

Residents trying to help save Lake Greenwood

By CHRIS TRAINOR
ctrainor@indexjournal.com

For some time now, water quality advocacy group Upstate Forever has been warning Lakelands area residents of potential problems facing Lake Greenwood.

If the crowd at the Pucketts Ferry clubhouse Thursday night was any indicator, it would appear that water quality and potential phosphorous and sediment issues are of great concern to many.



**JOHN
TYNAN**

Upstate Forever's John Tynan was on hand Thursday to present a report titled "Saving Lake Greenwood" to the nearly 100 residents who jammed into the clubhouse. Numerous elected officials also attended, including Greenwood County Councilman Patrick Moody, S.C. Rep. Gene Pinson, S.C. Rep. Mike Pitts and S.C. Rep. Jeff Duncan.

Representatives from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control also were on hand.

Tynan acknowledged the two greatest threats to Lake Greenwood's water quality.

"Through the entire research of the (Saluda-Reedy Watershed) Consortium, two major threats were identified," Tynan said. "One is sediment, which is primarily from upstream

development. The second is phosphorous. That primarily comes from wastewater treatment plants upstream. There is also a contribution of both of those from lakeshore landowners and smaller tributaries that go into the lake."

Tynan went on to say that the Saluda River, which flows into Lake Greenwood, was listed as the nation's sixth most endangered river by American Rivers, a nonprofit river conservation organization.

Tynan said Lake Greenwood has lost more than 300 acres of open water since the 1970s, an amount that accounts for more than two billion gallons

of water and 11 million cubic yards of sediment.

He said that amount of sediment would fill up Clemson University's Death Valley 10 times.

"That's how much (sediment) has entered the upper reaches of the lake and has settled out," Tynan said. "Some of you have seen that occurring, and what you bought as deep, open water lots are maybe shallower now. Hopefully, we can reverse this trend and you won't end up with wetland lots."

In terms of phosphorous, Tynan said a Department of Natural Resources study

showed the bulk of the phosphorous entered the Saluda-Reedy watershed through wastewater treatment pipes dumping into the rivers.

He said there are 12 wastewater treatment plants in the Saluda-Reedy watershed above Lake Greenwood. Tynan said two plants on the Reedy have phosphorous controls, the 10 wastewater plants on the Saluda do not.

Tynan said there is an opportunity to reduce phosphorous coming in from the Reedy and Saluda, as 10 of the 12 aforementioned wastewater treatment plants will face the renewal of their wastewater

permits in the next 12 to 18 months.

"This is a unique opportunity to address the phosphorous problem coming into the lake," Tynan said, adding DHEC is the agency that controls the renewal of those permits.

Pitts talked about the importance of the lake and the importance of Greenwood, Laurens and Newberry counties coming together to address important water quality issues.

"Greenwood County, Laurens County and, to some degree, Newberry County all have input into what goes on on this lake," Pitts said. "By that I mean septic systems, failing septic systems, et cetera. Greenwood County has done a much better job than the other two counties have in monitoring that and trying to solve those problems. The other two have not come to the table. I served on (Laurens) County Council before I got into the Statehouse and Patrick (Moody) and I worked on that years ago. It was very difficult to get Laurens County to come to the table. I was on Laurens County Council. It was impossible to get Newberry County to come to the table on those issues.

"Luckily, Greenwood County owns the lake, so they do have a high degree of responsibility."

For information about the "Saving Lake Greenwood" project, visit <http://www.saludareedy.org/resLakeMgt.html>.