

Lake Allatoona Association (LAA)
Public Meeting
Sunday, February 24, 2013 @ Marietta Marine

- Approximately 82 people present
- No one present from the USACE

Aaron Feldt (LAA Director & Chairman of Great Lake Allatoona Clean-Up (GLAC) Committee)

- In 2012, approximately 4,100 people participated and 5 tons of trash were removed from Lake Allatoona
- LAA has pushed the date of the clean-up back a week hoping the Lake level will be slightly lower, resulting in more trash being removed from the lake
- Will be held on September 28th, 2013
- People may sign-up on the website

Sean Nicholl (LAA Chairman)

- The LAA realizes there are several different viewpoints/opinions on Lake Allatoona's water usage. That is the purpose of this meeting: to assess the public's concerns/opinions so the LAA can represent Lake Allatoona appropriately.
- The USACE is revising their Water Control Manual (WCM), which governs the lake level and the use of Lake Allatoona's water.
- While the LAA is focused primarily on the quality, usage, & level of the lake, they also plan to hold more fun activities around the lake (e.g. paddle board race, etc.) They have created a 'Fun Committee' in charge of planning these events. More info to be communicated once they have the details.
- The LAA also has a Water Resource Committee. This group's mission is to gather and maintain data that relates to water quality and level. The Committee is currently working to understand the Corps' planned process in revising the WCM. Their purpose is to increase LAA's understanding of the factors relating to the improvement of water quality and water level.

Mike Bearden (LAA)

We are here today because we represent the interests of Lake Allatoona; our overriding priority is to seek to protect our cherished local resource. If we do not, then no one else will. Other strong interest groups actively seek to take water from our Lake, to their benefit, to our detriment, at no cost. We must be the “Voice of Lake Allatoona”, if anyone is to be.

The USACE’s WCM has not been revised since 1993, and prior to that, since 1952.

There is a lot of political pressure from Alabama to remove water from Lake Allatoona. The water removed from our lake would benefit the water supply in the state of Alabama. We hear that the State of Alabama has elevated recreation to be a high priority for their water usage.

Regarding the USACE’s revision to the WCM:

- The latest information is that the USACE will release the draft WCM on March 1, 2013.
- There will be a 45 day comment period once the document(s) are released.
- The LAA will be commenting once the revised WCM is released. They will be meeting within the next month or so to finalize their viewpoint on the issue.
- The state of Georgia is requesting that the USACE allow for increased water withdrawals by Cobb County and City of Cartersville that could result in the removal of 1/3rd of Lake Allatoona’s low-flow discharge volume. In effect, much of that increased withdrawal will end up in the Chattahoochee River Basin from the Coosa Basin at the expense of ongoing water levels of Lake Allatoona. Governor Deal has written a letter to the USACE for this request. A copy of the letter is available to the public.
- The LAA’s Water Resource Committee has made several requests to get the revised WCM in advance from the USACE. The LAA will not have access to the documents until they are released.

- Environmental Impact Study (EIS): LAA believes, from USACE correspondence, that an EIS will likely be also issued in conjunction with any future changes to the USACE WCM. Therefore, it is possible that opportunities to review and comment as part of that process may present themselves.
- The LAA's policy position as to Lake level and quality improvement is known as "2-4-6-8 Allatoona Clean". That position advocates four outcomes for a cleaner, healthier Lake Allatoona water with improved water level goals and practices by the USACE.
 - 2 Proposal to implement operational changes that would result in raising the lake level by 2 feet during the summer full-pool season
 - 4 Proposal to seek operational changes that would result in full-pool summer level for lake recreation and water supply needs 4 weeks earlier in the spring
 - 6 Proposal to seek operational changes that would result in full-pool summer level for the lake recreation and water supply needs extending 6 weeks later in the fall
 - 8 Proposal to implement operational changes that would result in a reduction as to how much water is taken out of the Lake in the winter by 8 feet, without jeopardizing flood control requirements.
- The LAA considers the following three points to be important in light of the proposed revision to the WCM. If properly implemented, these suggestions could serve to reach the desired '2, 4, 6, 8 Allatoona Clean' outcomes:
 - 1) The USACE should more efficiently and effectively manage the outflow of water from Lake Allatoona
 - 2) The USACE should revise and modernize its hydrologic assumptions and principles to managing the Lake's water resource, which is now exponentially more valuable than it was 60 years ago when existing principles and assumptions were put in place
 - 3) In light of the enormous impact the Lake has on local quality of life and economic viability, the USACE should give appropriate consideration to the economic benefit Lake Allatoona has on its surrounding area and give the resulting recreation need a high priority

Questions & Comments from the Public

COMMENT/QUESTION: The gentleman had previously been informed that it would cost roughly \$800,000 to perform the necessary environmental studies, which is why it had not previously been done. Is it now possible?

DISCUSSION: The LAA does not have firsthand knowledge of this issue. Yes, it is possible that these studies are now underway as a direct result of Federal Court rulings in the "Water Wars".

COMMENT/QUESTION: Is it possible that the "2" of '2, 4, 6, 8 Allatoona Clean' will cause more silt in Lake Allatoona? Has this been considered?

DISCUSSION: LAA's opinion is that that "2-4-6-8 Allatoona Clean" practices will, in fact, result in significantly less siltation. Yes, higher summer-pool levels in some shoreline areas would result in slight one-time added topsoil erosion, but that result is considered to be insignificant compared to the huge reduction in erosion resulting from higher levels of water in the Lake during the remainder of the year. Yes, it has been taken into consideration.

COMMENT/QUESTION: The uncontrolled development upstream is also causing excess silt

DISCUSSION: Yes, the problem with silt will never disappear and needs aggressive management by local jurisdictions. Dramatic reduction in land development upstream in Cherokee and Forsyth Counties and significant reduction in agricultural uses along the Etowah have resulted in perhaps the clearest/cleanest lake water in decades.

COMMENT/QUESTION: How many contracts are being met by releasing water out of Lake Allatoona? How many counties?

DISCUSSION: Cobb County, Cherokee County, and the City of Cartersville are the three main water authorities which pull water from Lake Allatoona. One could consider the water released at the dam as be a "contracted release", too. The amount of power generated from Lake Allatoona is very

minimal in relation to the overall total power supply in the state of Georgia. Georgia Power's Plant Bowen depends on the Etowah River. There are several power plants on the Coosa & Alabama Rivers that also depend on water from Lake Allatoona. LAA's proposals do not seek to affect the needs represented by those stations. LAA is, however seeking realistic pricing models be put in place which would give realistic measurement of the value of the Lake's water, rather than continuation of the subsidy of electricity rates at the expense of the Lake's other needs, particularly recreation and quality of life needs. Recently, Alabama Power has filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to relicense its Martin Dam and raise the levels of Lake Martin by two feet. That request is based on the assumption that Alabama will be able to obtain greater releases of water from Lake Allatoona to raise Lake Martin levels by 2 feet. This could significantly and negatively affect the water levels in Lake Allatoona.

COMMENT/QUESTION: Lake Allatoona is NOT manufacturing water. Is this being considered? If Lake Allatoona did not exist, where would they be getting water from?

DISCUSSIONR: Our local utilities benefit from Lake Allatoona's water. LAA is thankful for that. The average lake outflows of about 1100 cfs are not very large. Given the now exponentially greater value that its water has as compared to when the lake was designed, LAA believes that much opportunity exists to improve operational practices such that most of the competing needs could all be met without compromising central principles. The main purposes of Lake Allatoona are flood control & protection, primarily of Rome, GA. None of LAA's proposals are intended or structured to in any way increase the risk of downstream flooding. With proper application of all modern experience, technology and by being proactive instead of reactive, LAA believes that USACE can manage Lake levels according to 2-4-6-8 AC with no flood risk increases.

COMMENT/QUESTION: Someone had read they quit dredging South of Dothan, therefore, barge traffic in south Alabama is no longer something that demands discharges of water from the Lake. Is this true?

DISCUSSIONR: The LAA has also read that. On an average basis, the water out of Allatoona is hardly measureable, less than 0.1% of the total that flows in the Alabama River into Mobile Bay. Even though there is much effort on the part of Alabama interests to gain increasing control of Allatoona water, our water does not statistically show-up in the overall scheme of things. In other words, it is a minor supplier of water to what flows into Mobile Bay. In LAA's opinion, our Lake is being threatened so that tough decisions do not have to be made in Alabama. Specifically, Alabama River levels at the Claiborne Lock and Dam have been used to justify harmful and wasteful releases of Allatoona during crucial periods of time. LAA believes that south Alabama barge traffic has not developed like folks over there believed it would; we are hopeful that the USACE apparent decision to cease wasteful river dredging efforts to support minimal to no barge traffic flow in the Montgomery areas is a signal that these outdated, wasteful and harmful Allatoona discharge policies in support of imaginary barge traffic will soon end. Further, it is disappointing that Alabama has not implemented very much in the way of water conservation measures.

COMMENT/QUESTION: It seems that, politically, whoever gives the least resistance is where they take the water from?

DISCUSSION: It does seem that way. This is another reason the LAA is asking for more public input/involvement. The most important takeaway today is that unless you engage actively to represent the Lake's interests, others who do not have the Lake's best interest at the forefront will "win" and leave less water in the Lake. LAA believes that the outcome of the events of the upcoming weeks/months will dictate the condition and health of Lake Allatoona for decades to come.

COMMENT/QUESTION: Public policy CAN be affected with enough community involvement and organization. We, as a lake community, can put enough people and energy together to change this.

DISCUSSION: Applause and agreement.

COMMENT/QUESTION: The only areas in Governor Deal's letter to the USACE were Paulding County & Cartersville. Why do you say that Gwinnett County and Atlanta is a recipient of our water?

DISCUSSION: Objective analysis of Northwest Georgia Water Planning District policies and existing practices of the major county water utilities in Metro Atlanta reveals that about 15 billion gallons per day are being taken from our lake basin and being shipped to the Chattahoochee and Ocmulgee River Basins. The Governor's request seeks to double or triple that amount. Given contractual relationships amongst major water utilities in those areas with Cobb County, the net beneficiaries of a lower Lake Allatoona as a result of the State's plan will be Gwinnett County and Atlanta. The State says that "only a 10%" deterioration will occur in Lake Allatoona recreation needs due to this water transfer. But I believe that you will find they are speaking of "on average". Just as a person can drown in water that "averages 1 inch over time", the State's plans' impacts on average will not be anything like the impact during July-September, when it will routinely be severe. We already lose much of the Lake's water levels beginning in early to mid-July. If Alabama and the State of Georgia have their way, Lake Allatoona would, substantially, be a mud-flat during peak-use seasons not unlike how it was in the severe drought year a few years ago. Given the State's position, our water is, in effect, going to wind up being used in Gwinnett and discharged in the Ocmulgee River to flow Brunswick instead of Mobile. It is an LAA policy request that any water removed from Lake Allatoona for drinking purposes should be replaced 1:1. The quality of the returned water should at least be equivalent to the quality of the water removed. Any water removed should not be returned to downstream channels, but back into the Lake; water utility customers should not have their costs subsidized at the expense of the Lake's health and conditions.

COMMENT/QUESTION: There was an article in the Marietta paper regarding the issues over water between Georgia & Tennessee. The author was stating that Georgia had a valid argument over Tennessee. Will that affect us?

DISCUSSION: Short answer – yes. If Georgia were able to use this immense and underutilized source of water, most pressures would subside for the foreseeable future. We are not lawyers and have no insight in how that might come about.

COMMENT/QUESTION: Does the USACE plan to have public meetings?

DISCUSSION: Yes, we understand that there will be four Public Meetings held by the USACE. One will take place in Cobb County, one in Rome, and the other 2 in Alabama. We are not aware of the dates for the meetings and how they will relate to the 45 day comment period after the revised WCM is released.

COMMENT/QUESTION: Is Carter's Lake affected by the WCM revision?

DISCUSSION: Yes, because Carter's Lake is in the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin.

COMMENT/QUESTION: Could they not just build a new reservoir to help with all the water issues?

DISCUSSION: Yes. Under existing regulatory and legal conditions, building a reservoir would be a lengthy process. Many such ideas are floating out there and we hope that certain ones will become reality.

The value of water is now HUGE! Allatoona is now a resource that is exponentially more valuable than it was in post-WWII years. The value of water is now much greater than when the USACE established most of its operational policies as a function of original Congressional authorization to build the Lake. LAA's position is that the USACE should utilize all of the changes in technology, experience and priorities that are now available to

manage this crucially important resource. These modern resources should be aggressively and proactively used to the maximum extent possible. We need to work to ensure that the value of the Lake's water is not wasted and is instead put to optimal use to particular benefit of the four-county area and the one million-plus citizens whose quality of life is directly linked to the Lake's health.