

# County eyes expanded access at Fall

BY STEVEN BRADLEY  
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WALHALLA — Members of Oconee County Council will continue discussions today about providing more public access at Fall Creek Landing on Lake Keowee.

Councilman Wayne McCall, chairman of coun-

cil's Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health and Welfare committee, has spoken on multiple occasions in open session about the need to expand lake access for Oconee residents.

"We need more access to the lake for the private people," McCall said at the June 20 meeting of full

council. "We keep harping on how we need to bring tourists in, meanwhile the local people, the parks are full of tourists, so they're climbing down the banks."



McCall

McCall said the prac-

tice of accessing the lake through "unimproved access areas" is allowed by Duke Energy "down by the bridge by the power plant" on both sides of the road, but called it a "dis-service to the local people who put us in office in the name of tourism."

"A lot of people who live around the lake think,

## Creek Landing

"This is our private lake," he said. "Well, it's not your private lake."

McCall said in June that he had been in negotiations with the U.S. Coast Guard trying to increase enforcement efforts for boaters who "want to shine their headlights going down the lake and want to basically ignore

the rules of navigation."

"The county hasn't got the money to take over this," he said. "Right now Duke Power is maintaining Devils Fork State Park, doing the maintenance up there through hydro, because everybody is strapped for money."

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## LANDING: 'I can't do it without the money,' administrator said

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One of the problems discussed with increasing access at Fall Creek has been in turn increasing vandalism and other unlawful activity, and McCall suggested the county could consider using school resource officers employed by the Oconee County Sheriff's Office when school is not in session.

"We need to provide more access — and by nature, people are going to be jerks and ... tear the signs up and litter everywhere," he said. "People are going to be pigs, whether they're tourists or local. But we do need more access, and this would be a prime access."

McCall said if the county could get Duke Energy "to unlock the gate that goes all the way out to the point ... we could open the park up into even a bigger park."

"The problem is funding," he said.

Fall Creek Landing has two separate access points, with two entrances. Most of the boat access occurs at the north access, while most of the recreation day use takes place at the south access.

County administrator Scott Moulder told council in May that in order for the county to take over Fall

Creek Landing, it would "have to give me some money to operate it — we're going to need rangers, we're going to need site improvements, additional parking," he said. "I can't do it without the money."

Moulder said council had weighed taking the park over on multiple occasions, but had always opted against pursuing that option in the past.

Despite calling it a "wonderful idea," Moulder again reiterated that funding would be needed to pursue expanded access at Fall Creek.

"The point, actually, would be a great (place for) — to start with — primitive campsite for tents and things like that, as we start to generate activity and money, we could go in and start improving some of them, maybe put a cabin or two out there," he said. "There's ideas out there that have already been presented and rolled around about how that park could be adapted into a county park for public access and a revenue-generation device very similar to what South Cove is now for us."

Also on the LEP SHAW committee agenda at today's 5:30 p.m. meeting is discussion and action regarding mobile home

registration decals, discussion about boat driving and safety, and discussion regarding maintenance at the Mosquito Point boat dock. The meeting will either immediately precede or follow a meeting of council's transportation committee.

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