

Life on the Lakes

Information About Lakes Hamilton & Catherine

Heavy Rain - High Water

Start preparing for a potentially wet spring. If you remember, during last winter's heavy rains, several docks and other large objects floated free from the shoreline.

Unlike Lake Ouachita, lakes Catherine and Hamilton were not designed for flood control, meaning they can take on only a limited amount of water before having to release it downstream. They were built in the 1920s and 1930s specifically for hydroelectric purposes.

When heavy rains come, lake levels can rise quickly and Entergy Arkansas has no choice but to pass water downstream through the spillway gates to prevent the lake from overtopping the dam. When the spillway gates are open, there can be a very strong current near the dams. In addition, heavy rains can cause water levels to rise in the backs of coves and in main tributaries.

To prepare for heavy flows, anchor your dock to the shoreline with a strong cable to prevent it from floating away. And ensure your floating dock or boat in a fixed dock is able to rise and fall with the lake. Remember: The tributaries into the lake can rise higher and quicker than the main lake body.

When Entergy Arkansas gets a forecast for potentially flood-producing rains, the company may drop the lake by 1 or 2 feet prior to the storm as a precaution. Even this small drawdown can sometimes buy a little more time to help keep the lake from rising to disruptive levels. It also helps reduce the amount of flow the company would have to send down the Ouachita River out of R Emmel Dam.

Historic lake levels as measured at the dam have exceeded 404 feet above sea level on Lake Hamilton and 317 feet on Lake Catherine. Although the water hasn't been this high in some years, you never know what the future holds. Keep an eye on the forecast and be sure all your facilities are secure and well-anchored.



February, 2012

Lakes to Refill - March 3th

The spring refill of lakes Hamilton and Catherine will begin March 3. The lakes will rise approximately 6 inches per day until they are back to the normal summertime levels on March 11.

Lakes Hamilton and Catherine are drawn down in the winter to facilitate shoreline maintenance and inspection and to help control nuisance aquatic vegetation. Entergy Arkansas' federal license requires the company to refill the lakes by March 15 each year to prepare for the fish spawning season and the summertime recreation season.

The Battle of the Debris!

When the lakes refill this spring, there will be a natural increase in the amount of floating debris in the lakes. This occurs from a combination of two things. First, heavier rainfall during the springtime washes trees, limbs, leaves and litter into the lakes. Second, the debris that rested on the exposed shoreline during the drawdown dries out over the winter, then floats as the lake level rises.

This will create floating obstacles in the water and eyesores on the lake that may be present through spring. The debris tends to travel in large "mats" that move wherever the winds and currents take them. The coves on the lake tend to be the biggest victims because debris floats in and doesn't go away. Rest assured it will eventually sink, disperse or float downstream.

To reduce the amount of floating debris, putting yard debris in the lake and on the dry lakebed is prohibited.

As a measure of goodwill, lakefront property owners who are unable to remove large logs can contact Entergy Arkansas for assistance. To receive assistance, a log must be more than 10 inches in diameter and longer than 25 feet. The log must also be located at a boat ramp or where it can be reached with equipment from shoreline accessible by Entergy Arkansas. To request assistance for debris removal, contact Entergy Arkansas at (501) 844-2197 or dbatson@entergy.com.



Making an Impact



Over the years we have been publishing both electronic and paper copies of our newsletter. Many of you requested to receive the electronic version only, and we were glad to comply. This year we made a New Year's resolution to make an impact on the environment.

Entergy Hydro Operations normally publish three newsletters each year: in the spring, summer and fall. Future spring and fall issues will only be published in an electronic form. Summer issues will continue to be mailed out. This will reduce the amount of paper used by two-thirds and thus reduce our carbon footprint. To ensure that you receive the latest edition, sign up at www.entergy.com/hydro for our weekly emails. Also, please share this with your neighbors who may not be signed up.

The weekly emails have historically been used to communicate flow information from the dams, but will be expanded to add information such as: safety-related issues, lake permitting information, lake drawdown and refill schedules, emergency weather-related actions, policy changes and other time-sensitive information.

There is no better time than right now to make a change for the better. If you are interested in learning how you, too, can make an impact, save energy, save money and help save the planet, visit Entergy's "Make an Impact" website at www.entergy.c2es.org/ where you can measure your carbon footprint and learn about how simple changes can make a big difference.



6,600 Pounds of Trash Removed from Lakes Last Spring

That's right, more than three tons of trash was removed from the shorelines of lakes Hamilton and Catherine during the annual Cash for Trash Bash event held in spring 2011.

While the larger fall event, Trash Bash, is focused on educating the public about litter and getting the community together as a whole to help clean the shorelines and road ditches leading to the lakes, the spring event is where the action is. Typically three times the amount of trash is collected in the spring when the lakes are drawn down, exposing vast areas of shoreline.

Each spring, the Trash Bash Council invites 10 to 12 dedicated organizations to brave the elements and scour the exposed shorelines of lakes Hamilton and Catherine for trash to remove. Groups have come from as far away as Little Rock, Pine Bluff and Arkadelphia to participate.

The Cash for Trash Bash event is a fundraising opportunity for these civic groups (sports teams, church youth groups, Boy Scouts, school organizations, local firefighters). This unique event is not only a way for them to earn money, but also a way for them to learn about the impact simple trash can have on the environment.

If you would like to help at either of these events or help support the council's efforts, contact Adam Roberts at (501) 655-2161 or AdamRobertsHSGCBC@msn.com.

The council consists of volunteer members from the Hot Springs/Garland County Beautification Commission, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Lake Hamilton Fire Department, Diggs Boat Dock Construction, The Mid-America Science Museum, the City of Hot Springs Sanitation Department, Diamondhead Realty, Entergy Arkansas, Inc., Garvan Woodland Gardens, Garland County Department of Environmental Services, Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce, Hot Spring County Solid Waste Authority, and City Plumbing Heating and Electric.

