" negotiations. The Committee will focus on every aspect of water usage in our State. LMRA could not stand on the sideline and watch as others made decisions about the water that enters and leaves Lake Martin. Four sub-committees were formed by the Committee and LMRA board members are active participants on each sub-committee. We've already seen industry and agriculture draw great attention to their water needs. Recreation and the economic impact that recreation generates is equally important to the State's economy. LMRA intends to focus on the economic impact of Lake Martin and the lake community. The very low water level of 2007 created a depressed economic situation for our area. To realize anything other than a full lake each year would be devastating to our economy. For this reason, LMRA intends to be a "major player" in the long range planning for water usage in Alabama.

One only has to be involved with the process to recognize the huge undertaking that lies ahead for this Committee and the participants. With the many diverse interests vying for the finite amount of water in Alabama, and with many of these interests being represented by powerful lobbyists, we foresee a struggle ahead. In this process, you can be assured that LMRA will be a strong advocate for the interests of our membership and the Lake Martin community. We will keep you informed of the Committee's progress in the months ahead.

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"Working for the Betterment of Lake Martin"

Lake Martin Resource Association Holds Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Lake Martin Resource Association (LMRA) was held Sunday, June 8th at Church in the Pines. Those attending heard comments about the recent efforts of the organization by current president, J. Charles Borden, as well as past president, Ben Russell. Speakers included James Crew, the hydro relicensing project manager of Southern Company, speaking on the current relicensing project of the Martin Dam. Sgt. Gary Buchanan of the Alabama Marine Police also spoke on the efforts by marine police officers to keep Lake Martin safe for boaters. The next annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2009 at the Harbor House.

“REPORT A LITTERER”

John Thompson

How many times have you heard the following about our ever growing problem with litter on our highways and in our beautiful lake? “This is awful, there oughta be a law against people trashing our environment”, Or maybe, “Someone needs to do something about this”? Well, the answer is, there is and you can. Alabama does indeed have laws against littering our highways and our waterways. Brief description:

Alabama Litter Law 13A-7-29 Criminal Littering
A person commits the crime of criminal littering if he or she engages in any of the following acts:

- Knowingly deposits litter, in any manner, on public or private property or waters
- Negligently deposits glass or pointed objects on or adjacent to public waters
- Discharges sewage, oil products, or litter from a watercraft of more than 25 feet in length

Litter is defined as rubbish, refuse, waste material, garbage, dead animals, paper, glass, cans, bottles, trash, scrap metal, debris, or any foreign substance of any kind and description. Criminal littering is a Class C misdemeanor. The minimum fine for first conviction shall be \$250.00. The problems are, few citizens know about the law and rarely are cases made against violators. The County Sheriff is responsible for the enforcement of the law and would be more than willing to take action whenever the opportunity arises. According to a 31 state survey conducted by the Institute of Applied Research, one half of litter is deliberate and the other half comes from the bed of pick-up trucks or garbage haulers. This same survey indicates that males are responsible for 72% of deliberate littering and 96% of the “accidental” kind, if there is such a thing. Since littering in the State of Alabama is a crime, as good citizens, it is our responsibility to report littering when we see it whether it be deliberate or accidental. You can do this by going to the Sheriff’s office or on line at www.LMRA.info.

These reports will be forwarded to the appropriate Sheriff’s Department. The Sheriff will determine the course of action to be taken and do the necessary follow up. Both Sheriff Franklin of Elmore County and Sheriff Abbett of Tallapoosa County have agreed to accept these reports from LMRA.

Reports filed on line will be completely confidential and will need: date, time of day, car/boat license, car/boat make, what was littered, who littered (driver/passenger/bed of truck). Signature and contact information will be needed if you are willing to sign a warrant after the Sheriff reviews and determines the appropriate action.

If you see it.....report it!

Safety Committee Report

Jim Koeppen

Your Safety Committee continues to monitor and replace broken and missing hazard and no wake buoys on Lake Martin. For the summer so far, we have replaced 8 hazard buoys. The biggest cause for buoy replacement during the summer boating season is buoys that are hit and then broken. Depending on the extent of the damage, they are left either missing the top part of the buoy, or so damaged that they sink. If you notice a buoy missing or damaged, please email me, jkoeppe@LMRA.info.

In an effort to make the buoys more visible during twilight and nighttime boating, two reflective LMRA stickers are being added to buoys. Seventy buoys have had the decals added with many more to go as we continue to monitor the lake.

Safe Boating Classes, to obtain your Alabama Boating license, will be held beginning in 2009. Watch for announcements in our January *Lake Lines*.



Lake Clean-up-2008

John Thompson

Thanks to all of the volunteers who participated in the Lake Martin clean-up on Saturday, June 7th. For a brief time at the conclusion of that hot and humid day, selected roadsides and some of the shoreline was cleared of unsightly trash that mars the natural beauty of the Lake Martin environment. This small group of hearty souls picked up roadside litter that had been tossed from vehicles or blown out of truck beds. The trash included beer cans/bottles, soft drink cans/bottles, plastic water bottles, politicians signs, plastic bags, and styrofoam “fast food” containers. The shoreline trash was some of the same and also included lawn furniture, bar-b-que grills, large chunks of styrofoam, automobile tires, plastic floats, ice coolers and camping equipment. Litter in the Lake Martin area is increasing and this effort only touched a small part and will last only for a brief time. As a caring community, we must all do more to protect our beautiful surroundings that means so much to so many.

WE’RE WORKING FOR YOU

E-MAIL ALERT

On our Membership Form, we requested that you provide your e-mail address if you have one. Many of our members provided theirs. However, some addresses appear to be incorrect. Recent “Blast” messages to our members have returned many messages as undeliverable. We found that some internet servers require you to “allow” receipt of mail from us. (Com-Link, Inc. and others) We intend to use e-mail when we have a need to inform our members of urgent and important information. You won’t get junk mail from us and your e-mail address will not be given out to anyone. If you have not received these e-mail items, then we do not have your correct information or your server has blocked us out. Please open your server to LMRA@LMRA.info. To insure that we have your correct e-mail address please send an e-mail to LMRA@LMRA.info with the word “test” and your name. We’ll check

Lakeside Address Signs

Many members have ordered these address signs to place on the lakeside of their property. If you haven’t placed your order, please do so now. The price is very attractive at \$13 for a 6”x18” Green (white reflective letters) metal sign. These signs are highly encouraged by emergency personnel for ease in locating your property from the water. See the order form in May Lake Lines or www.LMRA.info or call Karen at 256-329-0835 to place your order.

LIGHTS ON THE WATER - PART

In the May edition of Lake Lines, I wrote an article with this same title. The focus was on the use of a white strobe light on the stern on pontoon boats and I strongly encouraged all pontoon boat owners to purchase and install such a light. In 1998, a tragic accident occurred in the Real Island area where a life was lost. A strobe light would likely have prevented this accident.

On August 9, again almost at the same spot in the Real Island area, a pontoon boat was struck and one person was killed and several others were injured. I can’t say with certainty, but it is very likely that a strobe light might have prevented this tragedy.

The marine law specifying a green and red light on the starboard and port bow of the boat and a white anchor light at the stern was passed in the early 1900’s. Much has changed since then but the light requirements have not changed. Today, there are more boats on the water. Boats are much faster, and on Lake Martin, as on many inland waterways, house lights dot the shoreline. Shoreline lights can deceive the boat operator into thinking that a white light at the stern of a boat is a shoreline light much farther in the distance than it actually is. And at best, the regulation lights are very small and difficult to see. Yet, a flashing white strobe light is much more visible and gets your attention because of rapid flashes. It does not impair night vision and is much easier to see and identify it’s location than the tiny white regulation light.

As I noted in the May article, we have discussed this with the Alabama Marine Police and they approve the use of a strobe light as long as it is white.

We still have plenty of water to enjoy fall nights on Lake Martin. We strongly encourage you to install a white strobe light at the stern of your boat. Don’t be involved in a boating accident that might be prevented by a \$25 item. Strobe lights can be purchased at area marinas, boating supply dealers and electronics stores. Please do this for your own safety and the safety of those on your boat and others.

Here are the directors and officers who have been elected to move LMRA forward.

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LMRA WEBSITE

Have you checked out our website at www.LMRA.info? We believe it is very attractive and informative and will provide the viewer with information about the mission, goals and projects of LMRA. We’ve included information about our very new endeavor of “Report a Litterer”, a link to our Boating Safety Committee and a means to secure the “\$5000 Reward” Sign.