Keowee islands put up for adoption

Program seeks to monitor wildlife, clean up lake sites

By Anna Simon
CLEMSON BUREAU
asimon@greenvillenews.com

SENECA — On the 12th day of Christmas my true love gave to me: an island in Lake Ke-o-wee.

All 67 of the larger islands in Lake Keowee now are available for adoption.

There are some strings attached, however.

The adopt-an-island program, sponsored by the Friends of Lake Keowee Society in cooperation with Duke Energy, is a way to clean up, monitor and enhance the larger islands in the lake, said Ben Turetzky, executive director of FOLKS.

The islands "have been overlooked" and some of the more popular spots "have been trashed," said Jack Lewis, who heads the island adoption program.

Those who adopt islands will be asked to keep an eye on them and help with upkeep. Some are covered with litter left by visiting boaters while others need shoreline work to prevent erosion.

"It's time to get more people on board. It will just make the lake that much nicer," Lewis said.

Old plywood signs bearing each island's number — numbers indicated on maps of the lake — have fallen into disrepair and will be replaced with signs similar to state highway signs, Turetzky said.

Habitat and wildlife surveys are planned for each island, and enhancements, such as elevated birds' nests for peregrine falcons, can be added in appropriate locations, Turetzky said.

"The commitment is to assist in the habitat and wildlife inventory and to have a presence with a reasonable frequency to clean up the island in between semiannual lake sweeps," Turetzky said.

A preliminary meeting will be held early in the new year. To adopt an island or get more information, call 864-882-3655.