



The Boone Watershed News

A Publication of the Boone Watershed Partnership, Inc.

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The Boone Watershed Partnership Continues to Progress

The BWP continues to make progress. The IRS has determined that we qualify as a 501(3) tax exempt organization and we have also been notified by the state of Tennessee that we qualify for sales tax exemption.

In the past few months, we have been involved in many projects including the east Tennessee Envi-

ronmental Conference, the reorganization of the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance, the Upper Watauga Watershed Initiative, working to establish watershed groups in the upper Watauga watershed, and three lake or stream clean-ups, the Boone Lake Clean-up, the Buffalo Creek Clean-up and the Watauga River Clean-up. Many

thanks to all those partners, and particularly the Board of Directors, who have worked so hard to make a difference in the Boone Watershed. Not only are our waters cleaner, future generations of east Tennesseans will thank us.

**Gary Barrigar
President, BWP**

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Profile of a Partner - the Boone Lake Association

The Boone Lake Association was formed in 1983 out of a pollution crisis. During the spring of that year, large pockets of "sludge" surfaced on the water near Davis Dock and immediately below the Bristol WWTP municipal outfall line. TDEC posted the area from Rainbow Bridge to DeVault Bridge in Piney Flats as "unfit for body contact". This had the immediate affect of eliminating recreational use on the Holston side of the lake (and the lake in general) and real estate value plummeted. That situation led to the creation of the citizens group known today as the Boone

Lake Association.

When the group was first formed, the primary interest of the lake community centered around the area that was posted. But the group began to educate the entire lake area through a newsletter called *Shoreliner* and reached out to the lake community as a whole to combat problems. The main thrust of the group upon its formation was to educate and inform the lake community about the severely deprived environmental condition of both legs (Holston and Watauga) of the lake.

Also, the group sought out

those having authority and responsibility over water quality and began a campaign of insisting on corrective action. The single greatest improvement came as a result of the 1988 Clean-water Act which mandated the separation of storm and sanitary sewer systems. This resulted in over \$40M dollars of upgrades in local sewer systems and had a tremendous impact on the water quality of Boone Lake. The formation of regional TDEC office in Johnson City in the mid- 1980's has also proved beneficial.

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Don't Forget!
**The 11th
Annual Boone
Watershed
Partnership
Watershed
Conservation
Awards
11:00 am June 30
at
Winged Deer Park
In Johnson City**

New TDEC Advisory for Mercury in Fish Includes Boone Watershed Waters

The Department of Environment and Conservation has announced several additions to Tennessee's list of precautionary fish consumption advisories as a result of the trigger point for issuing a mercury advisory being lowered to 0.3 parts per million (ppm). "Recent studies indicate that mercury has potential neurological effects on children at lower levels than previously thought," said Paul Davis, director of the Division of Water Pollution Control. "Because of this new research and based on EPA's new water quality criterion, the mercury advisory trigger point is being lowered to a more conservative level." Unlike "do not consume" advisories that warn the general population to avoid eating fish from a particular body of water altogether (the North Fork of the Holston has a "do not consume" advisory), precautionary fish consumption advisories are directed at sensitive populations such as children, pregnant women, nursing mothers and those who eat fish frequently from the same body of water.

According to Davis "Swimming and wading in these waters or catching and releasing fish are activities that do not expose the public to an increased risk from mercury. In addition, people should be mindful that fish are a generally healthy source of high quality protein and other essential nutrients, low in saturated fat and contain omega 3 fatty acids. While contaminated fish should be avoided, fish remain an important component of a healthy diet."

Local waters in the precautionary fish consumption mercury advisory are: the Holston River in Hawkins County from the mouth of Poor Val-

ley Creek and in Sullivan County upstream to the confluence to the North and South Fork for all species of fish; South Holston Lake for Largemouth Bass and; Watauga Lake for Largemouth and channel catfish. Where new advisories have been issued, TDEC will put up signs at public access points and working with the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, will collect and analysis fish for mercury this summer. According to the EPA, as of 2004, 44 states, 1 territory, and 2 tribes have issued fish consumption advisories for mercury covering 13.2 million lake acres and 765,000 river miles (USEPA 2005a).



What is the source of mercury?

While the source of mercury in our waters is not known, the EPA states that mercury occurs naturally in the earth's crust and cycles in the environment as part of both natural and human-induced activities. The amount of mercury mobilized and released into the biosphere has increased since the beginning of the industrial age. The largest single source of anthropogenic mercury emissions in the country currently is coal-fired power plants. Other man-made sources include: municipal waste combustors, commercial/ industrial boilers, manufacturing sources (cement, pulp and paper manufacturing), and mining.

Most of the mercury in the atmosphere is elemental mercury vapor, which circulates in the atmosphere for up to a year, and hence can be widely dispersed and transported thousands of miles from sources of emission." Once it is deposited, in soil and water micro-organisms convert it to methyl mercury. Methyl mercury is highly bioaccumulative and is the form of mercury that bioaccumulates most efficiently in the food web.

What are the health effects of mercury?

According to the EPA, "Exposure to methyl mercury can result in a variety of health effects in humans. Children who are exposed to low concentrations of methyl mercury prenatally might be at risk of poor performance on neurobehavioral tests, such as those measuring attention, fine motor function, language skills, visual-spatial abilities, and verbal memory."

I. Depose of products that contain mercury properly. Compact fluorescent light bulbs and batteries contain mercury and should be disposed of properly. Even the "green" labels have mercury. To find out where to recycle an item check

www.earth911.org





Three Simple Ways To Prevent Mercury Pollution

1. Conserve Energy

Most mercury pollution comes from burning coal in power plants. Conserving energy will reduce mercury pollution along with greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

- Install a programmable thermostat
- Seal windows, doors, holes around pipes coming through walls and floors
- Insulate attic, crawlspace, and walls
- Wrap hot water heater with insulating blanket
- Seal ductwork
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs
- Recycle



Money Isn't All You're Saving

2. Don't Buy Mercury-Containing Products Unless Absolutely Necessary

Instead of...

Mercury (silver bulb) thermometer

Use...

Digital, red bulb thermometer, or other non-mercury type

Instead of... Thermostats with mercury

Use...

Programmable thermostats

Instead of...

Normal fluorescent bulb

Use...

Low-mercury bulbs (green end caps) - which should still be recycled

Instead of...

"Silver" dental amalgam

Use...

Tooth-colored resin

Instead of...

Mercuric oxide button batteries

Use...

Zinc-air or other mercury-free button batteries

3. If Nothing Else, Install A Programmable Thermostat!

Most non-digital thermostats contain mercury.

They contain much more mercury than thermometers and other household mercury containing products. Programmable thermostats are easy to install and will pay for themselves in energy cost savings.

Make sure to recycle your old thermostat.

If contact with mercury occurs, call your [State](#), or [National Poison Control Center](#) at [1-800-222-1222](tel:1-800-222-1222)

(Source: Earth 911 <http://earth911.org/>)





The Boone Watershed Partnership Continues to Progress (continued from page 1)

BLA grew its membership from 50 original members to approximately 500 members at present with an ongoing effort to expand membership. Membership dues provide the primary source of funding for the group. In addition to water quality efforts, the group has mounted a campaign to attack a serious floating trash problem with the lake - the trash comes from over 650 streams that travel through a trash-strewn country side and several municipal areas with a high population density. In addition to trash, the streams also carry agriculture, industrial and residential runoff pollution to the main channel. There is a constant effort by BLA to educate the public about the problem and to join with county and state officials to combat NE TN's serious and growing trash problem. The group has joined with other groups such as Boone Watershed Partnership and TN Cleanwater News to seek innovative ways of combating water pollution problems of all streams in the watershed and state wide.

In spite of the many problems facing Boone Lake, it is one of the most highly regarded residential areas in up-

per Northeast TN. One of the great challenges of BLA is to fight complacency among the lake community residents - too many have a lackadaisical attitude and don't understand the absolute necessity of active community involvement. The future welfare of Boone Lake is contingent upon the success of BLA to convince the greater lake body that the lake is still an endangered stream. The scales can still tip either way. In spite of the aggressive growth (partially as a result of it) on Boone Lake, it today remains a threatened stream. Only through the efforts of citizens groups and government working together will Boone Lake void the pitfalls of yesteryear. There still remains a clear and imminent danger.

— Don Cross , Secretary, Boone Lake Association



Trash comes from over 650 streams flowing into Boone Lake



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To partner with local users, regional, state and federal entities, educators and others to identify and address water resource issues in the Boone Watershed.

We're on the WEB!

www.geocities.com/boonewatershed/