

DEEP CREEK DISPATCH

Spring, 2004

Newsletter of the
Property Owners' Association
of Deep Creek Lake, Incorporated

Lake Capacity Study

If you think everything about boats and boating on DCL is just fine, you'll love the (Environmental Research Management) ERM draft report. They made only two major recommendations; that sailing regattas and bass tournaments are not to be held on peak weekend hours, and that law enforcement be increased during peak hours in coves, under bridges, and in no wake areas. After the bass fishermen and the sailors got through with ERM, those recommendations were withdrawn. I think most of us would have recommended increased law enforcement, but perhaps a 70 page report makes it more believable.

In fact, there were no complaints in the survey of residents and weekenders about sailboats or bass fishermen. A photograph was presented which showed the starting area of a typical weekend sailboat race start. In truth for about 40 minutes the narrow area between Turkey Neck and the south shore of Thousand Acres is often congested with a lot of sailboats on summer weekends. However other boats can pass through. ERM did not contact the sailing community and did not know the situation.

The draft report presents a lot of statistics. If you are interested, and have a good computer, modem, and Internet connection it can be downloaded at www.dnrmaryland.gov/publiclands/western/deepcreeklake.html or by going to www.dnr.state.us and typing Deep Creek Lake in the search engine. Be patient as it runs 70 pages plus about 20 pages of appendix. Call the lake manager's office at 301-387-4111 and they may be able to provide you with a copy.

The rationale for "the lake capacity" is based on work done in 1989 by Warren and Rea for some lakes in North Carolina. For example, the required acres per motor boat on the water is said to be 9.0 acres, a fishing boat requires 1.3 acres, a sailboat needs 4.3 acres, a PWC 4.3 acres, a canoe or kayak only 1.3 acres, and a waterskiing boat takes 12.0 acres. Calculate a mix of boats on the lake at any time, add it up, and compare with the size of the lake. ERM did reduce the lake surface area by deducting 100 feet from the shore which is considered unusable. If Warren and Rea are incorrect, so is the ERM capacity study. The *Dispatch* will be studying the source data for a report in the summer issue. We have already found some apparent inconsistencies in ERM's use of Warren and Rea.

Please be advised that ERM will make a presentation immediately following the POA membership meeting which starts at 8:30 AM June 26 at the Garrett 8 Cinema.

We note that ERM is the firm that has been hired to also study the lake watershed zoning.

Garrett County Arts Council

A calendar of local events is maintained by the Garrett County Arts Council at their web site www.garrettarts.com. If you are wondering what to do, you can check there for upcoming events, exhibits, workshops, and demonstrations relating to the arts in Garrett County.

Breaking News about Sewers

The method of funding additional sewer and water service to most of DCL and improving treatment plants and transmission lines in other parts of the county described in the next *Dispatch* article titled sewers, is far reaching, expensive, extensive, and controversial. As its cost and importance to the County and DCL became recognized, the POA and the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce both requested that the commissioners hold open the comment period until May 4, 2004. The Commissioners have extended the comment period, and have requested that the Public Utilities Department scale back their plans, looking at the areas that are most in need of sewer and water service first. It is intended that a reduction in the total capital requirements will reduce the ad valorem tax. Mark Tonkovich, director of the Department of Public Utilities, told the *Dispatch* that they are reviewing the entire plan, but that he still favors universal rates for the entire County. The Commissioners did add the Stockslager Road and Sandy Beach areas to the Deep Creek Sanitary Service Area. Just what taxes and fees property owners in those areas will pay is not yet available. Watch future editions of the *Dispatch* for further details.

Sewers

A public hearing was held Tuesday, April 6 to consider enlargement of the Deep Creek Sanitary Service Area (formerly know as the Deep Creek Sanitary District). Areas to be annexed are: Shingle Camp Rd., Sandy Shores Rd., Sandy Beach, Penelacres, and most of Stockslager Rd. Detailed maps may be obtained from the Garrett County Public Utilities Dept. at 2008 Maryland Hwy. (a.k.a. MD Rt. 135) or call 301-334-6983.

A proposal for universal water and sewer rates was presented by consultant Ed Donahue of Municipal and Financial Services Group. He stated up front, "We don't want permanent residents subsidizing capital and operating costs for seasonal and weekend customers." Other objectives of the proposed rate plan are: (1) establish self supporting water and sewer service areas, (2)

fully fund maintenance, and (3) growth will pay its own way.

In line with the universal rate approach all properties in the various service areas will pay an ad valorem tax (a.k.a. property tax) at the rate of \$0.14/\$100 of assessed value for sewers and \$0.23 for water. If your property is in one of the service areas, expect to see this increase in your County Property Tax bill this summer. Since the areas to be annexed this spring will be getting both water and sewers the total will be \$0.37. If your lake property is your full time residence a homestead credit of \$250 each for water and sewers will apply. For example, a lake property assessed at \$300,000 will be taxed $\$0.37 \times 3,000 = \$1,110$ per year. If it is your main residence, deduct \$500 for both water and sewer service. If you already receive water or sewer service the ad valorem tax applies.

If you are in a newly annexed area, when the sewer or water line reaches your property you will be required to hook up. The proposal includes a universal capacity fee: for water customers \$2,800, and sewer customers \$6,500 for up to 3.5 bathrooms, \$13,000 for up to 6 bathrooms, and 9 bathrooms will have to pay \$19,000. You will have to hire your local backhoe operator to dig the ditch and lay the pipe.

There is more! There will be quarterly use fees. For 6,000 gallons of water the quarterly charge will be \$54, and \$104 for 15,000 gallons. To put these numbers in perspective, 6,000 gallons might represent a weekend home, while a full time residence would expect to use at least 15,000 gallons. And don't forget sewage. Since many areas with sewers do not receive water service and there are no water meters, quarterly charges for sewer use will be based on the number of bathrooms as follows: up to 3 bathrooms \$68, up to 4.5 bathrooms \$101 continuing to over 8 bathrooms at \$203.

This combination of ad valorem tax, capacity or tap on fee, and use fees represent "alternate plan B" and are still proposed. They have not yet been adopted by the Garrett County Commis-

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Sewers *(continued from page 2)*

sioners. The annexation of the areas described at the beginning of this article is almost a done deal. The adoption of the proposed rate structure is not yet certain.

What does universal rate structure mean? Will “everyone pay these taxes and fees? Deep Creek Sanitary Service areas include: the towns of Mt. Lake Park, Loch Lynn, Friendsville, Kitzmiller, Deer Park, Crellin, and various portions of DCL. Oakland, Grantsville, and Accident have their own Sanitary Districts and are not included.

Because of rapid growth of the lake area and surrounding mountain tops, those areas will most likely pay most of the capacity charges, and it is because of such growth that the new capacity is needed. Because of higher property assessments and the homestead credit, “the lake” will pay an inordinate share of the ad valorem tax. Even a year ’round home in Mt. Lake Park assessed at \$100,000 would pay $\$0.37 \times 1,000 = \370 , then less \$500 homestead exemption, and the tax bill is zero!

The quarterly use fees will be applied evenly around the county. We would like to see water meters, rather than counting bathrooms, and perhaps that will come in time. In issuing septic field permits, the County Health Department counts bedrooms, and we wonder how many offices, dens, sewing rooms etc. are really bedrooms? Counting bathrooms is straight forward, but the retired couple with a large home, will be paying a heavy premium for the two weeks every year that the kids and grandkids come.

The consultant provided some comparison of capacity fees in other parts of Maryland, and some seasonally impacted resort areas. For example in Queen Anne’s County, Maryland (just east of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge) combined capacity fees for water and sewer to single family homes are \$30,801 in Bay City and \$25,449 in Cloverfields. Frederick County, Maryland charges \$10,300. Similar fees in resort areas ranged from \$4,667 in Myrtle Beach, SC, to \$7,345 in Ocean City, MD up to \$11,250 at the ski resort town of Killington, VT.

It is anticipated that as capacity fees are collected,

bonds will be paid down, reducing the ad valorem tax.

But keep in mind that with the influence of gravity what goes up must come down, but that is seldom true of taxes.

If you wish to let the Garrett County Commissioners know what you think of this plan, e-mail commissioners@garrettcounty.com or write to: Garrett County Commissioners, 203 S. 4th St., Courthouse Room 207, Oakland, MD 21550.

How Bad Was Winter

If you were wondering, Garrett County had 162 inches of snow during the 2003-04 winter, that’s 13.5 feet—still less than the record buster 2002-03 season which saw 236 inches (almost 20 feet) of snow. The County spent \$1,633,000 for snow removal this year.

Fifth Secret Country Gardens

Tour Planned

The Mountain Laurel Garden Club of Garrett County will host its fifth annual garden tour Saturday, June 26, 2004 from 10 AM until 4 PM. “Secret Country Gardens” will feature the four private gardens of Hopwood and Karen Woodell, Judy and Dave Bertsch, Markene and Randall Glass, George and Madeleine Collins. Tickets, which will include coupons, maps, and written directions, may be purchased in advance at three locations: Gregg’s Pharmacy in Oakland, Nature’s Own, Sang Run Road, McHenry; Green Acres Garden Center, Oakland. On the day of the tour, members of the Garrett County Historical Society will sell tickets at the Gazebo in downtown Oakland. The cost of a ticket is \$7. Proceeds from the tour will be used by the Mountain Laurel Garden Club for the continued beautification of our communities as well as encouraging gardening and sound conservation practices through club activities and programs. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Garrett County Historical Society. For more information about the tour contact Barbara Chesley 301-334-4519 or Kathie Smith 301-334-3249. The Mountain Laurel Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland.

Garrett Lakes Arts Festival

The GLAF fund raiser, Amazing Grazing IV will be held Saturday, May 22 from 6 PM to 9:30 PM at the Will'O the Wisp. Music will be provided by Harry Kight and the Jazz All-Stars. This group plays a delightful medley of jazz classics in a subdued manner. A variety of food dishes will be available as a sumptuous buffet. The evening will also feature live and silent auctions of items donated by local businesses and individuals. Call GLAF at 301-387-3082.

The summer schedule begins May 1

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| May 1 | “Velveteen Rabbit” 7 PM Childrens puppet show | \$12 | GCC |
| June 19 | Ernie Hawkins 8 PM Acoustic blues guitarist | \$12 | GCC |
| July 4 | Garrett Community 7:30 PM Concert Band and Fireworks at Wisp | FREE | GCC Tent |
| July 5-8 | Chautauqua 7 PM Henry David Thoreau Teddy Roosevelt Rachel Carson Garrett County Voices Meshach Browning John Garrett Coal Stories | FREE | GCC Tent |
| Aug.17 | Symphony 8 PM Beethoven’s 9th with Garrett & Uniontown Chorales | \$22 | WISP Inside |
| Aug. 20 | Family Night at the Pops Movie & Show Tunes 7:30 PM 1812 Overture & Fireworks | \$12 | WISP Outside |
| Aug. 21 | Symphony 8 PM Mozart, and more | \$22 | GCC |
| Oct. 1 | Romeo & Juliet 7:30 PM | \$12 | GCC |
| Oct. 3 | United States Marine Band 2:30 PM Southern High School Tickets Required | FREE | — |

For further information call GLAF at 301-387-3082 or check their web site at www.artsandentertainment.org or e-mail to glaf@artsandentertainment.org. Student tickets are \$5 for all programs. Season tickets are \$90, or select any four programs at cost less 10%.

There are also week long youth workshops in art, acting and dance as well as one day programs in puppets and *Romeo & Juliet*. Call GLAF for details.

Membership

This issue of the *Dispatch* is being sent to 1,049 of you who have paid 2004 dues, and 426 of you who paid last year, but are in arrears for 2004. If we do not hear from you this will be your last *Dispatch*. The number after your name on your address is the year you last paid dues.

The first of two annual membership meetings will be held Saturday, June 26 at 8:30 AM at The Garrett Eight Cinema. Please plan to attend. Additional information about sewer and water service should be available.

Music at Penn Alps

These Saturday chamber music programs are all held at The Great Hall at Penn Alps in Grantsville. They start at 7:30 PM and admission is \$12.

- May 29 James Gorton & Gretchen Van Hoesen
Oboe & Harp
- June 5 Laurel Trio—Piano, Horn & Violin
- June 12 Gila Goldstein—Pianist
- June 19 Tenor Michael Forest & Soprano Marie O’Brien with Mark Riggelman, Pianist
- July 3 Newberry’s Victorian Cornet Band
- July 10 Ilya Finkelshteyn—Cello with piano accompaniment by Enrico Elisi
- July 17 Eaken Piano Trio—Violin, Cello, & Piano
- July 24 Merling Trio—Violin, Cello, & Piano
- Aug. 7 The Cecilian Quartet
- Aug. 14 Ricardo Cyncynates & Anna Balakerskia
Violin & Piano
- Aug. 21 Tony Ellis & The Musicians of Braeburn
Celtic, Folk, & Original Songs
- Aug. 28 Lyra—Religious & Secular Chorus
- Sept. 11 Schrock Memorial Concert—Pianist
Franko Richmond

The Spruce Forest Artisan Village, adjacent to the Penn Alps Restaurant in Grantsville will hold its annual Summer Fest (Quilt and Craft Show) Friday and Saturday, July 9 and 10. We also note that Stanton’s Mill will be open this year. Stop by and meet the miller, or visit the artisan village and visit with a potter, weaver, basket maker, blacksmith or other artisans. The village is open daily except Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM.

Bike Trails

A Recreational Trails Task Force was formed by the Garrett County Commissioners in 1999. The group found funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission, Program Open Space, and the Recreational Trails Fund and hired Pashek Consultants. The consultants were asked to develop a master plan to “connect the dots” so to speak between all of our public owned spaces and existing trails. Another requirement was to provide construction documents to connect the Deep Creek Lake State Park and Wisp Ski Area. The State Highway Administration agreed to bike lanes on US 219 if group plans were available. The route will go from the Wisp behind the lots across from Tips Up, behind the Railey Mountain Lake Vacations Maintenance Building, in front of the Deep Creek Lake Brewing Company, past the Chamber to Route 219. From there the trail heads south to Glendale Road. Because of extensive development and limited right of way, there will be an “off road trail” to the Glendale Bridge on the south side of the road. A separate bike lane cantilevered from the bridge is envisioned. The trail will then follow State Park Road where it will be marked as share the road. The final plan was presented to the Commissioners in December of 2003. The construction documents for the Route 219 have been completed and this section should be marked this spring. Planning for the McHenry and Glendale Road Sections continue. The overall plan can be viewed at http://www.garrettchamber.com/rec_trails.asp

A second proposed trail connection is between Deep Creek State Park and Grantsville loosely following the old snowmobile route. 80 percent of this trail is in existence. Agreements are being pursued with the 4H Center and the Rock Lodge Trust Property.

A third trail would connect Wisp and the Adventure Sports Center International with Herrington Manor and a fourth section would connect Friendsville to Oakland. Ultimately, Garrett County would have bike/pedestrian access to the Allegheny Highlands Trail which connects Pittsburgh to Cumberland. The third through fifth trails

have no selected alignments at this point. A trail from Kitzmiller to Jennings Randolph Lake is also being considered.

On May 17th, The Taste of Garrett will benefit the Garrett County Recreational Trails. Please make sure to attend to help support the trails. This event will be held at the Wisp from 6 to 9 PM. The cost is \$20 per person which includes food dishes prepared by the chefs from your favorite area restaurant.

Please note that trails are planned on the buffer strip.

Boat Launching Fees Increase

Pending final approval by the Policy & Review Board and DNR, boat launch fees will increase this summer. Fees to launch had remained \$2 since 1994. Launch fees will be \$5 on weekdays and \$7 on weekends and holidays. The plan is to increase the weekend fee by \$1 per year until it reaches \$10. That's the bad news. The good news, if you have a buffer strip use permit (a.k.a. dock slip), and remember to bring the permit with you, the first boat launch of the season is free, and it's always free to pull a boat. Seasonal passes sold for \$75 will be accepted at DCL for 2004.

Cats To Be Licensed Starting July 1

The County Commissioners adopted the Garrett County animal ordinance, which will affect both cat and dog owners. The license is \$15 and may be obtained at the Garrett County Court House Tax Office. With a Veterinary certificate that your pet has been spayed or neutered the fee is only \$3. Proof of rabies vaccination is also required. Visitors to the county for less than 30 days do not need the license if they have proof of rabies vaccination available. For further information call the Garrett County Animal Shelter at 301-334-3553, or read the ordinance at www.garrettcountry.org.

POA Board Members

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