

# Eastside residents fight to save lake

"Our biggest concern is that it will be sold off. We know it isn't a park, but a lot of people treat it that way. I'd be happy for anybody to get involved and help us preserve it."

— Soren King, resident of Oak Pointe neighborhood



FATRICK O'LEARY / STAFF

Supporting the effort: Oak Pointe resident Kathy Frazier gets Samuel Smith's signature on her petition to preserve Oak Grove Lake. "Our goal is to preserve the property as a public park for everyone," she says.

"It is quite the community gathering place, as well as a good place to exercise and enjoy nature. ... This is an issue that has really pulled the community together."

— Gloria Larkin, resident of Oak Pointe neighborhood



## Members of legislative delegation say they'll work to help preserve Oak Grove Lake's serene, natural state

By April M. Silvaggio  
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Members of Greenville County's legislative delegation said this week they're willing to work alongside folks like Kathy Frazier and Gloria Larkin to save Oak Grove Lake.

That promise came as music to the ears of Frazier, Larkin and plenty of neighbors who live near the popular Eastside recreation spot just off Roper Mountain Road. It also was a spark for hundreds of others who visit the lake each

week to walk, jog or feed the ducks or even kayak or fish.

Most have worried about what might happen to the lake and adjacent acreage owned by the state Department of Natural Resources once the agency relocates its regional office there to Clemson. The office was one of 17 statewide that fell victim this year to massive budget cuts.

"Our concern is that private developers will buy up the property and ruin it," said Kathy Frazier, who lives in nearby Oak Pointe.

### YOU'RE INVITED

The public is invited to attend a "Save Oak Grove Lake Halloween Walk" on Oct. 30 at 6:30 p.m. Children are invited to parade around the lake in costumes.

"Our goal is to preserve the property as a public park for everyone."

State Rep. Gloria Haskins, R-Greenville, told *The Greenville News* this week that is exactly what should happen.

**Oak Grove Lake**  
Members of Greenville County Legislative Delegation say they'll work to save the lake from private developers



She told the newspaper she'll invite Frazier to appear before the local legislative delegation Nov. 15

See LAKE on page 5B

**WANT TO HELP?**  
Interested in signing a petition to help save Oak Grove Lake? Call 676-1316 for more information

## LAKE FROM PAGE 1B

to share her concerns and enlist the group's help.

"I'm all for saving as much of our natural green space as we can," Haskins said. "I've walked around that lake many a time with my children on their bicycles with our dog. That is really a peaceful, serene area, and it needs to stay that way. All progress is not necessarily beneficial to the welfare of our society if we are talking about taking away from the beautiful space that God gave us. To see a developer go in there and take all the trees out would just make my hair stand up."

John Frampton, director of the Department of Natural Resources, said no decision has been made about the future of the property. When a decision is made, he said the agency would meet with the local delegation to explore options to use the property as green space.

Still, Frazier and other folks who live in nearby Dove Tree,



"We need to preserve places like this for the future of our children. Why would they want to keep going in this direction?"

— Toni Clark, resident of Dove Tree neighborhood

Oak Pointe and Huntington neighborhoods are concerned. They believe private developers are already attempting to buy privately held real estate fronting on Oak Grove Lake, with plans to target the Department of Natural Resources adjacent acreage when it becomes available.

"We don't want to see them clear out the trees and put up patio homes," Frazier said.

If that were allowed to happen, she said, the road that circles the lake would likely have to be widened to accommodate the new traffic. And the increased storm-

water runoff would likely be too much for the lake and surrounding creeks and streams to handle, resulting in flooding problems as far away as Garlington Road.

"That would be devastating," said Larkin, who has lived up the road from Oak Grove Lake for five years. "Everybody I've talked to about it is concerned."

The homeowners associations in Dove Tree, Oak Pointe and Huntington talked about the idea of acquiring the land. But Frazier said the maintenance and insurance costs would be too high.

State Sen. David Thomas, R-

Greenville, said he is confident a solution can be found. He said he is already working with the leadership of Upstate Forever, a nonprofit organization that focuses on protecting special places in the Upstate, to keep the property out of the hands of private developers.

"Any kind of lake that we can maintain as a park should be done," Thomas said. "We shouldn't let that get loose, and out of the hands of the public."

State Sen. Mike Fair, R-Greenville, said his only concern is that DNR might want to be compensated for the land. "If that isn't a hang-up, I don't see a problem," he said.

Both Fair and Haskins said the answer might be to have the state deed the property over to the Greenville County Parks and Recreation Commission.

That is one avenue the delegation will explore.

"We have plenty of other land throughout Greenville that could be developed," Haskins said. "This is an issue that just really sends me through the roof. I find it very ironic that the very department that is supposed to be preserving our natural resources would consider doing away with this great space."

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