

# Life Lakes

on the



February, 2004

## Information About Lakes Hamilton & Catherine

### Lakes Hamilton & Catherine Refill Dates

#### Refill Schedule

##### Lake Hamilton

Start Phase 1	February 23, 2004
End Phase 1	February 29, 2004
Stable	March 1 - 7
Start Phase 2	March 8, 2004
End Phase 2	March 14, 2004

##### Lake Catherine

Start	March 8, 2004
End	March 14, 2004

Lake Hamilton will begin to refill on Feb. 23. In November, Lake Hamilton was drawn down nine feet, and Lake Catherine was drawn down five feet. Both lakes will be refilled by March 15 so as to not interfere with this spring's fish spawn.

The refill of Lake Hamilton will occur in two phases. Phase 1 will begin Feb. 23 and end Feb. 29, raising the lake 4.5 feet. Phase 2 will begin March 8 and end March 14, raising the lake another 4.5 feet, back to its normal summertime level. There will be a one-week period between the two phases to allow dock owners and contractors to return docks that were temporarily relocated before the drawdown back to their permitted location.

Lake Catherine's level will gradually rise five feet, beginning on March 8 and ending March 14. The normal summertime level for Lake Hamilton is approximately 399.7 feet above sea level, and Lake Catherine's summertime

level is approximately 304 feet above sea level. The lake levels may fluctuate daily as much as 24 inches on Lake Catherine and 12 inches on Lake Hamilton, except during the spring fish spawning period, which ends in May.

For more information concerning the annual drawdown, information on vegetation management strategies, or to obtain a booklet on the permitting of docks and seawalls, see our web page at [www.entergy.com/hydro](http://www.entergy.com/hydro) or call Entergy's Hydro Operations office at 501-844-2148.

### Why Are the Lakes Drawn Down Each Year?

Entergy understands that most people who own property on Lakes Hamilton or Catherine would prefer to have the lakes full year-round. Unfortunately, as most of lakefront property owners understand, the drawdowns are necessary for a number of reasons, most of which have to do with maintaining and improving the beauty and recreational qualities of the lakes.

There are two primary reasons for drawdowns: shoreline construction and maintenance/cleanup and nuisance aquatic vegetation control. An added benefit of drawdowns is improvement to overall fisheries on the lake. Drawdowns concentrate forage fish, reducing their population and increasing the growth of sport fish that feed on them.

Entergy has done annual drawdowns of normally 3-5 feet for over 20 years. These drawdowns allow lakefront property owners to do shoreline construction, maintenance and cleanup. It was only in mid 1990s that the aquatic vegetation began to be a real problem in Lake Hamilton, covering swimming areas, clogging boat docks and generally fouling the shallower waters.

After intensive research by the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and Entergy and after conducting a public hearing, a formal Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan was adopted. It called for the use of more extensive winter drawdowns and the stocking of grass carp by the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission as the primary methods of "whole-lake" nuisance vegetation control. The plan was successful in 1997 in significantly reducing Southern naiad in the southern half of the lake, but in recent years a new species of nuisance underwater weed, Eurasian watermilfoil, has invaded the northern half of the lake. This species of milfoil, which is not native to the United States, is rapidly spreading downstream. Unlike the native Southern naiad, milfoil is more resistant to winter kill and is not favored by grass carp. In response, Entergy and the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission determined in 2002 that two consecutive years of more aggressive 9-foot drawdowns were needed to slow and hopefully reduce this explosive growth.

Entergy understands that many feel, as we do, that an annual 9-foot drawdown would be excessive, and for that reason we have never intended to make them an annual occurrence. However, research suggests that to be effective against milfoil, drawdowns should occur on a prolonged and regular basis. While 9-foot drawdowns are effective, they do not completely eradicate milfoil, which unfortunately, grow to depths of 12 feet. *(continued on back)*

### **Why Are the Lakes Draw Down Each Year?** *(continued from front)*

A drawdown's effectiveness is determined by many factors, such as the amount of lake bottom exposed, duration of exposure, presence of springs, and the weather. The amount of success will vary from year to year, depending on temperature and the amount of moisture. Water level manipulation alone negatively impacts milfoil growth. Vegetation management is not an exact science, due to the many variables. However, it is certain that 9-foot drawdowns will help reduce milfoil's coverage and density, helping maintain the beauty and usability of the lakes.

Yes, a dry lake bed during the winter is not very pleasing to the eye, but it will help assure that the beauty and usability of the lake from March to November is protected. Even with the winter drawdowns, the lake is still accessible to boating. Boaters should take extra care due to additional shallow areas and obstructions exposed during any drawdown.

The current plan for the winter of 2004/2005 is for a standard five-foot drawdown on Lake Hamilton and three-foot on Lake Catherine. It is very likely that future 9-foot drawdowns will be needed in the management of milfoil. Each year Entergy and the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission inspect the vegetation coverage. These annual inspections help in determining the appropriate control method needed for the future. Fisheries, vegetation, and facility management, as well as downstream water needs, are a few of the factors considered in deciding a drawdown's depth and timing.

At Entergy we take very seriously our commitment to be good stewards of the properties that have been entrusted to us, and we work hard to keep the lakes beautiful to behold and easy to enjoy. There are challenges and by working with the excellent community leaders and property owners as our partners, we will identify and execute the best solution we can find to any problem we encounter.

#### **2004 Boating Safety Classes**

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Time:</u>
March 1 & 2	6- 9 PM
March 29 & 30	6 - 9 PM
April 26 & 27	6 - 9 PM
May 20 & 21	6 - 9 PM

### **Boating Safety Classes Being Offered**

The Garland County Marine Patrol will be offering boating safety classes at the Garland County Sheriff's Office located at 525 Ouachita Avenue in Hot Springs. Persons born on or after January 1, 1986, are required by law to successfully complete a boater education course before they may operate any powerboat, sailboat or personal watercraft (jet ski). For more information, call Corporal Neil Parliment at 501-622-3660 between 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

### **Do you know of lakefront property owners who are not receiving this publication?**

Send their name and address to:

Entergy Hydro Operation  
141 West County Line Rd.  
Malvern, Arkansas 72104

Or email them to:

Bobby Pharr  
bpharr@entergy.com

**Hydro Operations Web Site:**  
[www.entergy.com/hydro](http://www.entergy.com/hydro)



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141 West County Line Road  
Malvern, Arkansas 72104

#### **Help Us With Our Mailing List**

Please contact Entergy at  
501-844-2148 with any corrections