

Lake Greenwood quality

Grassroots efforts seeing results

By Judith Brown

Staff Writer

In the summer of 1969, a fire burned on the top of the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland, Ohio, and brought attention to the plight of rivers and lakes across the country, forcing the Clean Water Act of 1972. But 10 years later, the Cuyahoga was still in trouble, and a grassroots effort led to its restoration.

"Citizens worked along with Ohio State University and educated farmers and industries," said Sandra Miller of Cross Hill. "In 10 years, you wouldn't have believed the difference. It was clean."

Knowing what ordinary citizens were able to accomplish in Ohio is what prompted Miller to join forces with her neighbor, Karen Boylan, in her attempt this summer to gather Lake Greenwood residents to become educated about the problems the lake is facing, and what they can do to be part of the remedy. Their work has paid off already, with the first two meetings and discussions bringing in 200 different people who are also looking for information and ways to help.

Meanwhile, as the true grassroots organization is being formed, complete with a steering committee of a dozen or so lake residents, Rep. Mike Pitts has been meeting with DHEC officials to try and determine a plan of action. Pitts was a longtime member of the house committee on Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, and is knowledgeable about the problem caused by the substandard rivers which feed into Lake Greenwood.

"It's not bad right now, but it's getting there," Miller said of the lake on which she and her husband relocated four years ago.

Both families are "transplants." Dan and Karen Boylan came a year or so ago from Florida, and Sandra and Gary Miller moved here from Ohio.

"This is a beautiful lake, and many people don't realize what they have here," Miller said Saturday in Boylan's yard, which overlooked a foggy Lake Greenwood.



Photo by Judith Brown

WORTHY CAUSE — A foggy Lake Greenwood morning provides a scenic backdrop for Karen Boylin and Sandra Miller to go through lists of names and numbers of lake residents. The hard work by the Cross Hill lakeside residents paid off by getting maximum crowds at two educational meetings on the water quality issues. The neighbors are working for a similar crowd at a 6 p.m. meeting at the Laurens County Shrine Club on Monday, Aug. 31, to learn what else can be done to decrease the phosphorous and sediment levels in the lake.

Upstate Forever's John Tynan on the problems facing the lake, and from DHEC officials as well.

Now, equipped with representatives from Laurens, Greenwood and even Newberry counties ready to work on the steering committee, they are getting the word out for their third meeting, this time at the Laurens County

Shrine Club off Highway 221 near Waterloo. The meeting is planned for 6 p.m., and several Laurens County council members have agreed to come.

"Mike Pitts will be discussing his recent meeting with DHEC officials," Boylan said, "so it's a very important meeting."

It wasn't too difficult to contact lake residents who are part

Having come from areas that are very congested, the neighbors selected Cross Hill's Crystal Bay community for its lake access and tranquility. But months after their move, Boylan began to learn about the negative impact the Saluda River, which is far from pristine, is having on the lake.

And that's when she began to look for a way to educate herself and others who might want to learn more.

"I spent hours and hours on the phone," Boylan said of those first few weeks. Then Miller joined her and began sending out letters to newspapers and seeking more publicity for their cause.

With close to 90 people at each of the two meetings, the women gathered e-mails and phone numbers of even more people, including some willing to put in work as well.

Residents from both Laurens and Greenwood counties heard presentations from