

# Lake Hartwell community joins push for zoning

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WALHALLA — The Mountain Lakes Community Association, which is adding its voice and growing clout to push for zoning and lake overlays in Oconee County, has added a Lake Hartwell subdivision as a member.

John Sutter, who heads the Mountain Lakes group, said Wednesday that Stillwater, a subdivision on the shores of Lake Hartwell, would like to have zoning.

Getting Stillwater property owners involved with the Mountain Lakes Community Association (MLCA) is timely because there is talk of adding an overlay district to Lake Hartwell as part of Oconee County's Zoning Enabling Ordinance (ZEO) that takes effect May 1.

Critics of the ZEO process have said residents of District 5, which also encompasses Lake Hartwell, Fair Play and people near the Interstate 85 corridor, were not given an opportunity to be heard. One of the reasons the ZEO is being sent back to the Oconee County Planning Commission is to review the section of the ZEO dealing with overlays and seek input from residents.

Sutter said he also has been in conversation with the president of the Lake Hartwell Association, Herb Burnham. Sutter said the two agreed to work together anytime an issue of benefit for the lakes came up.

Burnham told the Daily Journal/Messenger the Lake Hartwell Association has not taken a position on Oconee's zoning initiative.

"Normally, we don't get involved in zoning issues unless there is a negative impact on the water quality of the lakes," Burnham said. "In some cases, zoning could put too much pressure on the lake from a standpoint of runoff or industrial waste."

Burnham added that as far as overlays are concerned, Lake Hartwell Association members tend to go with what U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations allow.

Burnham added that Anderson County has zoning in place, which to him is a good thing.

"It keeps density down and manufacturing out of your subdivision," he said.

MLCA is aggressively adding members to its organization and now has 70 homeowner associations around the lakes in its group.

Sutter said this week at a Planning Commission meeting that its 70-homeowner associations represent more than 5,600 lots, or 77 percent of the parcels in the lake overlay as defined by the ZEO.