

## E-Mail No. 1

November 17, 2020

Dear WATeR Member:

With concern for COVID-19 safety and social distancing guidelines, WATeR's Board decided to hold its annual meeting in a print format. The Board is sending three (3) E-mails. The first is the annual report, the second is a motion to make a change in WATeR's Mission Statement and the Nominating Committee's report on recommendations for three new Board members, and the third is the membership renewal form. The second E-mail requires your approval in the form of a vote on 2 Motions by return E-mail to [tellicowater@aol.com](mailto:tellicowater@aol.com), and the third asks you to print, fill out and return your completed membership renewal form and dues to WATeR's P.O. Box in Loudon.

WATeR was founded in 2000 as an all-volunteer organization to preserve and protect the water quality of the Tellico Watershed and Reservoir. This is our twentieth-year anniversary.

Many persons from the Tellico Watershed communities have served on its board and committees. Many others from local area service clubs and schools have participated in its events: most notably, our work with the East Lakeshore Trails system and our Tellico Watershed clean-up program. On the following pages, the Board and its Committee Chairs are providing you with a summary of our collective effort to satisfy our commitment per WATeR's Mission Statement.

You, our member, are the backbone of this organization. Your membership has made our work possible and we hope you are proud of the accomplishments of your organization. The Board invites you to continue your support of WATeR in 2021 by renewing your membership per E-mail No. 3.

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WATeR MEMBERSHIP  
AND  
TWENTY YEAR ANNIVERSARY REVIEW OF WATeR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: STATE OF THE LAKE:** Tom Paul, President

This year we celebrate twenty years since the founding of the Watershed Association of the Tellico Reservoir. WATeR has accomplished much, remains vibrant, but faces significant challenges in the future.

In these twenty years WATeR has built and maintained the East Shore Trails, a busy recreational amenity that serves the public while forestalling development of a large portion of the lakefront. Significant infrastructure repair of bridges and trails will soon be needed. Additionally, WATeR will need to pick up the slack in the cleanup of the adjoining campsites as TVA and local governments pull back. Water Quality in Tellico Reservoir has been maintained and even improved slightly. The lake is no longer listed as impaired by Mercury. PCB levels have continued to drop. WATeR has funded catfish collection and testing at a site halfway between routes 321 and 411, to encourage the state to remove the catfish consumption advisory on the lake south of the halfway point. WATeR has undertaken a comprehensive testing program to establish baseline levels of water visibility, nutrients, and algal species so that trends in lake "greening" can be monitored. Our testing will identify the species present and allow countermeasures to be developed, to keep lake water safe. The carp threat will be addressed when the threat is better clarified and countermeasures identified. Sources of industrial water pollution are being monitored. Previous efforts have resulted in a new wastewater treatment plant with significantly cleaner effluent. WATeR has enabled the acquisition of millions of dollars of grants to reduce pollution and sedimentation in major creeks in the watershed. Baker Creek was the first and some improvement has already been observed. A grant to improve Bat Creek was recently funded.

The annual lakeshore cleanup effort has been growing each year both in community participation and trash tonnage removed. The scope has grown from just the lake shore to a significant part of the watershed. In spite of the fact that large projects like the Heron Island project were well supported and other community groups provide substantial financial assistance, by and large community participation in WATeR has been poor. Large portions of the watershed are underrepresented in our membership

rolls. Our education and publicity committee has been restarted in an effort to improve participation.

More detail on the above can be found on our website, [tellicowater.org](http://tellicowater.org)

Serving as president has been a rewarding experience. Thank you for the opportunity.

**MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURE:** Mel Fisher, Treasurer

Over 20 years, WATeR has received almost a quarter million dollars in funds from membership dues, donations and grants and used as follows:

- \$60,000 for the construction and maintenance of the East Lakeshore Trail;
- \$45,000 for the shoreline stabilization project at Heron Island;
- \$20,000 for the annual watershed clean-up program;
- \$25,000 for direct expenditures for water quality work;
- \$50,000 for organization expenditures for insurance, membership, publicity, annual meetings, website and administrative costs.
- \$1.4 million in cost-shared water quality grants that WATeR's members participated in and/or supported with technical assistance (see chart on the next page). Note: WATeR does not administer these grants.

Privately donated assets to WATeR:

- A 2009 22.5' pontoon boat with outboard motor used to access and transport materials to the East Tail for trail building, repair and general maintenance was donated by Rarity Bay residents Dr. and Mrs. Getchonis in 2013.

TVA donated assets to WATeR:

- A utility trailer used for to store trail building tools and hardware, weed trimmer and spray equipment.

WATeR asset:

- An HP Laptop computer.

As of October 31, 2020, WATeR had a positive cash balance of \$37,580.44: \$3,567.71 for designated funds and \$34,012.73 unencumbered funds.

WATeR is financially prepared for the challenges before us.

**GRANTS AND DONATIONS TO SUPPORT WATeR'S GOALS:** Bill Waldrop, Chair,  
Water Quality Improvement Committee

**Water Quality Cost-Shared Grants Supported by WATeR**

<b>Trib. Watershed</b>	<b>Source of Grant</b>	<b>Date of Grant</b>	<b>Performing Agency</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Status</b>
Baker Cr.	USEPA / TDOA	2010	Blount Co. Soil Conv. Dist.	\$540K	Continuing Phase III
Fork Cr.	NRCS	2013	Monroe Co. NRCS	\$563 K	Completed
Fork Cr.	USEPA / TDOA	2013	S. E. TN Resource Conservation & Development	\$120 K	Completed
Bat Cr.	USEPA / TDOA	2019	UT Extension Service	\$210 K	Planning Phase I
<b>Total =</b>				<b>\$1.433 M</b>	

**RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS OF WATeR:** Bill Waldrop, Chair, WATeR Quality Improvement Committee

**TRIBUTE TO RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS OF WATeR**

Twenty years ago, a dedicated committee of volunteers devoted untold hours in discussions and debate to establish a mission statement for WATeR. The fruit of this effort produced a concise statement that the mission was to “protect and improve the environment in and around Tellico Reservoir... so that humans can live, work, and play in harmony with native plants and animals as well as each other.” This document only provides a vision, but left it to individuals to determine how this was to be achieved. Hundreds of volunteers throughout the ensuing 20 years have contributed in their own way to achieving success of this mission. To mention only a few as examples, consider these outgoing Board members:

- **Brent Martin** who 20 years ago used maps and his GPS system to chart and mark the route and help construct the first section of the East Lakeshore Trail, and recently again served as a Board member before resigning because of health reasons.

- **Tom Paul**, who has served on the Water Quality Improvement Committee for years before joining the Board, and as President engineered a major revamp of the web site.
- **Kevin Kuklok**, who as a Board member, tirelessly promoted membership and marketed WATeR at numerous club and public meetings.
- **Chris Bridges**, who served a critical role in the UT Extension Service receiving the recent grant for improving water quality of Bat Creek and in convincing farmers and cattlemen to participate.
- **Steve West**, who has for years helped to build and maintain the East Lakeshore Trail and represent trail builders on the Board.

These are but a few who have contributed to the success of WATeR throughout the years. We thank them all and expect to continue to rely upon them for support and advice. Now, we look to new leadership to continue identifying environmental issues and structuring projects to maintain a clean environment for Tellico Lake and the entire watershed as a place to live, work, and play.

## **COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS**

Over the past 20 years, WATeR's Board and Committees have accomplished the following in support of WATeR's mission as a not-for-profit organization:

### **WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE:** Bill Waldrop, Chair

**Bat Creek Water Quality** –Several sources of pollution in this major stream have been the focus of the WQI Committee. Once a source of pollution through discharge by the old plant, the new Madisonville Wastewater Treatment Plant began operation in July 2018 and was considered fully functional on January 1, 2019. An analysis of their monthly discharge permit reports by WQIC member Carl Hagen shows that they are meeting their discharge limits. The WQIC sampling program in the Bat Creek Watershed in 2016 to identify nonpoint source pollution led to the UT Extension Service obtaining a grant to assist farmers to implement Agricultural Best Management Practices. Although the funds became available in January 2020, progress has been limited by restricting contact with farmers because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Rarity Bay community is located at the mouth of Bat Creek where it flows into Tellico Lake.

**Baker Creek Water Quality** – The WQIC has been supporting the Blount County Soil Conservation District for more than 10 years in administering grants to assist farmers and rural residents to remove pollution of Baker Creek. Bill Atkinson and Dick Sawinski have developed a plan for water sampling to identify and characterize sources of pollution to allow the Blount Co. staff to target primary sources. Sampling is scheduled to begin in early 2021. The Foothills Pointe community is located at the mouth of Baker Creek.

**Citizen Lake Monitoring** – A number of people have remarked that Tellico Lake appears to become greener each year. This is an indication of increasing concentrations of nutrients (i.e., nitrogen and phosphorus) producing more phytoplankton in the lake. If continued, this trend may produce growth of algae in coves where there is little flow, making swimming and boating unpleasant. WQIC Member Garry Lucas has established a program to analyze samples collected by volunteers at several locations to document annual and seasonal trends of water clarity, and to characterize the type and concentration of nutrients and plankton. The goal is to prevent an undesirable condition that will be difficult and expensive to correct.

**Reduction of Storm Water Pollution from Urbanization** - With the growth of new residential developments around Tellico Lake, a new environmental threat has emerged – urban nonpoint source pollution from lawns, streets, parking lots, roads, and golf courses. These developments contribute considerably more storm water runoff than the previous forests and pastures. This increase in storm water from roofs and pavement transports fertilizers, oil, herbicides, and other chemicals directly to the lake. This promotes the threat of algae, phytoplankton, and other undesirable plant growth. To combat this concern before it becomes critical and exceedingly difficult to counteract, WQIC is promoting better environmental treatment of lawns and golf courses, and better control of storm water runoff with features such as retention basins. WQIC has built two demonstration buffer zones to catch lawn runoff before it enters the lake, one led by John Shryock in Tellico Village and another led by Chris Bridges in Rarity Bay. Presentations explaining implications of this emerging environmental threat and methods to control it are planned. The hope is that more public awareness and education will prevent a future serious threat to the lake.

**Revising the Catfish Consumption Advisory** – WQIC has conducted negotiations with TDEC for the past 16 years to limit the zone of the TDEC Catfish Consumption Advisory due to the presence of PCBs, polychlorinated biphenyls, which are toxic

industrial compounds. The Committee has developed a process to explain the limited significance of the Advisory and is working to remove it entirely. This has entailed collecting catfish for analysis at an additional site to supplement those routinely caught and analyzed by TVA biologists, in order to show the limited range of catfish containing PCBs. At WATeR's request, TVA is collecting six catfish near the powerline crossing at Mile 6 for the fifth consecutive year, and WATeR will have them analyzed for PCBs. The goal is to convince TDEC to totally remove the Advisory for the upstream 28 miles of Tellico Lake, where the analyses of catfish reveal only harmless trace levels often below the laboratory detection level.

**Asian Carp Commission** – Gov. Bill Lee recently created The Asian Carp Advisory Commission to monitor, evaluate, and provide advice concerning the progress and plans of the coalition of 28 states and five federal agencies to control the upstream migration of Asian Carp. When Rep. Russell Lowell requested a recommendation of someone from his district to participate on this commission, the request was forwarded to the WQIC for a nomination. Dr. Sally Leonhard, also an attorney and a member of the WQIC, has been nominated for consideration at the state level.

### **TRASH COLLECTION COMMITTEE/PROJECT: Bill Waldrop, Founding Member of WATeR**

The first months after WATeR was formally established in early 2001 were primarily devoted to administrative issues such as applying for non-profit status, attaining a tax-free status, recruiting members, etc. The Board was eager to begin with environmental projects, and planning for the lakeshore trash collection was at the top of the list. Residents complained about the trash in and around the lake, but TVA, the Federal agency that built and manages Tellico Lake and thereby owns the shoreline property, had no plan to remove it. In addition to the shoreline, there were legacy trash dumps on TVA property that preceded creation of the lake.

The collection would be performed during good weather to attract the most participation, and when the lake level was at the winter elevation to expose the maximum shoreline. The WATeR Board selected a weekend in March of 2002 for the initial trash collection. This was early spring when people are eager to work outside and before TVA began filling the lake to summer elevation. This plan has continued each year since.

A complete plan must not only have people collecting trash, but also a process to deal with the trash collected. As Vice Chairman of the Loudon County Solid Waste Commission, I requested the Commission to accept the trash at the Matlock Bend Landfill free of charge and it was unanimously approved. Santek Environmental, Inc., the contractor operating the landfill, readily agreed to provide dumpsters to collect the trash collected from around the lake and to haul it to the landfill. This arrangement has continued throughout the 18 years at no charge.

Lou Livengood and I shared responsibility for organizing the initial trash collection. Marjorie Waldrop widely publicized the event resulting in about 200 volunteers assembling on the Saturday morning in the Tellico Village Yacht Club parking lot to receive a site assignment for trash collection and a safety briefing. TVA provided trash bags, gloves, and grabbers for volunteers. In addition to collecting typical litter, old illegal dumps included a wide variety of amusing trash, such as commodes, bed springs, furniture, and loads of tires. Participants expressed their feeling of accomplishment, which set the stage for making this an annual affair.

The WATeR Board followed the original event by establishing a Trash Collection Committee and recruiting Bruce Rein as chairman. Bruce added committee members who established contacts with various organizations, designated captains for their crews, and identified areas for collection. Bruce continued as chairman for several years before passing the chairmanship to Bill Webster who continues to chair the committee. Bill recruited additional support of Loudon Co. staff who have supplied tee shirts, accepted certain types of unusual trash, and loaned WATeR needed equipment such as a trailer. From 2002 through 2020, Santek has reported receiving more than 140 tons of trash from this annual event at the Matlock Bend Landfill. As the trash collected from the original sites has progressively decreased, the area of collection has expanded to newer regions of the Watershed.

**TRAILS COMMITTEE/PROJECT:** Bill Waldrop, Founding Member of WATeR

### **East Lakeshore Hiking Trail**

To understand the creation of the East Lakeshore Trail requires an understanding of a controversial issue regarding TVA's management of their lakefront property. TVA developed a Land Use Plan in 1972 that was revised with minor changes in 2000 for all TVA property surrounding the lake. The expressed reason for such land use planning was to prevent "rapid uncontrolled urban sprawl." These plans



specifically designated locations to be developed for industrial, commercial, residential, and recreational purposes under the management of the Tellico Reservoir Development Agency (TRDA). The property not designated for development was retained by TVA and classified as Natural Resource Conservation never to be developed which included the preponderance of the eastern shoreline between the Tellico Dam and Highway 411.

The booming success of Tellico Village and Rarity Bay, both of which are in designated zones for residential development, prompted potential developers to approach the TVA Board of Directors in 2002 with proposals to purchase and develop property along the eastern shoreline. One proposal had already been submitted to TVA and TRDA to purchase Natural Resource Conservation tracts, and at least two other tracts were in the proposal stage. The developers claimed that this **shoreline property was inaccessible to the public and only of value if developed**. Two of the three TVA Board members with urban development backgrounds welcomed such offers that were obviously inconsistent with the environmentally sustainable goals of the Land Use Plan.

With support of many local citizens, WATeR strongly opposed this arbitrary reclassification for its lack of sensitivity for the environment. The debate continued for months and included many meetings with TVA management. The issue received much press coverage including a front-page article in the Sunday edition of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

To refute the claim that the shoreline was inaccessible to the public and only of value to developers, WATeR initiated the building of a hiking trail there to provide easy public access. WATeR had been exploring building a hiking trail nearby since most hikers must travel to the National Park to hike, but this project had been deferred because building a trail would require much time and many volunteers.

When presented with WATeR's request to build a hiking trail along the shoreline, TVA staff eagerly supported the idea. It became obvious that TVA staff supported our opposition to uncontrolled development, but were obligated to officially support the TVA Board position. After much discussion, TVA lawyers prepared a contract allowing WATeR to begin building a "hiking trail system designed to enhance recreational opportunities on the TVA property on Tellico Reservoir."

WATeR volunteers began planning for construction. This entailed sending a team of volunteers for training in trail building with those building the Cumberland Trail State Park.

Upon returning, these volunteers trained other volunteers in construction methods and safety, and ordered necessary tools. Meanwhile, others identified and marked a route for the initial section of the trail. Among those participants were Larry Smartt, Brent Martin, Meredith Clebsch, and Ginny Tolbert. The latter three of these lived on the eastern side of the lake. The initial construction became very productive when Jerry Barr assumed chairman of the Trails Committee and organized a team of volunteers.

The initial section of the trail also served as an outdoor laboratory for students. Brent Martin arranged for Ed Clebsch, a botany professor at UTK, to mark and add signage of interesting plants and various species of trees along the trail. Brent also coordinated with faculty of Sequoyah High School near Madisonville for student field trips until these field trips were discontinued because of school liability issues.

After several years and miles of trail were completed, Jerry Barr passed the trail leadership to Bob Martin who took it to another level. Bob, a retiree from the National Park Service, extended the trail to a length of about 30 miles. The trail now includes numerous bridges, 10 parking lots with kiosks containing maps, a boat landing, and benches at scenic locations. Martin also arranged to have the East Lakeshore Trail achieve national recognition with classification as a National Recreation Trail. This all was accomplished with the support of TVA which provided supplemental financial support and the assistance of a dedicated employee, Darrell Cuthbertson, who served not only as an advocate and advisor, but also worked alongside volunteers until his retirement.

Despite WATeR's efforts and overwhelming public opposition, the TVA Board in early 2003 voted two to one to approve the sale of several hundred acres and to allow construction of the Rarity Pointe residential development which, after bankruptcy, has become WindRiver. WATeR lost that battle, but ultimately won the war. Shortly after the land sale, the TVA Board changed from a three-member Board to nine members. One of the first actions of the new TVA Board was to establish a policy prohibiting TVA from selling any shoreline property anywhere for development. The vote was 8 to 1, with the only negative vote coming from the previous Board member who was instrumental in approving sale of the TVA/TRDA land to create Rarity Pointe. He soon resigned from the Board.

No doubt, WATeR was spurred to start East Lakeshore Trail by TVA's attempt to ignore their master plan for sustainable environmental planning of property adjoining Tellico Reservoir. However, building this trail was consistent with

WATeR's mission of protecting and improving the environment in and around Tellico Reservoir, and has proven to be more utilized and appreciated by the public than ever anticipated.

**COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE:** Marilyn Morete, Chair

- Established a website to provide in-depth information on the full range of WATeR's activities and accomplishments, and technical support for lawn management.
- Established an e-mail address for communications from WATeR to the members.
- Established a ZOOM account for WATeR meetings.
- Developed a Speaker's Bureau.
- Developing a "WATeR TABLE" – an informal roundtable discussion group comprised of the presidents of watershed environmental clubs and organizations.
- Established working relationships with area print media and community newsletters: The Connection, East Tennessee's Mountain Views, and community newsletters from: Foothills Pointe, Rarity Bay and Wind River.
- Established working relationships with area electronic media including Tellico Village's TELL-E-GRAM.
- Published articles on topics related to the mission of WATeR. See the WATeR website for the text of thirteen (13) current articles published in The Connection, in East Tennessee Mountain Views and area newsletters.
- Established communications to the membership via e-mails with news and information and "WATeR Molecules."
- Updated and revised the WATeR brochure in 2020.
- Created stationary for written communications and name badges for identification of WATeR members representing WATeR at events.

The three (3) year goals for the committee are to:

- Expand the speaker's bureau
- Utilize the ZOOM format to offer a lecture series
- Continue writing articles for the print media
- Continue the work of all the program efforts listed above in the summary of accomplishments.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Marilyn Morete

WATeR is committed to community education about best management practices to protect and preserve water in the Tellico Reservoir, Tellico Lake, and streams that flow into the lake. Educating WATeR's membership and others is primarily through our speakers bureau: committee members knowledgeable in topics important to WATeR make presentations to area groups, clubs and organizations. Our web site at [tellicowater.org](http://tellicowater.org) contains most documents produced by WATeR including papers, reports, articles published in area newspapers, position papers and research data. Two additional educational outreach programs are the monthly articles in *The Connection* and *East TN Mountain Views* and educational information placed in the Kiosks along the East Lakeshore Hiking Trail and the Kiosk at the riparian (lakefront water garden) at Rarity Bay. In the future, we hope to utilize the broadcast facility at Tellico Village to expand knowledge and awareness about the issues affecting the Tellico Reservoir and Watershed.

Over twenty years, WATeR has provided education programs to schools within the watershed, developed environmental guides for lakeside trails for teachers, and involved students in its annual lakeshore clean up. "Hands-on" experience is a wonderful way to teach the negative impact of trash, and awareness of lakeside environments. When the schools are fully open, WATeR hopes to give in-classroom presentations on the issues affecting the Tellico Reservoir Watershed, Tellico Lake and the major streams of the watershed.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** Kevin Kuklok, Chair

Membership implemented programs and activities as detailed in the Board Member Resource Book. Specifically, the Membership Committee conducted an annual drive in the fourth quarter of 2019 via direct mail, email, flyer dissemination. Follow up drives were conducted focused on 2018 and 2019 members who had not renewed in the initial membership drive. Annual membership for 2020 resulted in 177 individual members; a net increase of 7% from the 2019 rolls.

Other outreach efforts included 1) the placement of WATeR trifold membership flyers in strategic locations including Tellico Village Welcome Center, Chota Rec Center and Tanasi reception areas and 2) Membership/Registration tables were available at TVHOA and TV New Villagers events. A WATeR Membership /Registration table was set up at WATeR's annual meeting each year and at Rarity Bay's "Break the Bank" annual event.