

Joyceonthelake - Blog #5 – High Rock Lake Clean Sweep

The Annual High Rock Lake Clean Sweep is scheduled for Saturday, September 21.

WHAT ARE WE SWEEPING?

With High Rock Lake being the second largest lake in North Carolina being fed by the Yadkin River several counties away, it has the potential to draw in lots of unwanted debris from cars passing by, rain run-off from homeowners' yards and sadly, activities from everyday life.

On Saturday, September 21, from 7:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. volunteers are encouraged to join the High Rock Lake Clean Sweep at one of two locations (N.C. Wildlife Rec Area Access areas); Southmont Access, Highway 8, Lexington and Dutch Second Creek, Bringle Ferry Road, Salisbury. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up on Friday, September 20 from 4 – 7 p.m. at both N.C. Wildlife Access locations. Gloves, trash bags and plastic boat deck coverings will be distributed at that time along with which coves will be serviced. You do not need to own property on the lake or have a boat. Volunteers without boats are encouraged to participate and will be shuttled to targeted coves for trash pick-up via pontoon boats. This will be a great way to meet neighbors, or simply those who enjoy the lake through fishing, kayaking, or just putting their toes in the water during the summer.

HOW DID THE CLEANSWEEP START?

Shane Graham, Lexington, N.C. and Barry Childers, Salisbury, N.C. are lake residents and business owners who want to ensure the community can enjoy all that High Rock Lake has to offer for generations to come. "We have something special here with its natural resource in Rowan and Davidson Counties and when the community comes together it's a win-win for all," said Graham.

Graham and Childers last year revived the lake clean sweep from their youth, a community effort that was held annually until 1991. The two men grew up on the lake and have personal experience with items floating along the shoreline and ending up in desolate coves or homeowners' properties. High Rock Lake has more than 300 miles of shoreline; the lake feeds into Badin and Tillery respectively. The High Rock dam catches most of the debris which could remain in High Rock Lake.

"This event needed additional resources and recently we formed a steering committee that is comprised of representatives from several organizations that care about all matters of High Rock Lake: Yadkin Riverkeeper, High Rock Lake Association, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Cube Hydro Carolinas, HRL River Rats Inc., Swing Insurance Group; we couldn't make this become a reality without help from Rowan County and Tourism Recreation Investment Partnership for Davidson County Foundation (TRIP)," said Graham. He wants to increase the effort from last year's event and is hoping for 300 volunteers and 100 pontoon boats for the event to make a real impact.

ITS ABOUT COMMUNITY

One of the organizations that has a vested interest in keeping High Rock Lake clean is the Yadkin River Keeper Edgar Miller, Executive Director. "Our biggest concern is the amount of trash being found on the roads, creeks and rivers. With all the rain that we have experienced recently, our lakes have accumulated debris that is bad for recreation, our wildlife and safety of boaters and others", said Miller. "Having a large-scale coordinated lake clean up on High Rock is important for the local community and we are happy to support those efforts," continued Miller.

One homeowner, Richard Freund who has been living on the lake since 1983 thinks the annual Clean Sweep is a great activity to bring the community together for the betterment of all. Freund is part of the steering committee and is also a member of the High Rock Lake River Rats, a non-profit organization that raises funds annually for two children's homes. "I am glad to be a part of a movement like this; we need to maintain the quality of life on the lake. I moved here from New York, and appreciate what our lake community represents, it's a conduit of activity for two counties to share a natural resource, and of course what lake living offers," said Freund.

Cube Hydro is another advocate for High Rock Lake who purchased the Tuckertown powerhouse to generate clean electricity, enough to power more than 13,000 homes. "We are looking forward to another successful HRL Clean Sweep and for our residents to come together again in the surrounding communities for such a great cause!", said Karen C. Baldwin, Property Compliance Supervisor, Cube Hydro Carolinas. Cube Hydro hopes that the weather will cooperate so that the lake can be drawn down by two feet for the event.

The N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission is supporting the event and will be on-site to conduct pre-launch boat safety checks on Clean Sweep day. "We need our waterways to be clean to protect our natural habitat, and to keep the lake safe for recreation. Debris from the Yadkin Watershed floats into the lake and that can become problematic for boaters, fishermen, swimmers and all those who are passionate about High Rock Lake," said Ashley O'Hare, Wildlife Law Enforcement.

HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY HELP?

For more information, please contact Shane Graham at 336. 596.0428, visit www.HRLA.com or Facebook: HRL Clean Sweep for more information. On High Rock Clean Sweep day, lunch will be provided by Domino's Pizza and Lexington BBQ, among others.

If the weather is unreasonable or unsafe for boating on September 21st, the HRL Clean Sweep will be rescheduled for Saturday, October 5, 2019.