

# Respect for the lake

BY BEN TURETZKY

We have all heard of cleaning our house "top to bottom," and most people on and around Lake Keowee are accustomed to seeing about 200 Friends of Lake Keowee Society members and other volunteers with orange vests conducting lake sweeps each spring and fall.

These volunteers have taken thousands of 40-gallon bags full of all kinds of trash off the shoreline over the past 18 years.

"The overall amount of shoreline trash has been decreasing over the years due to the development of the shoreline, but people still leave behind their leftover food, packaging, dirty diapers and cans and bottles. Some people are even 'nice enough' to pick it all up, put it in a plastic bag, but then leave it on the shoreline," said Jack Lewis, co-commander of the Lake Sweep Program and commander of the Adopt-an-Island Program.

Two years ago, FOLKS initiated "Adopt an Island" and has had volunteers out at least four times a year — twice in conjunction with the spring and fall sweeps. These "parent" volunteers have found that some islands were treated with considerable disrespect. Just as along the shoreline, some people have left their trash behind on the islands.

On the other hand, "Use of the Islands" signage erected at the access areas, as well as signage on the islands by Duke Energy, combined with frequent visits by the island "parents" have resulted in noticeable improvements.

What most people do not know is that, starting three years ago, a group of divers from North Carolina, many belonging to the "Divers of Carolina," sponsored by Cygnus Scuba in Flat Rock, has been coming down to Lake Keowee to help "clean the bottom." Divers from The Cliffs Vineyards Fire Department and the Keowee Fire Department have also joined in these efforts.

These divers have found that there



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**FOLKS** volunteers at work sweeping the lake.

were — and still are — a huge number of aluminum cans and broken bottles concentrated in a few places where many boaters congregate.

Recently, Zeus (Ed) Stevens shuttled divers to the areas of The Falls and the extension of Fall Creek Landing. Stevens spent some time with the divers and noted "the dropping of bottles and cans is a constant problem since that area was bottom swept at the end of last summer."

The bottom line is that the primary purpose of the lake is to provide cooling capacity for Oconee Nuclear Station and the secondary purpose is to provide backup emergency hydroelectric power. Along with providing a clean source of drinking water for hundreds of thousands of Upstate residents, the lake provides abundant recreational opportunities for all to enjoy.

The access area improvements in process will enhance access and recreational opportunities.

However, it is our hope that those who are either careless or "just plain do not care," will think about their behavior and start the next boating season bringing back at least what they brought out to the lake and depositing their trash in the receptacles provided at all of the access areas.

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