



The Conservator



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Spring 2005

Newsletter of the Catawba Riverkeeper® Foundation

Rocky Shoals Spider Lilies

One of the most exciting things about spring returning to the Catawba River Valley is that the rare and beautiful Rocky Shoals Spider Lily emerges to delight river and wildlife enthusiasts alike. The beautiful white flowers are far larger than roses, growing in clumps more than 3 feet tall and 4 feet wide. The most unique feature of the spider lily besides the fact that they only grow in the middle of rocky southeastern rivers, are the delicate spider like tendrils that extend as much as 8 inches from the base of the flower.

The Rocky Shoals Spider Lily (*Hymenocallis coronaria*) exists in fewer than 60 places on earth. The Catawba River and Landsford Canal State Park in Chester County, South Carolina, is home to the world's largest colony. Among botanists and wildflower enthusiasts, visiting the more than 25 acres of spider lilies found in the Catawba River is more than a visit to one of America's great remaining wild places; it is a pilgrimage to experience one of the most magnificent wildlife views and river experiences found anywhere in nature. The lilies bloom for a short four-week season, from mid-May to mid June.

Please join us for our annual pilgrimage to the spider lilies. The Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation will lead a bring your own canoe or kayak trip through the lilies on Saturday May 28, 2005 at 11:00 AM. The trip is free and open to the public, but since it requires paddling through Class 2 rapids, it is for experienced paddlers only.

Don't have a canoe or kayak? Landsford Canal State Park has a viewing area along the river shoreline where the public can see lilies from afar after a short hike of less than a mile. The park is 15 miles west of Lancaster off US Highway 21. From Charlotte: take I-77 exit 77 to Highway 5 & 21. Turn left (south), travel 16 miles to the Landsford Canal State Park sign and turn left. The park entrance is on the left. From Columbia: take I-77 north to exit 65 to Highway 9. Turn right and travel two miles to Highway 223. Turn left on Highway 223 and travel 9 miles to Highway 21. At Highway 21, turn left and travel two miles to the State Park sign. Turn right and the park entrance is on the left.

Charlotte's Whitewater Park

.by Donna Lisenby

The U.S. National Whitewater Center is officially under construction along the banks of Lake Wylie. I spent an afternoon with project leaders inspecting Phase I sediment and erosion control features. Because the site design calls for a river to be constructed on land, mass grading and clearing of forest is necessary.

Creation of two river channels is planned. One will be a wider rafting channel while the other will be a smaller more challenging canoe and kayak channel. The topography of the site is highly variable making it quite a challenge to control sediment runoff. I was glad to see multiple two-stage sediment basins and more than a mile of reinforced silt fence protecting the Catawba River.

We have made a commitment to regularly patrol and inspect the park as it proceeds through construction. Our goal is to help its environmentally minded project leaders have the least environmental impact possible. We will keep you posted.



Rocky Shoals Spider Lilies
Bloom in May 2004

7th Annual Meeting

The 7th Annual Meeting of the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation was held at Camp Thunderbird on Lake Wylie Saturday, April 9th. About 65 members, supporters, and other interested persons attended the afternoon picnic meeting.

Bartlett Tree Experts' (see profile below) arborists conducted several demonstrations related to the proper planting, pruning, and care of trees, with a focus on riparian buffer zones.

Photos show:

~ Board members talking with members before the meeting began (top); and

~ Arborist Tom Martin demonstrating proper planting of trees to ensure a healthy plant (bottom).



The CRF Board reported on the Foundation's accomplishments in 2004 and its vision for the coming years. (See incoming Board Chair Jane Henderson's article beginning below.)

The highlight of the meeting was volunteer awards. Wylie Lakekeeper Val Munei made volunteer awards to Covekeepers Steve Johnson and Doris Bienz. Vicki Taylor presented an award to Norman's Lakekeeper Cynthia Jones. And, Cynthia Wood honored Wateree Covekeeper Randy Humphries. The Volunteer of the Year Award went to Treasurer and Lake Wylie resident Gene Daniels for his longstanding commitment to CRF. All award winners received a stella d'oro day lily and Mr. Daniels also received a copy of *The Riverkeepers* autographed by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.



Business Profile - Bartlett Tree Experts

The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company was founded in 1907. His mission: to provide preventive care that would assure good health, longevity, beauty, and safety for his clients' trees. Early Bartlett scientists and technicians developed or perfected many of the materials and procedures that are standard in arboriculture today. An arboretum was started and laboratories were relocated to Charlotte, NC in 1963. The permanent laboratory staff consists of PhD's in disciplines such as plant pathology, entomology, physiology and soil science and technicians with degrees in horticulture, botany, arboriculture, biology, and forestry. They research and evaluate new products and procedures for maintaining the health of their clients' landscape plants; provide technical support to their arborists, technicians and clients; and provide training to company employees to ensure that clients' plants receive the highest level of care. Bartlett Tree Experts are located at 14627 Youngblood Road in Charlotte and you may reach them by phone at (704) 588 - 3713 or (704) 588 - 3718. Thanks to Bartlett Tree for sponsoring our 7th Annual Meeting!

Visions for the Future

by Jane Henderson

As we began our work in 2005, we were hit with several unexpected transitions at the Foundation. A renovation project at the Great Aunt Stella Center forced us to consider an office relocation sooner than anticipated. A horrible traffic crash in Colorado caused Rick Gaskins to be hospitalized in March. Our business manager experienced back-to-back health issues from illness and an automobile accident. And our Riverkeeper supported family through illness and death while trying to keep the office running smoothly.

A series of events like these forces us to stop and realize just how precious life is. It reminds us that we are all intertwined like the rest of the natural world. Barrie is back in the office. Donna has also returned and is focusing her energy on relicensing and other programs. Rick is home facing additional surgeries and recovery time. He is keeping up his spirits and continues to joke, laugh, and see the bright side of every situation. He has joined board phone calls and remains active in our mission. We work our way through these events, but not without reflection and conversations about the future.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

Creations for the River: An Artistic Fundraiser for CRF

A silent auction to benefit CRF is scheduled for Friday May 27th at Red Sky Gallery at Phillip's Place in Charlotte. It features various creations in mixed media, including a traditional Catawba wedding vase by Margaret Robbins; etched glass by Wayland Cato III; several oil/acrylic paintings by Michael Wilson; and a ceramic piece by Gilda Mitchell, among others.

Guests will be entertained by harpist and Lake Wylie resident Joan Johnson as they view the donated artwork and that already on display at the gallery. Bowater Carolinas Division provided the invitations for this event.



Regular Covekeeper Meetings - All Meetings at 7:00 pm

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Lake Norman 1st Thursday of Month | Rocky Mount United Methodist Church |
| Lake Wateree 2nd Thursday of Month | Dutchman Creek Fire Dept |
| Lake Wylie 2nd Wednesday of Month | Red Fez Club off Hwy #49 |
| Mountain Island Lake 2nd Monday of Month | Cook's Presbyterian Church |

2005 Dammed Catawba River Challenge

The Dammed Catawba River Challenge returns May 21st. This series of three open water swim races was a solid success last year with increasing participation at each successive race.

The races will be at McDowell Park on Lake Wylie on May 21st, Latta Plantation Park on Mountain Island Lake on July 9th, and Ramsey Creek Park on Lake Norman on August 6th. This is a great way to spend a Saturday morning on the river.

Each event offers two races - a 1.2 mile (2K) beginning at 8 am and 2.4 mile (4K) that starts at 9 am. These are open to all swimmers ages 12 and up grouped appropriately by age with a separate group for the physically challenged. Prizes are given to the top three overall male and female finishers and the top three male and females in each age group. At the final race, prizes will also be awarded to the series winner in each of the above groups.

If you're interested in swimming and want to register in advance, please go to www.racescapes.com. The series is organized by Carolina Sportslink Magazine in partnership with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation Department and the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation.

Proceeds of the races will benefit CRF. We are also providing safety support and will promote awareness of our mission. To volunteer, please contact Althea Callaway by phone at 704.679.9494 or by Email at althea@catawbariverkeeper.org.



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The Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation was created to protect 225 miles and 11 reservoirs of the Catawba River, which now serves nearly 2 million people in 14 counties in both Carolinas.

Visit us on the Web at:
www.catawbariverkeeper.org

Relicensing Adventures

by Donna Lisenby

The relicensing process for all 11 Catawba River dams is transitioning from information gathering to negotiation. In the last 18 months, Duke Power conducted 31 environmental and operational studies of the Catawba River system. In June, the final reports and recommendations of resource committees that result from those studies will be presented.

One of the core interests in the stakeholder relicensing process is conservation of shoreline lands for protection of water quality, public access, wildlife habitat, and recreation. In the Lake Wateree area, a broad coalition of stakeholders from local government, homeowners associations, paddling interests, and environmental organizations have been working towards the preservation of a large tract of Crescent Resources-owned shoreline called the Singleton Creek Tract. This acreage was the topic of extensive discussions in numerous relicensing meetings and was listed as a potential item for consideration for the settlement agreement in both the Lower Catawba Advisory Group Land Trial Balloon and the Catawba-Wateree Relicensing Coalition Comprehensive AIP Trial Balloon..

CRF Board Members met with Crescent Resources in February to discuss the land preservation process. Crescent representatives advised them that the most important part of the Singleton Creek Tract - that portion directly across from the existing Wateree State Park - had just been put under contract to a developer. They also advised that the community efforts to preserve the tract were the motivation for developers to fast-track a contract for development of these 3,500 acres to Greenwood Properties.

In the Foothills area of the upper Catawba River basin, members of local government, non-governmental organizations, state government, and recreation planners have a keen interest in greenways and trails along the Johns River, a major tributary of the Catawba River in Caldwell County. Before relicensing stakeholders could work for a collaborative mutual gains solution that met the interest of all parties in the relicensing process, Crescent also sold riverfront lands there that would have been a key to establishing this greenway and trail system.

The sale of the Singleton Creek Tract prompted ten relicensing stakeholders, including representatives of local government, the Lake Wateree Homeowners Association, paddling interests, the Catawba Riverkeeper, and Lake Wateree Lakekeeper to walk out of a relicensing meeting in March. In a statement read preceding the walkout, stakeholders said, "This action by Duke/Crescent sadly sends the message that development opportunities will continue to override consideration of other stakeholder needs in providing for public access/recreation, wildlife habitat, water quality protection, and view shed protection."

It is very difficult to understand how relicensing stakeholders can be expected to continue working in good faith on a

negotiated mutual gains settlement agreement with Duke Power while another Duke Energy subsidiary is selling the very lands that are key to the reaching a relicensing agreement.

In the 2004 Duke Energy Annual Report, CEO Paul Anderson reported on Duke's performance. Ten 2004 objectives were highlighted with Anderson's assessment of company performance.

Three of the ten with his comments follow:

| Objective | Anderson assessment* |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Generate cash & reduce debt | \$4.6 Billion-Home Run! |
| Improve safety record | Major disappointment -unacceptable |
| Restore credibility with key stakeholders | Making progress |

In a letter to shareholders on March 15, 2005, Anderson said:

"... I would be remiss if I did not address the most critical concern I wrote of last year: restoring credibility with our key constituents. In 2004, I believe we made significant progress in re-earning their trust. While trust and credibility are hard to measure, we see positive indicators - in the tone and tenor of questions from our many stakeholders, in the spirit of resilience of our employees, and in the contracts and handshakes with our partners and customers. As I said last year, the task of building confidence will always be unfinished business for us ..."

I found it encouraging that Duke Energy's objectives for 2005 include their commitment to continue working on restoring credibility. Specifically, Anderson states that in 2005 Duke Energy will continue "to build stakeholder relationships and future shareholder value through effective leadership on key policy issues related to energy, regulation and the environment."

*Source: Duke Energy 2004 Summary Annual Report http://www.duke-energy.com/investors/publications/annual/ar_2004

In 1904, the first power plant on the Catawba River was built near Rock Hill, South Carolina, by James Buchanan Duke and others. Since then, a total of 18 power plants were constructed, including 12 more hydroelectric plants, 3 coal plants and 2 nuclear plants, making the Catawba River one of the most electrified rivers in the nation. Approximately 280,000 acres of land was acquired throughout the Catawba River Basin during the process of building power projects. Government gives the extraordinary power of land condemnation to utility companies for the creation of things like municipal drinking water intakes, power plants, and wastewater treatment plants because they are deemed to be in the greater public interest.

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Before his accident, Rick had the leadership wisdom to ask the board to reassess and update our strategic plan. Our previous plan was three years old and nearly complete and it was time to focus on the future - to paint a picture of where we wanted to be at the end of the upcoming years. We embarked on a full day board retreat in February. Our work involved self-examination, reflections, lessons about organizational capacity, and strategic thinking about key priorities. We were fortunate to have representatives from both the board and the covekeeper programs participate. We finished the day with **five key programmatic focus areas for the Foundation for the next three years:**

1. Litigation/Advocacy: These activities are at the core of our organization and its founding mission. We collectively spend volunteer and staff time ensuring that the Foundation is known as the "Voice of the River." To that end, we set our priorities in this focus area to include:

- ~ appeal the adverse decision on the trout water designation below Lake James;
- ~ work for tangible action by NC toward elimination of discharges into our lakes;
- ~ become an active voice and ensure the viability of the new Catawba-Water Bi-State Commission;
- ~ help secure uniform buffer regulation in SC; and
- ~ continue our capacity of tackling two issues per year, working them through for the good of the river, and still having some reserve to take quick action when necessary to time-sensitive issues as they arise.

2. Hydropower Relicensing: These discussions will impact the future health and viability of the Catawba River system more than any other for decades to come. This 30 to 50-year relicensing process is our opportunity to help shape the conversations with Duke, the largest corporate citizen utilizing the resources of the river. We will focus our efforts on:

- ~ a favorable settlement agreement/gains for the river;
- ~ restoring the Great Falls for recreational use;
- ~ establishing an adaptive management committee for ongoing oversight; and
- ~securing 30,000 acres of protected public land.

3. Cove- & Lake-keeper Programs: These programs produce the volunteers that are the eyes and ears of the water. Our current program volunteers monitor shoreline, pollution spills, and compliance with buffer regulations. These programs are the only way we can actively build to full monitoring of all 225 miles of the river system. We want to support and build upon these programs in the following ways:

- ~ keep volunteers engaged, reduce attrition rates;
- ~ improve recruitment, increase current chapters to 50 to 100 members per lake;

- ~ respond to water quality events within 48 hours;
- ~ redesign the program to accommodate various levels of volunteerism;
- ~ establish goals and programs for each lake and then monitor performance; and
- ~ expand the program with 2 new groups - Hickory and Little Sugar Creek (the first urban Creekkeeper program)

4. Training of Activists and Advocates: To accomplish the objectives of item #3, we realize that we need to conduct more training. We need volunteers who are knowledgeable, energized, and prepared with the tools necessary to advance our mission on the water. We plan to:

- ~ offer a *variety* of training programs;
- ~ offer *more frequent* training;
- ~ train initial Lake Hickory Covekeepers; and
- ~ develop a Creekkeeper volunteer program.

5. Education and Public Awareness: Increasing our effectiveness and our scope requires us to increase awareness and energy around environmental issues. Improving environmental awareness is a tough task, but it is vital to the long term success of our mission. We will:

- ~ educate consumers on the importance of looking beyond their personal interests to the good of all;
- ~ ensure that we are the respected source in 75% of the media coverage on the river's issues;
- ~ contact a survey to determine knowledge of CRF and its mission, then use the data as a base for improving awareness and moving it upward; and
- ~ conduct at least one signature event - the Dammed Catawba River Challenge - to increase our presence and help support the Foundation.

As you can see, we have a challenging agenda for the next three years. It will require a lot of hard work and the resources and time of many of our members. It will probably require additional financial support. And, it will absolutely be the right and best thing we can do to support the long term health and wellbeing of our river and lakes.

Rick has led this Foundation well and will continue to help us achieve these goals. He guided our many accomplishments of the past few years and focused attention on building the organizational capacity of the board and staff. As he now concentrates on healing, he has passed the gavel on to me to be the new Board Chair.

I only hope that I can serve you as well as he. It will take a collective effort from all of us to realize the vision we have set forth above. Please join me in my commitment to achieve these goals.

Boating Safety Tips



It's a good idea to check your boat carefully at the beginning of a busy summer season, as well as maintain it throughout the year. Regular maintenance can often prevent stranding due to mechanical failure. Make sure you have adequate fuel for your planned trip. The general rule is one-third out, one-third back and one-third in reserve.

Always check to be sure that you have the appropriate safety gear on board *and in use*. Flotation devices, fire extinguishers, radio, cell phone, tow ropes, water or other non-alcoholic beverages to avoid dehydration, a whistle, bell, or horn, first aid kit, flares, sunscreen, bug spray, and a basic tool kit are some safety items that should always be available on a boat. Everyone on the boat should know where these items are located.

More than 1,000 people die in boating accidents annually in the United States. Nine out of ten drown. About half of those fatalities involve alcohol. Statistically, when drinking, you are much more likely to fall overboard.

Alcohol combined with wind, boat noise, vibration, wave action, and sun glare have a tremendous adverse influence on judgment and response time. Do not drink and drive a boat! If necessary, select a designated driver who has not been drinking to operate the vessel.

A wise boater will consult the local TV weather channel or a local radio station that provides frequent weather forecasts before heading out. Boaters with VHF radios may find continuous weather broadcasts. Always be aware of the weather as you leave shore.

Use common sense. Be on the lookout constantly for hazards. Look before you move and be aware of any possible waterway hazards such as low hanging trees, high water levels, fast moving currents, and floating debris. Not being alert is the leading cause of boating accidents.

Finally, be considerate of other boaters, as well as the people and animals on shore and in the water.

Covekeepers Meet With Duke Power

by Becky McSwain

Thirty covekeepers from Lakes Norman, Wateree, Wylie, Wateree, and Mountain Island Lake gathered in Charlotte April 7th for a meeting sponsored by the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation and Duke Power.

"The purpose of the meeting was for covekeepers and Duke Power's Lake management folks to get to know each other and better understand each other's work and objectives," said Catawba Riverkeeper executive director Donna Lisenby. "Our goal was to foster better cooperation between the two organizations and an appreciation of what each is trying to accomplish with regard to the river." Relicensing issues such as land preservation were basically "off limits" for this meeting.

Duke Power President Ruth Shaw joined the meeting for a lunchtime question and answer session. Topics

ranged from discussions about Duke Power's near-term plans for building a new power plant, possibly a nuclear plant, to our mutual desire to protect the river.

During afternoon breakout sessions, small groups brainstormed ideas for synergies between the two groups. Though there were no blockbuster ideas or agreements from the day, both groups left feeling they had learned something about the other's roles and commitments.

Donna Lisenby perhaps summed it up best when she compared the day's events to the effects a stone being thrown into a pool of water. "Ripples created from the stone represent future possibilities," she said. "Working jointly we can better protect the Catawba River, preserving it for those who come after us."

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All the power plants on the main stem of the Catawba River are currently owned and operated by Duke Energy through Duke Power. Most of the lands were at one time owned by Duke Power and then managed by Crescent Resources, the land development subsidiary of Duke Energy. The billions of dollars made by these companies would not have been possible without the Catawba River and the lands that border the river.

In 2002, Duke worked with the state of South Carolina to protect and preserve 32,000 acres of the Jocassee Gorges in the western part of the state. Duke won numerous conservation awards for this project as they should have. It demonstrated clear environmental leadership and established a great deal of credibility and trust with key stakeholders.

It is commendable that, as a result of a lawsuit settlement, Crescent Resources made it possible for the state of North Carolina to purchase approximately 3,000 acres on Lake James last year for a state park expansion. However, it is worth noting that Duke Energy has never voluntarily completed any kind of riverfront conservation project for the Catawba River on the same scale as the Jocassee Gorges project. As the Keepers of the Catawba River, we believe that it is long past time for Duke to give back to the river that has given it so much. If Duke leadership is indeed serious about re-earning the trust and credibility of key stakeholders and demonstrating effective leadership on the environment, then the first place to start is in the relicensing process on the Catawba River where the Duke corporate business was born.

Norman Covekeepers Make Second Annual River Guardian Buffer Awards

Lake Norman Covekeepers made their 2nd Annual River Guardian Buffer Awards at the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation's Annual meeting on Saturday afternoon, April 9, 2005.



The awards result from a nomination by Covekeepers, who watch for properties on the lake where the

shoreline buffer has been maintained and is especially attractive. These properties are lovely and definitely meet our criteria.

Buffers are especially important for the health of the river and the quality of the water. They help to establish a good corridor for wildlife along the river. North Carolina Rules, permanently adopted last August, require a 50-foot vegetative buffer on properties platted after June 30, 2001,



and a 30-foot buffer on properties platted before that date. No trees three inches in diameter at the stump or larger should

be removed; trees can be limbed up to improve the view of the river.

The purpose of the award is to honor people who are following the rules and have created a

beautiful property. There are many ways that buffers can be improved upon, even after technical compliance is met. One way is by adding native woody plants and native wildflowers to the buffer. Norman Covekeepers are working to develop an information site on our website which will give a good list of native plants, and also note the invasive species, which should be removed.



Award winners:

~ Shep and Pete Foley, 7953 Woodhill Cove Lane, Denver, North Carolina [photo top left]

~ Gail and Gene Satterthwaite, 3932 Burton Lane, Denver, North Carolina [photo bottom left]

~ John and Pat Murphy, 2552 Las Brisas Lane, Denver, North Carolina [photo top right]

~ Susan Minch, 20101 Riverchase Drive, Cornelius, North Carolina

[photo bottom right]



Awardees were given stella d'oro day lilies courtesy of Rountree Plantation, 517 Rountree Road in Charlotte. Stop in to see their wide selection of plants and remember to thank them for their support.



In Memory Of ...

Jon Lucas, longtime Lake Wylie Covekeeper and husband of Chris Lucas.

In recent months, CRF has received memorials honoring Nick Castanas, Edna Mae Jones, and Nancy Pace. Their spirits echo still.

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