

Relicensing and elections dominate annual meeting of home owners and boat owners on Lake Martin

The Lake Martin Home Owners and Boat Owners Association (HOBOS) convened our annual meeting on Saturday, May 18, at the Red Ridge Methodist Church near the StillWaters community. As has been our practice since being founded, our meeting was preceded by a free country breakfast catered by Laeman Butcher and Karen White. Nearly 100 members braved the heavy rain to participate.

As has been the case every year, the Martin Dam relicensing status remains the number one item of interest. Many HOBOS participated in the meetings that Alabama Power Company (APCo) arranged on the Central Alabama Community College campus in Alexander City. Now that the process of gaining input from stakeholder groups has ended, our members feel starved for information on what might lie ahead and the anticipated length of time before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) grants the new license to operate Martin Dam.

Board Member Jesse Cunningham presented the update on Martin Dam's six-year relicensing process that will soon enter its seventh year. He pointed out that the relicensing process for seven dams on the Coosa and Warrior rivers, which began in the year 2000 and were prepared simultaneously, still have not gotten their new licenses from FERC. That prompted a meeting attendee to suggest that we may all be dead by the time we get ours. Unfortunately, that may be true for several of our directors.

Our members are anxious for a change in the water level regime. From the get-go, the HOBOS asked for a winter level of 485 feet. Although we remain certain that proper computer modeling would support that higher level, our members realize that APCo's selected model supported their consultant's preference for a change from 480 feet to 483 feet for the winter pool. The reasoning of our general members is that, given the computer modeling, the new 483-foot inclusion in APCo's license application, and the 483-foot winter variances granted by FERC during several of the more recent relicensing years, FERC should approve and declare "evergreen" status, so that all of us can benefit, beginning in the 2014 calendar year, from a higher winter pool of 483 feet, rather than after a new license is finally approved. After a motion, a second, and a short discussion, the HOBO board was given its marching orders to write to FERC on the subject.

We have a strong financial condition. Because of that and because we want all HOBO members to share the same membership expiration date of March 1, we have initiated



HOBO
BY DAVE HEINZEN

a temporary reduction in our dues rates. Single memberships have been reduced from \$15 to \$10. Family memberships are now being offered at \$15, reduced from \$25. Our three business membership categories have all been reduced by 30 percent. Customary membership rates will resume in March of 2014.

During the annual meeting, Mike Dollar was re-elected as treasurer. Jim Anckersen was re-elected, but this time with the title of second vice president. New directors Jim Clinton, Alice Scarborough and Bill Walker were all elected.

They join first vice president Bryan Bartley, secretary Judy Heinzen, president Dave Heinzen and directors Debbie Nigh, Jesse Cunningham, Jim Robinson and Bill Toney.

We introduced our members to what is happening through cooperation of five state agencies that have been tasked by Governor Bentley to develop Alabama's comprehensive water policy. They are known as Alabama Water Agencies Working Group and are engaged with stakeholder groups throughout the state, gaining public input to the policy that has a December 2013 deadline. It is a very daunting task and is critical to this state's future in everything from personal health to economic development and our quality of life. Our board of directors is fully engaged with the water agencies.

Join our organization of Lake Martin enthusiasts. Visit our website at www.lakemartin.org and take advantage of our new, temporary, membership rates.

Dave Heinzen is president of the Lake Martin Home Owners and Boat Owners Association.



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