Meeting Summary
Natural Resources and Technical Systems Committee
December 4, 2013, 5:30 p.m.
OWASA Boardroom

Committee Members:	Terri Buckner (Chair), Michael Hughes, Heather Payne, Dana Raborn, Amy Witsil, John Young
Staff:	Mary Darr, Kenneth Loflin, Ed Kerwin, Johnny Riley, Todd Taylor
Visitors:	John Brantley, Joel Bulkley, John Galassi, Alan Tom

Major Items Discussed

Kenneth Loflin made a presentation on the 2013 recreation season at University Lake and Cane Creek Reservoir covering the operating schedule, user fees, attendance, revenue, demographics, expenses, and an informal lake visitor survey. The presentation is attached.

- A question was asked if we could collect user fees on opening day and donate them to the Taste of Hope. This change would require Board action.
- A question was asked if eliminating the OWASA customer or Orange County resident senior $2.00 user fee changed the number of visits by seniors. The attendance records are not detailed enough to determine the impacts of eliminating this fee.
- The lake staff was commended for being very helpful to a senior couple that frequently visits Cane Creek Reservoir.
- Staff noted that there is an understanding with neighbors that Cane Creek Reservoir would not open before 1:00 p.m. on Sunday.
- Generally staff feels visitors go to Cane Creek Reservoir to fish and University Lake to boat.
- Expenses in the presentation are for recreation only.
- A blank copy of the survey was handed out. It was noted that the first two survey questions should have included trade-offs. It was also noted that some lake users, particularly bank fishermen, may not be capable of or feel comfortable filling out the survey and therefore may be underrepresented in the results.
- A question was asked about enforcement of boating rules and regulations at University Lake. Rules and regulations are posted and staff makes visitors aware of requirements.
- Based on the high average Friday attendance at Cane Creek, staff believes that the changes to the 2013 recreation season (opening Cane Creek Reservoir on Fridays and closing University Lake on Fridays) were good. One letter was received from Rosewalk, which is near University Lake, that did not support the changes to the recreation schedule.
- Questions were asked regarding the cost impact of opening University Lake on Fridays and Cane Creek reservoir on Sunday afternoons.
- A question was asked if we know where the Cane Creek Reservoir Friday customers are from. While this level of detail was not readily available, staff feels it is similar to the overall distribution of Cane Creek Reservoir customers.

- A question was asked regarding a benchmark of number of customers/day for lake to be open that day the next year? An additional comment was made that there should be a minimum number of Orange County customers established.
- It was noted that recreation at University Lake and Cane Creek Reservoir is being subsidized.
- A comment was made that if University Lake and Cane Creek Reservoir are open an additional day next recreation season, we need to break even (cost/expenses) on the added days. The current schedule can remain subsidized.
- Staff recommended benchmarking against other lakes in the region.
- A question was asked if we ever hit boating capacity.
    - At Cane Creek Reservoir all of the flat-bottom boats were rented and the lake's boat limit was reached on April 5th (in May the limit was increased from 50 to 75 boats). All of the flat-bottom boats were rented again on Nov. 2nd.
    - At University Lake all of the flat-bottom boats were rented and the boat limit was reached (21 boats) on April 6th. All of the flat-bottom boats were rented again on Oct. 27th.
- A question was asked could we have higher rates at Cane Creek Reservoir than University Lake. Additionally, should fees be higher for out-of-county residents?
- A question was asked if we have considered renting kayaks. Making kayak rental available may produce additional revenue. Should canoes that have reached the end of their useful life be replaced with kayaks? The City of Durham purchased several kayaks for its Stormwater Department; therefore State Contract pricing may be available.
- A question was asked about developing a network of low-impact trails around the Cane Creek Reservoir with the help of scouting troops or other partners. Impacts to neighbors must be considered.
- A question was asked about the repair/replacement status of the Cane Creek Reservoir dock. Replacement of the dock is in the FY 2013 CIP. Staff is working with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to design and build a new dock.
- The UNC Rowing Team constructed a dock at Cane Creek reservoir and used it regularly for 5-6 weeks this past year.

Next Steps

- Staff should report back on the following items at the January NRTS Committee meeting:
    - Lake use fees at area utilities
    - Information on purchasing and renting kayaks
    - Cost/impact of opening University Lake on Fridays and Cane Creek Reservoir on Sunday afternoons, a breakeven analysis of fees, and analysis of higher fees for out-of-county residents
    - Proposed changes to 2014 recreation fees
    - Options for expanding hiking trails at the Cane Creek Reservoir

The next NRTS Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 8th at 5:30 p.m. in the OWASA boardroom.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Prepared by:



Mary Darr, P.E.
Director of Engineering and Planning

Attachment: 2013 Annual Recreation Report presentation



Opening Day

- The 2013 recreation season began on Saturday, March 23rd.
- Opening day is Lightning Brown Day, lake use, private boat-launch and boat rental fees are waived.
- Both lakes received 119 visitors with a total of $1,033 in fees waived.

Operating Schedule

- University Lake was open Saturday and Sunday from 6:30am to 6:00pm.
- Cane Creek was open Friday and Saturday from 6:30am to 6:00pm.
- For the 2013 season University Lake was closed on Fridays and Cane Creek was opened on Fridays. Cane Creek was last open on Fridays in 2007.

User Fees

LAKE USE FEES:		2012 Season	2013 Season
Boat Rental Fee	Orange County Resident	$4.50[1]	$4.50[1]
	Non-county Resident	$8.00[1]	$8.00[1]
Private Boat Launch Fee	Orange County Resident	$3.50	$3.50
	Non-county Resident	$7.00	$7.00
Motor Rental	Orange County Resident	$15.00	$15.00
	Non-county Resident	$22.00	$22.00
Lake Use Fee	Orange County Resident	$4.50	$4.50
	Non-county Resident	$5.50	$5.50
	Child (Orange County Resident)	$2.00	$2.00
	Senior (OWASA Customer or Orange County Resident)	$2.00	$0.00
	Senior or Child (Non-County Resident)	$2.50	$2.50

[1] Rental Fee does not include Lake Use Fee

User Fees

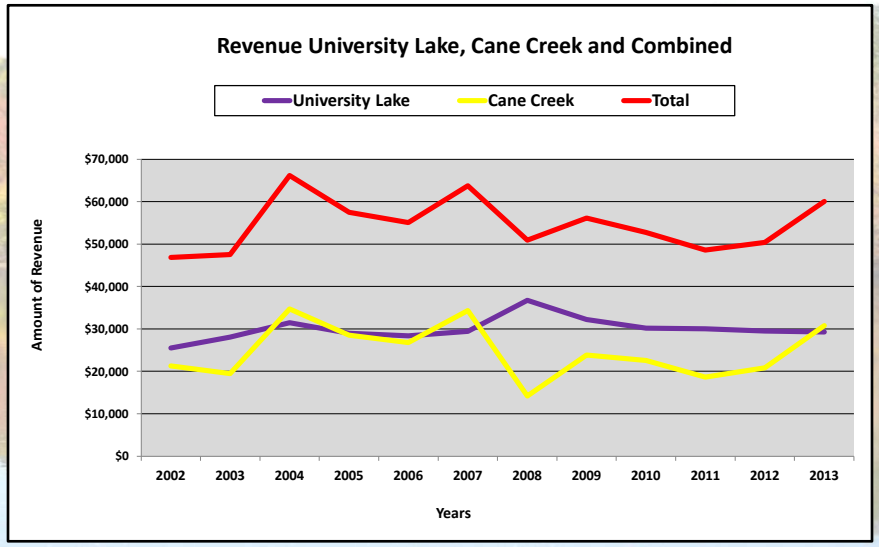
- In November 2012 a decision was made to eliminate the $2.00 lake use fee for senior citizens (65 and above) who are OWASA customers or Orange County Residents. All other fees remained unchanged for the 2013 season.
- A total of 223 seniors visited both lakes at no charge, 77 at University Lake and 146 at Cane Creek.

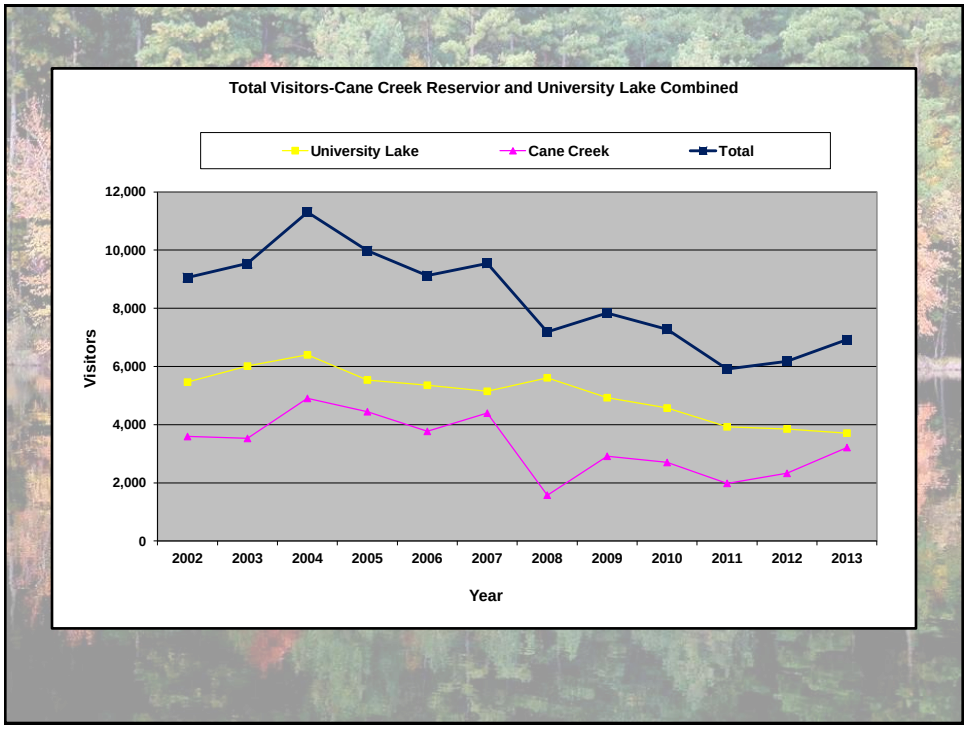
Season Passes

- 5 types of passes are available to Orange County residents.
- 16 single boat passes were sold
- 3 group boat passes were sold
- $1,801 in total revenue
- Each pass sold was used an average of 12 times

Revenues and Attendance

- University Lake generated $29,251 with 3,708 visitors.
- Cane Creek generated $30,802 with 3,214 visitors.
- The combined revenue totaled $60,053 with 6,922 visitors.





Recreation Attendance by Day of the Week

Cane Creek	Thursday[1]	Friday[1]	Saturday	Sunday[1,2]	Monday
Average 2004-2012	25	19	65	21	N/A
2012	N/A	N/A	66	N/A	N/A
2013	N/A	33	60	N/A	N/A

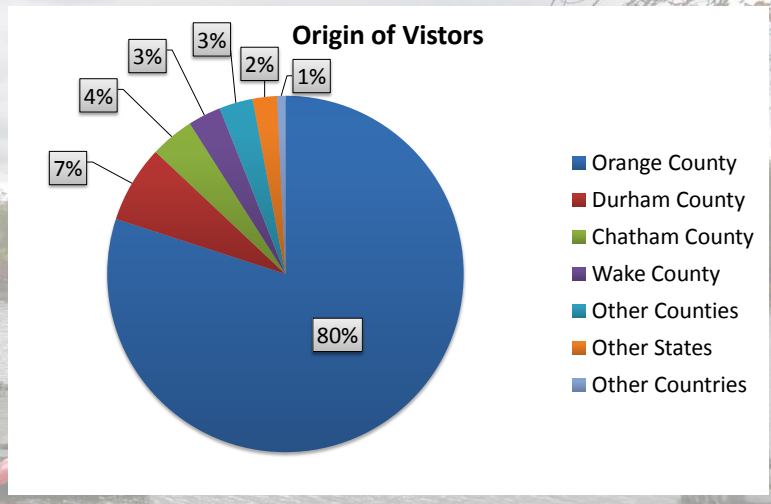
University Lake	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday[3]
Average 2004-2012	N/A	21	51	61	21
2012	N/A	17	42	50	N/A
2013	N/A	N/A	45	60	N/A

[1]Cane Creek closed on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays after 2007 season

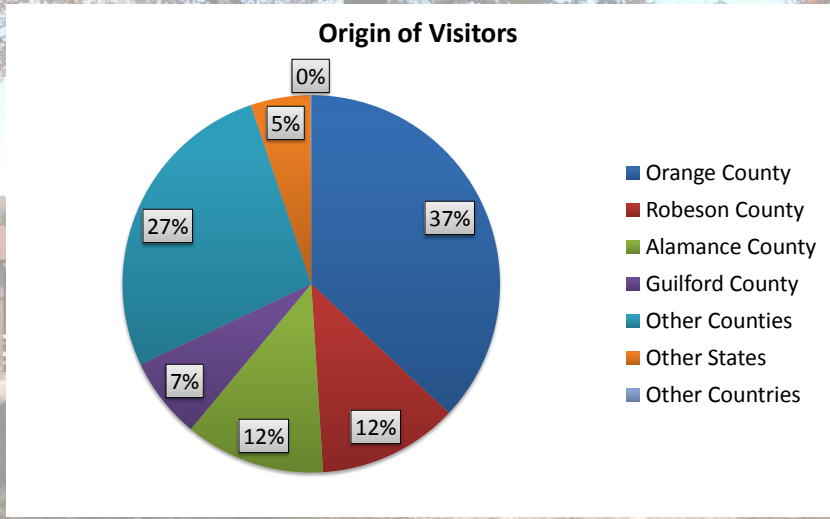
[2]Sunday hours at Cane Creek were 1:00 – 6:00 PM

[3]University Lake closed on Mondays at the end of June 2009

University Lake Demographics

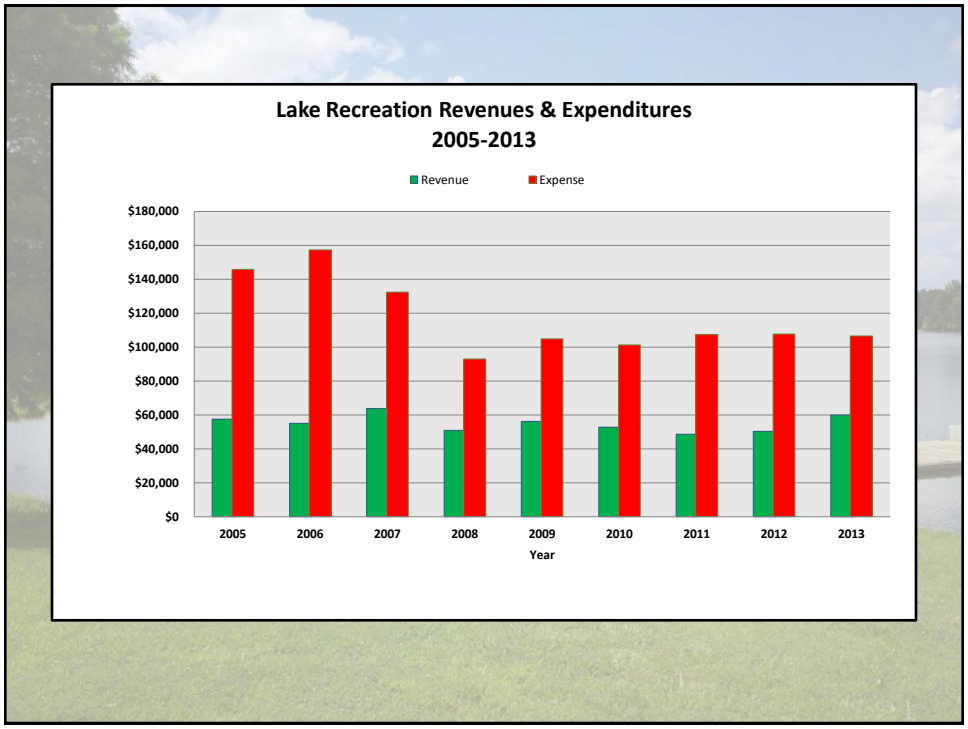


Cane Creek Demographics



Expenses versus Revenues

- Revenue total = $60,053
- Expense total = $106,474
- Recreation deficit funded by the general fund $46,421
- The ratio of cost to revenues was 1.77, indicating that expenses totaled $1.77 for every $1.00 in revenue.
- Daily recreational cost for each lake = $750



Visitor Surveys

- The recreational season ended on Sunday, November 10th.
- Visitor Surveys were placed at each lake in September.
- 22 completed surveys were received at Cane Creek
- 10 completed surveys were received at University lake
- The survey summary is as follows:

1. Which of our lakes do you visit most often?

• University Lake	22.6%
• **Cane Creek Reservoir**	**71.0%**
• I visit both of them about equally	6.5%

2. How often do you go to one of our lakes?

- **Once or more per week** **59.4%**
- Once or more per month 37.5%
- Less than once per month 3.1%

3. In 2013, we increased the number of recreation day at Cane Creek Reservoir from previously being open Saturday only to being open on Friday and Saturday. What do you think about this change?

- **I support it** **87.5%**
- I disagree with this change 6.3%
- I have no opinion 6.3%

Comments:

- I would like for Saturday and Sunday openings instead.
- I petitioned for it.
- I was one of the people who developed this idea and got about 40 people to sign a petition to support this idea.

4. In 2013, we decreased the number of recreation days at University Lake from previously being open Friday, Saturday and Sunday to only Saturday and Sunday. What do you think about this change?

- I support it 32.3%
- I disagree with this change 32.3%
- **I have no opinion** **35.5%**

Comments

- My support is based on the position taken by management that this was the only way to get an added day at Cane Creek.

5. Would you be willing to pay higher fees to have more recreation days at the OWASA lake you visit most often?

- No 34.4%
- **Yes** **59.4%**
- Not sure or no opinion 6.3%

Comments

- Fees are already too high.
- I appreciate the affordable rates which make it possible to frequent often but would pay up to $2.00 more if required.

6. If your answer to the Question 5 is yes, how much more would you be willing to pay per visit?

- $2 33.3%
- $4 14.3%
- **$5 38.1%**
- $6 - $10 9.5%
- More than $10 4.8%

Comments

- $2.00 - $4.00 per person

7. If you support adding more recreation days, which day would you most prefer be added?

- **Sunday 42.9%**
- Monday 19.0%
- Tuesday 0.0%
- Wednesday 23.8%
- Thursday 28.6%

Comments

- Friday
- Friday
- Friday

8. If you support adding more recreation days, at which reservoir?

- University Lake 36.8%
- **Cane Creek Reservoir 63.2%**

Comments

- And also Cane Creek.
- All day

9. Considering the amount of fees you pay and the quality of our lake recreation, how do you rate the value of our lake recreation?

- Poor 3.3%
- Good 6.7%
- Very Good 6.7%
- **Excellent 83.3%**

Comments

- Best fishing bargain anywhere.
- Staff at both lakes is first rate!

10. We welcome any other suggestions you might have concerning the recreation provided at University Lake or the Cane Creek Reservoir.

1. Having either facility open on Monday & Friday would be fabulous.
2. Very poor flat-bottom boat quality. Poor enforcement and staff knowledge of boating regulation & rules for NC.
3. Opening earlier in March would benefit bass fisherman.
4. Present system is working well. I don't recommend any changes.
5. Several friends have asked about kayak rentals. That might be appealing to some.

Question 10 comments continued:

6. I have lived in this area over 10 yrs. And never knew what a natural resource was here! If I saw a sign by the road reading "canoe/paddle boats for rent" I would have found you a long time ago and frequented with family and friends. I will spread the word!
7. Very good
8. Fantastic lake, hidden gems. I would only recommend one more recreation day at each reservoir.

Questions

