

LAKE WATCHER

The Newsletter of Lake Watch of Lake Martin
by Eric Reutebuch and Matt Campbell

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2016 Achievements:

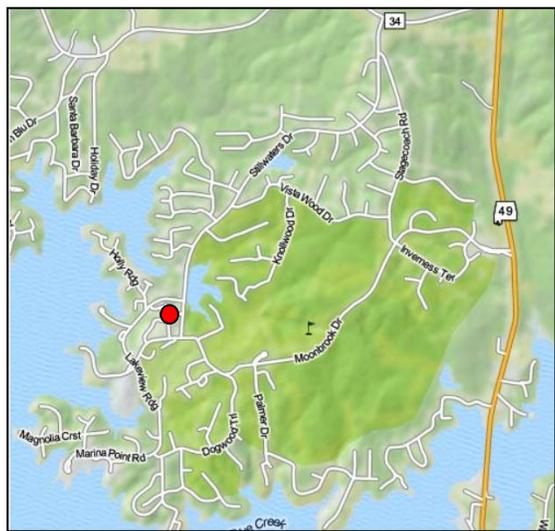
- 18 sites monitored for water chemistry and bacteria in the Lake Martin Watershed
- 115 data records submitted to the AWW water quality database
- Provided bacteria monitoring data to the Swim Guide, www.theswimguide.org
- Educated hundreds of children and adults about lake and watershed stewardship

Lake Watch Annual Meeting February 19, 2017

The Lake Watch Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, February 19, 2017, 1 pm to 3:30 pm at the StillWaters Residential Association Centre** inside StillWaters Resort (1816 StillWaters Drive, Dadeville, AL; map and directions below). Lunch will be catered and we ask that you pre-register so that we have a head count in order to accurately order food.

Also, the Board has asked that everyone donate a nominal fee of \$8.00 per person to cover the cost of our BBQ lunch so that our dues and donations are used for water quality and watershed stewardship purposes. To register, go to www.lakewatch.org. Click the **Events** menu on the left side of the homepage, then click the **Register** button. Click the **Add guest** button to add a person, if needed, then **Confirm**. Ignore the 'Invoice not paid' message - you can mail in your luncheon payment with your annual dues or pay at the meeting but please do take the time to register for the meeting. Or, if you prefer, send an e-mail to us at

membership@lakewatch.org to let us know that you plan to attend. Mr. Jimmy Lanier, Founder of the Cherokee Ridge Alpine Trail Association (CRATA), our guest speaker, will inform us on the latest developments on new trails and an interpretive facility at Smith Mountain fire tower and how those interested can help make it all happen. Lake Watch president, Eric Reutebuch, will give an overview of results from our Lake Watch water quality monitoring throughout the lake.



Directions to StillWaters Residential Association Building: From Dadeville take Hwy 49 south, turn into StillWaters onto Moonbrook Drive, take Moonbrook Drive to StillWaters Drive, turn right on StillWaters Drive, the StillWaters Residential Association Building will be on your left (see red dot on map).

Lake Watch 25th Anniversary Celebration

Last year marked Lake Watch of Lake Martin's 25th anniversary! Lake Watchers gathered at Camp ASCCA last October to reminisce and celebrate. Dr. Bill Deutsch, former director of Alabama Water Watch, was our keynote speaker. He took us on a journey across the years highlighting his move to Alabama, the beginnings of AWW and Lake Watch of Lake Martin. It was a delight to have Bill tell us his story of the "water spirit" (AWW's logo, the caddisfly or *Hydropsyche* – meaning, you guessed it, water-spirit), working locally and around the world through Global Water Watch, working with people dealing with water issues that have benefited from GWW's community-based watershed stewardship approach.

The gathering of veterans and newbies were then treated to the story of the group's formation, major challenges, and achievements by Lake Watch founder and long-time president, Dick Bronson. Dick's unwavering commitment to Lake Martin and his leadership of Lake Watch in clean water advocacy has made a huge difference over the years in stopping pollution from entering the lake, and encouraging compliance by our towns, contractors and homeowners around the lake to ensure that the effluent and runoff that flows into the lake meets water quality standards. The volume of data that our Lake Watch monitors have gathered has been key in bringing problems of point source pollution and polluted run-off to the attention of those entities that can initiate action to get water problems resolved. In the *APCo Lake Martin Dam relicensing*, Lake Watch representatives were fully engaged throughout the process, participating in countless MIG (Martin Issue Group) meetings, advocating for maintenance of the lake's excellent water quality, as well as for maintenance of more favorable lake levels in the fall and winter.

The crème de la crème – TAL! From two decades of water monitoring on the lake by Alabama Water Watch-trained monitors, Lake Watch knew that the lake was at the top of the list of clean lakes in the state. Dick wanted to keep it that way, and began lobbying ADEM for a special designation for the lake to protect its waters in perpetuity. Through meetings, discussions, letters, and sheer persistence, working with Director LeFleur at ADEM, Dick saw the fruits of his labors pay off at Children's Harbor in December of 2010, when then-Governor Bob Riley signed into law a new designation to protect reservoirs of exceptional quality, *Treasured Alabama Lake* (TAL). Soon to follow, Lake Martin was designated as the first TAL in the state in early 2011 – a HUGE Victory for the lake and its residents! TAL protects Lake Martin through strict statute limitations on point and nonpoint pollution sources both now and in perpetuity.

The 25th anniversary celebration ended with a proud ovation, and this message: *"Thank you Dick and Mary Ann Bronson for being tireless stewards of Lake Martin. You continue to inspire us to do our part in preserving and protecting its waters, now and for generations to come."*

Special Thanks to People Working to Spread the Water-Stewardship Word

Judy Palfrey serves as Lake Watch water monitoring volunteer coordinator, ensuring that Lake Watch monitors have adequate supplies to do their work. Judy is also a monitor, and tests at multiple sites. She also continues to work with Dadeville grade school and middle school children to teach them about watershed stewardship, water monitoring and "Living Streams" – analysis of the aquatic "bugs" that signify that our water systems are healthy or, by their absence, disclose the ill-effects of pollution on them, and other aquatic creatures. If you think you'd like to become a monitor or environmental educator, talk with Judy!

Dick & Mary Ann Bronson and Raymond & Zelma dePasquale, together with Radney teacher - Laurie Barrett, continue to meet regularly with the Radney Elementary middle school children, giving of their time and seemingly unending energy toward enhancing learning experiences for the children in the boundless 'outdoor classroom.'

Lastly, we are excited about Mona Dominguez, Alabama Water Watch coordinator of the 4-H AWW Program, working with Debra Stewart on introducing AWW water testing and watershed stewardship to youth through the 4-H Club. This most promising and exciting program is bringing the water stewardship message to children in the counties around Lake Martin, and will include canoe and kayak outings on our rivers and streams.. Go to www.alabamawaterwatch.org and click ENVIRO ED to learn more.

Lake Watch Budget

As you know, the greatest part of the Lake Watch budget is spent on the purchase of water testing supplies. Special THANKS to Lake Martin HOB0 for their contribution to Lake Watch for our water monitoring program. In addition to water testing kits and supplies, membership funds are used to cover our costs to spread the word of watershed stewardship, water conservation, to advocate for clean water, and to encourage others to join in the effort. The website, newsletter, and teaching supplies are all part of those costs.

Lake Watch Leadership

Our board will see some changes in the coming year. Laurel Goldsmith, our long time Treasurer, board member, website guru, and organizer extraordinaire, is moving. Special thanks to Laurel for a job well-done! And to Sonny for his steadfast support and assistance! Best wishes to you, Laurel and Sonny! The Nominating Committee is searching for replacements, specifically, treasurer and a website manager. If you can assist, contact Eric at reuteem@auburn.edu.

Water Monitoring

Lake Watch volunteer monitors continue water testing throughout the lake at 18 sites, from Horseshoe Bend down to The Ridge. Key areas of the lake have gone silent, particularly the Kowaliga side of the lake, as long-time volunteers retire their test kits, so we are in need of new water monitors. If you think it's a necessity to have an insurance policy for your car, think the same way about your lake – insure it through your involvement in lake stewardship by becoming a Lake Watch supporter, and consider becoming a water monitor. Visit the Alabama Water Watch website at www.alabamawaterwatch.org for information on water testing and registration for free workshops held throughout the year, or email Eric at reuteem@auburn.edu.

Closing Thoughts

YOU are what makes Lake Watch of Lake Martin work! We urge each of our Lake Watch members to spread the word on Lake Watch, to support our programs and to participate. Renew your membership! Help sign up new members to our team! Consider an additional donation to Lake Watch! Not everyone can get out and monitor water or teach in a classroom, but each member is essential to our success. Together, we can and will make a difference in the protection of our lake, in water conservation and clean water advocacy, and in the world we leave for our children. If every Lake Watch member encourages one or two friends to join in our efforts, it will go a long way toward ensuring the continuation of the good work we've accomplished over the past 25 years. Go visit your neighbor and sign him or her up. Or send your neighbor to our website, www.lakewatch.org to sign up. Better yet, bring them to our annual meeting on Feb 19th where they can hear about our work first-hand!

Dues Reminder

Take the plunge, if you haven't already!

- Protect Lake Martin by supporting Lake Watch!
- And ask a neighbor to do the same!



For the many faithful Lake Watch members who already sent in their dues for 2017, thank you! And for those who haven't yet, don't forget to send your check to:

P. O. Box 72 Alexander City, AL 35010

to keep your membership current. Membership levels are listed below:

Regular dues (annual): **Student \$10** **Individual \$15** **Family \$25**

Lake Martin Steward: **Silver \$50** **Gold \$100** **Platinum \$250**

We also welcome donations. Don't forget—a donation in someone's honor/memory is a lovely gift/tribute.

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Lake Martin

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