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Floating restroom planned on Lake Keowee

Facility would be anchored near Mile Creek Park

By Julie Howle
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Boaters on Lake Keowee could soon find something new floating on the water – a bathroom.

Pickens County officials are pulling together funding for a floating restroom designed to help keep the water and shoreline clean.

"We're very excited about this," County Administrator Chappell Hurst said. "It prevents trash and other things from being deposited along the edges of the lake."

Hurst said the county has received $7,000 from Duke Energy for the project and said another $25,000 is coming from funds that were generated through the boating gas tax.

He said the money will be used as a match for a grant from the U.S. Clean Water Act, which would cover the other 75 percent of the $135,000 project.

"This is an attempt on our part to try to keep the lake clean and preserve the shoreline ... as well as protect the water quality," he said, describing complaints about diapers, toilet paper and other items found around the lake and on islands.

Hurst said county officials will know if they've received the money from the U.S. Clean Water Act in about 60 days.

The restroom would float about a half mile from Mile Creek Park docked in the lake, he said, and would have a men's and women's restrooms, a diaper changing area in each restroom and sinks.

Mile Creek Park is located off State 133 north or the State 183 intersection.

Andy Thompson, spokesman for Duke Energy, said the facility would be the first on the lake's waters.

"It's a convenience for boaters," he said. "Instead of having to come into a marina or to a docking area to use a restroom, they can actually use this floating restroom."

And the restroom would be one of the first of its kind in the state. Hurst said he is aware of only one other, located on the inner coastal waterway at Hilton Head.

Boats could be docked to the restroom, which would look similar to a travel trailer, only floating, Hurst said.

He said a pump-out station at Mile Creek Park would be used to clean the floating restroom.

Ben Turetzky, executive director of the Friends of Lake Keowee Society, a group that among other duties, monitors water quality on the lake and its watershed, said one of the difficulties on lakes is when people go out in boats that don't have toilet facilities.

"There's anecdotal and visible evidence that people use, have used the islands as restrooms," Turetzky said. "Anything that we can do to provide restroom facilities, both on-shore and tethered to the shore, is going to be positive."

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