

No Drawdown in 2013 Where's the Silt? NAVIGATIONAL AIDS SINK Glean Up 2.0

**FOCL Alerts** 

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2014 Calendars and more!

Cover page photo by: Jeff Caldwell





This year our Clean Up Program received a major upgrade with the help of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors and Administration, American Electric Power, and members of FOCL. With the unfortunate flood of January, one result was damage to one of FOCL's barges which was determined to be unrepairable to a safe operating level. Starting the clean up season this year with one arm tied behind our back, FOCL worked hard putting together proposals with Pulaski County and AEP that would help us get back up to full speed and possibly upgrade to begin working more efficiently and safely. A new barge and excavator were purchased to begin operating a clean up program similar to our neighbors at Smith Mountain Lake.

Safety, being everyone's primary concern, is increased since the larger debris can be collected by the excavator and cut up on the barge without the crew being in the water. The new equipment will hopefully also allow FOCL to extend the clean up season every year. Typically our clean up season greatly depends on weather and water temperature. Now FOCL can extend operations by keeping our crew out of the water. Plans to keep our crew working until December and starting in March of 2014 are being considered. All of this will of course cost more money to operate in crew wages, fuel, supplies, and ongoing repairs and maintenance. That is why FOCL, more now than ever, needs the Claytor Lake community to get involved and help. You can help by doing your part to clean up your shoreline and also by making a tax deductible donation.





FOCL received a record number of phone calls and emails from property owners who saw the massive amount of debris that our lake collected due to 2 major floods in January and July. FOCL certainly understands everyone's frustration with the debris this year and the fact that our clean up crew were forced to work on the hardest hit areas of the lake. Our crew worked feverishly with limited equipment for most of the summer and tried to play catch up in August when the new barge and excavator arrived. We know there will be areas of the lake that we just aren't going to be able to get to and we hope this past year's floods won't reoccur next year, but we will keep working on everything possible around the lake. We also saw a lot of areas and homeowners stepping up to collect and burn debris providing our crew some relief.



<u>Clean Up Stats as of</u> <u>October 1, 2013</u>

185.75 - loads wood debris 223 - bags of trash 7 - 55 gal. barrels 47 - tires with wheels 2- propane tanks 1- 750 gal. tank 3 - docks/ramps







The morning started off gloomy with a sky full of clouds and rain at Claytor Lake's Harry DeHaven Park to kick off FOCL's second annual All Lake Clean Up Day. Shortly after the first few volunteers arrived, skies began to dry up and blue sky was seen over the cliffs at Claytor Lake as Clean Up began!

FOCL brought in 107.1 WPSK for a 2 hour live remote to alert everyone in the listening area to come on out and help clean our

beautiful lake. The Waterway Cafe was launched and donated ice cream to volunteers turning in bags. Our FOCL Barge, the Miss Pulaski, was out accepting bags with two of our clean-up crew, Tony Stammers and Richard Meredith. Claytor Lake Watersports donated canoes for cleaning State Park shoreline and Conrad Brothers and Rock House Marina handed out bags to those launching boats.

Dumpsters were located at Claytor Lake State Park, Shop-eez, and Harry DeHaven Park for debris dropoff, staffed by FOCL Board Members with cold drinks provided by Virginia Eagle. FOCL provided tote bags for participants who returned trash.

We had Neighborhood Captains coordinating clean up in their areas including: Amy Hunter – Little Wytheville, Jim Kelly – Blackberry Lane, Chris Meade – Peak Creek, Larry Bandolin – Cecil's Chapel, Jan Woodward – Cecil's Chapel, Virginia Ash – Cabinland, Larry Moore – Lakeview, Jackson Beamer – Claytor Lake Estates, Cheri Strenz – Woods on the Lake, Felts Hollow, Smith Hollow, Judy Nelson – The Cliffs & Redwood, Fran Baldwin – Hidden Valley, Sara Metcalfe – Texas Hollow, Stu Vaught – Twin Coves, John Johnson – Merry Point, Bill Cunningham – Lakeland, Darrell Sarver – Dunkards Bottom, Laura Walters and Jeff Arnold– Dublin Hollow, and Jeanie Jones – Dam area, West. We estimate about 200 volunteers turned out to help including Virginia Shoreline who filled up their pontoon boat and other boats full of bags and other sunken items. Jamie Riggins and his crew pulled off the record for one haul of debris! Several interesting items were found including a message in a bottle from 1995 in Dublin Hollow which directed the finder to take the message, fishing tournament registration, and a bag of trash to the Howe House at the State Park to claim a treasure. Also found was a very scary life like plastic head and over **10 tons of trash!** Specifically over 178 trash bags were returned, 11 tires, 14 wheels with tires, 2 truck wheels, 1 boat floorboard, 1 metal strap, 20 pieces of Styrofoam, 10 plastic chairs,1 refrigerator, 1 toilet, 4 buckets, 2 buoys, 1 55 gallon drum, and 1 white 5ft pipe. Clean Up Day this year tripled in size and the amount of trash removed.

The Friends of Claytor Lake could not have accomplished any of this without the support and dedication of our supporters, our Board of Directors, Our fantastic sponsors including AEP, Pulaski County, Claytor Lake State Park, Shop-eez, Claytor Lake Watersports, VDGIF, VDEQ, VDCR, Virginia Eagle Distributors, Waterway Café, and Virginia Shoreline. Also special thanks to Chris Doss, State Park Manager and Ronnie Nichols with Pulaski County for dumpster placement and removal.

A big **THANK YOU** to all the boaters, residents, fishermen and lake users who worked to make the day a success. Mark your calendars for next year's Clean Up Day on **June 28th, 2014** and be part of this awesome event to help keep our lake pristine!

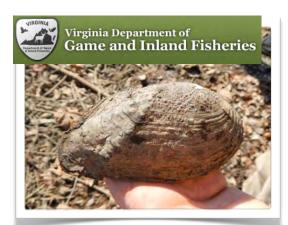




At the request of those in the Claytor Lake community who sustained an unusual amount of damage and debris from flooding earlier this year, FOCL's Board asked Appalachian Power Company and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for a 5 foot drawdown this fall of 2013. Since a drawdown was held last year, this request was a change from the drawdown plan to have 3 foot drawdowns every other year.

The Friends of Claytor Lake felt a 5 foot drawdown this year would assist property owners who needed to make repairs and clean up from the flooding. Discussion was held within Claytor Lake's Technical Advisory Committee, and FOCL submitted a written request.

Appalachian Power, in consultation with Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, decided to adhere to the existing drawdown plan that provides for a drawdown in 2014. VDGIF's cited concerns that back to back drawdowns would not give ample time for mussels to mature and that maturity would help them survive a drawdown in 2014. Despite this year's floods, VDGIF felt the circumstances weren't severe enough to change the current drawdown agreement. In recognition of those who need a deeper drawdown, however, consideration will be given for a 5 foot drawdown in 2014. This increased depth would be an exception that might not be repeated. Property owners needing a deeper drawdown, therefore, would be encouraged to make maximum use of the 2014 drawdown.





Starting last year in FOCL's Fall Newsletter, we began informing lake users of part of the Claytor Hydro project relicensing plan to install 68 navigational aids in Claytor Lake. American Electric Power had included the Aids to Navigation Plan as part of their relicensing plan for the Claytor Lake Dam. In December 2012, FOCL's President Laura Walters presented to the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors meeting and requested their decision be tabled for one month so that FOCL could collect more data on resident and recreational user's reaction to the installation of these buoys. Our data was then presented to the Board of Supervisors In January of 2013.

In March, the Navigation Aid Committee met to discuss 2 additional options for initial sites for markers and provide the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors with a recommended starting point for the program. The following month AEP presented to the Board of Supervisors the committee's recommendation of 8 buoys in the Allisonia area at the head waters of Claytor Lake.

Other developments surrounding this issue was the formation of a citizen's group that began petitioning the county to prevent the implementation of the Aids to Navigation Plan. The group, mainly organized on the web at www.stopthebuoys.com, was able to collect close to 500 signatures of homeowners, boaters, sailors, anglers, and others. The Board of Supervisors was inundated with phone calls, letters, and emails all urging them to reconsider the plan. The Board of Supervisors decided they would take the advice of their constituents and recommend to VDGIF to not allow the Aids to Navigation Plan. VDGIF did have the final decision on the issue since they would be enforcing the plan's compliance, maintenance, and location of each buoy. In late spring, VDGIF Regional Director Clark Greene issued a letter to AEP, Pulaski County, and FOCL indicating that VDGIF had some concerns about the Aids to Navigation Plan and safety concerns that the public had raised during Board of Supervisors meetings and issues that were voiced directly to VDGIF. While everyone understands that issues involving shoaling in the upper end of the lake, FOCL hopes to continue to educate boaters of the issues surrounding those areas and educational materials to reduce the amount of groundings each year by inexperienced boaters or others unfamiliar with the area.

OCL Alerts

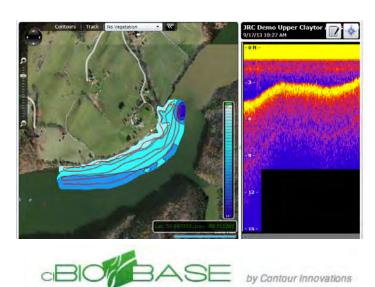
# 2014 Calendar Available



Get <u>YOUR</u> pictures in our calendar! Do you have some awesome pictures of the lake you would like to share? Summer? Winter? Fall?

Send your pictures in to info@focl.org The best ones will be showcased with your name in our 2015 Calendar.

#### www.focl.org/merchandise



New innovations are emerging that will aid FOCL, VDGIF, Pulaski County, DEQ, AEP, and other parties studying vegetation and siltation on Claytor Lake. Using new technology, we can now get more accurate readings of vegetation in Claytor Lake as well as start to study the substrate (ground) to show areas that would be able to be identified as harder or softer surfaces. In relation to Hydrilla, we can now start collecting data and analyze the density of Hydrilla and native vegetation in the water column of Claytor Lake. This gives us the ability to more accurately calculate Grass Carp releases and also allow us to let the vegetation grow to levels that help anglers, but do not interfere in recreational lake use. In regards to Siltation and its ever encroaching movement down our lake, we can now better analyze how much siltation the lake actually has and how and

where it moves each year. In a recent Technical Advisory Committee meeting, a demonstration was given by Contour Innovations that showed just how useful this system could be to FOCL, VDGIF, DEQ, AEP, and Pulaski County. It could also help us strike that important balance of vegetation that promotes growth of Claytor Lake's fish and fowl communities, but allowing VDGIF to keep it controlled at a level that is both satisfactory to anglers and recreational users. FOCL and VDGIF hopes to have the system in place and fully operational by Spring of 2014.

FOCLALERTS

In response to the flood of January 2013, FOCL has been developing a notification system that would text our donors of upcoming issues in water level both traveling down the New River and any sudden changes in the levels of Claytor Lake that AEP make in response to incoming weather patterns. January saw docks break loose that still have not been located or claimed, boats that floated right off their lifts and into the lake, and most

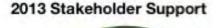


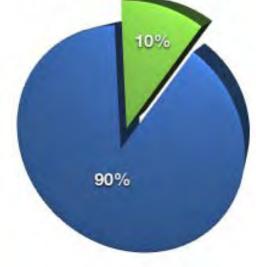
of all the massive amounts of debris and trash that was brought down the New River and collected in Claytor Lake. While we can't prevent a lot of the debris issues if floods like this year repeat themselves, we do now have the capability to educate our donors of weather related issues, giving them advance notice to secure their docks, property and any items that would be vulnerable to increased flows and flood levels. This is a service that we will only provide to FOCL supporters and you can opt into the notification program with your 2014 donation. You can Opt-In on the back page of our newsletter when sending in your donation or you can sign up on our website. This is not a warning system of any type but a system that will educate you on weather patterns that could possibly affect the flows of the New River entering Claytor Lake as well as lake levels AEP might adjust to upcoming weather patterns. Notifications could also not translate to changes in your area.

## The Friends of Claytor Lake is dedicated to protecting the quality, sustainability, and tranquility of the environment of Claytor Lake for all.

Looking back on 21 years to reflect the impact that FOCL donors have had on Claytor Lake. Through the efforts of a few concerned citizens, The Friends of Claytor Lake was formed to address a difficult and massive clean up after a hurricane in 1992. The initial work was done by individuals in their own small boats, removing driftwood and debris. As FOCL donations grew, equipment was purchased in order to make the clean up process safer and more efficient.

In order to monitor the water quality in Claytor Lake, FOCL partnered with Ferrum College to create a long term testing program that has indicated very positive results for the entire lake. By working hard to address the overall "health" of Claytor Lake, it seems that the "aging" process of Claytor Lake has been slowed. The importance of protecting the lake for all is central to FOCL's mission.





2013 has been a busy year!!!! Some of the areas of interest that FOCL has worked on this year are; Proposed Navigational Aids: Amendments to the Shoreline Management Plan; Hydrilla Management Plan; Drawdown and Mussel Salvage: Updates to the Water Quality Testing Program; Flooding during both winter and summer months resulting in historic debris levels; and the acquisition of new equipment for our Clean Up Program. FOCL's participation came as a result of many requests by those directly affected by these issues.

As FOCL enters its 22nd year, the importance of participation by users of Claytor Lake has never been more critical. Through most of 2013, the participation level in FOCL by those around Claytor Lake is approximately 10%. That means 90% of people who own property on Claytor Lake **DO NOT** participate or aid FOCL in its mission. This does not even take in consideration those who don't own property but use the lake yearly as their central part of enjoyment during the summer months.

There is still much work to be done to keep Claytor Lake the "little piece of heaven" that we all love. Don't leave it to the 10% to carry the load! FOCL needs 100% of your input, talents, and donations to accomplish its mission statement, improve its current programs, and develop new and exciting programs and events for Claytor Lake.

#### Be a Business Class Supporter of FOCL Today!

The Friends of Claytor Lake reaches out to thousands of people every year. This a great opportunity for businesses to show people how much they support the programs and activities that keep Claytor Lake a beautiful place to visit.

Get more **<u>GREEN</u>** by supporting FOCL Today with your business! <u>www.focl.org</u> info@focl.org (540) 395-FOCL



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The Friends of Claytor Lake greatly appreciate the support of our community. Without your support our yearly programs would be impossible. Each of you have helped Claytor Lake stay a great place to be! There is still much to be done and many of you who belong on this list helping us keep Claytor Lake into one of the greatest places to be!

If we have mistakenly left your name off the list, we do sincerely apologize. Please be sure to contact us immediately so that we may add it to the following newsletter. Some donations will not be reflected that were received after our newsletters are sent to the printers.

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