

WATeR's 2020 Tellico Reservoir and Lake Cleanup: Protection on two fronts



Our new life challenge is twofold: protect ourselves and others from the medical condition associated with Covid-19 and protect ourselves from the negative effects to the Tellico Reservoir from our neighbors who dump trash in and around these waters.

There is a beautiful analogy and parallel between our human body and the “body of water” of the Tellico Reservoir – that area from the Tellico Dam in Lenoir City to the Chilhowee Dam 33 miles south. Our human body is protected against disease and premature death by medical practitioners, use of drugs and other medical treatments. By maintaining six feet distance from others, we “intervene” and block the Coronavirus transmission process.

Our “body of water” – the Tellico Reservoir and Watershed needs an intervention or – cleanup of trash and debris – in order for the water you enjoy esthetically

and recreationally to remain clean and healthy. This year the cleanup was scheduled for March 21, 2020. Rarity Bay and Kahite worked March 28. A group of 201 heroic people who live in the Tellico Watershed marched out and removed 12.51 tons of trash and debris that would bring physical and chemical harm to this body of water and ultimately to you.

Here's Bill Webster's, the Lake Cleanup Chairman, report:

Greetings,

This year's Lake-shore Clean-up was supposed to be an effort by fewer folks than usual and less collection than usual. The Virus lock down had already started and we stressed being safe and keeping a social distance. We did have 201 volunteers show up to work. This was a number that I had hoped to see. The surprise was the collection - 12.51 tons. This was the fewest number of participants and the second largest amount of trash/debris collected. I am still shaking my head at these numbers. If they are correct, and I don't see where they are incorrect, this is amazing!

A few of the teams decided not to participate - and the school kids and boy scouts did not participate.

TVA and Santek really stepped up again this year. TVA once again furnished the much needed bags and gloves, and Santek had 4 dumpsters out for two weekends. The Team Captains and the Volunteers worked hard cleaning up the shore, the contributing creeks and streams and the roadways near the Lake. WOW what a job.

Thank You Committee, you make this all look easy.

Bill

Some would ask, "Why didn't you postpone the cleanup to another part of the year?" Reason: the most effective time to remove trash is when lake water is at its lowest level. CDC recommended practices were implemented.

In March of each year, WATeR - the Watershed Association of the Tellico Reservoir - organizes a one-day cleanup of the watershed from Tellico Dam to areas near Chilhowee Dam which include Loudon, Monroe and Blount counties.

Several hundred committed volunteers are assigned to clean hot spots and other locations favored by trash dumpers and/or where trash accumulates from wind and water flows. This is a critical time of year when individuals privately from our watershed communities and individuals through their membership in charitable clubs and organizations, and students from local high schools come together for the common purpose of maintaining the health of this pristine body of water.

So, you ask, “how does removing trash – other than esthetically – keep the reservoir waters healthy?” The United Nations Environment Program says: “Inappropriately managed waste can attract rodents and insects, which can harbor gastrointestinal parasites, yellow fever, worms, the plague and other conditions for humans...” “Toxic waste materials can contaminate surface water, groundwater, soil, and air which causes more problems for humans, other species, and ecosystems.”

Solid waste trash contaminates the water which can ultimately contaminate you and your body’s health. If you want to stay healthy, keep the lake waters healthy and free of trash and debris. Covid-19 is showing us we are all interconnected and we effect each other’s health by the actions we take with each other. And so it is with our reservoir and lake water.

The people of Spain daily applaud their health care workers. We too applaud all our water health care worker/volunteers who made WATeR’s 2020 lake cleanup a success. You care, and you stepped-up to keep our reservoir water and ourselves healthy. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to a healthy environment!

WATeR is a membership organization. Please join WATeR: we need your help and support! Send an email to tellicowater@aol.com to request a membership application.