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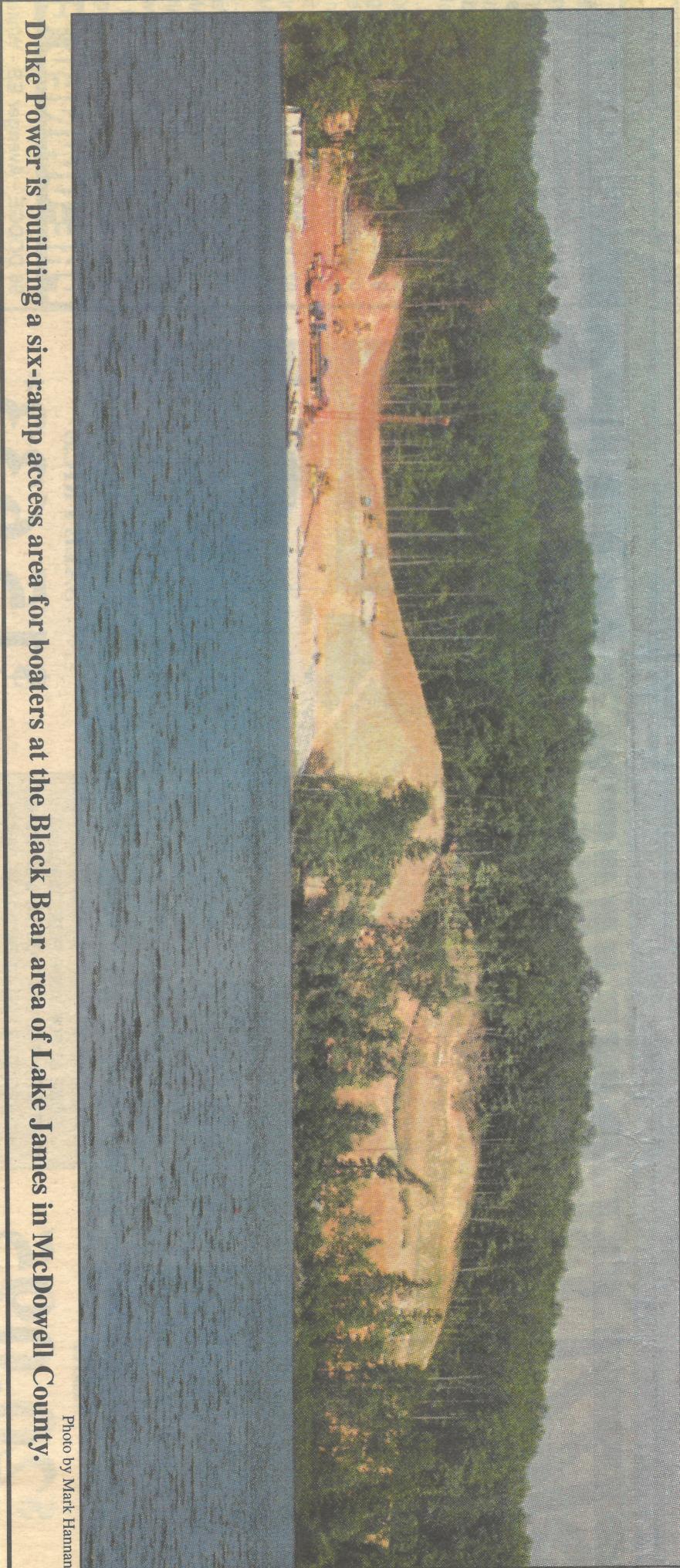
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Jeff Hollifield of Connally Springs launches his boat from access area at Lake James.

Photo by Mark Hannan



Duke Power is building a six-ramp access area for boaters at the Black Bear area of Lake James in McDowell County.

Photo by Mark Hannan

## Access crucial factor

By SABIAN WARREN  
News Herald Staff Writer

Larry Matthews of Old Fort, who has been fishing Lake James most of his life, admits to being a little unsettled by the new wave of housing construction along the shoreline.

The retiree says he has a feeling ordinary folks may be pushed aside as wealthy newcomers build extravagant homes on forested banks that once were open to everyone.

"All these mansions that are going in, they are changing the shoreline," said Matthews, who was on the lake recently fishing with his granddaughter. "This is on the way out as far as the public goes. They're going to privatize the whole lake."

Matthews isn't alone in that sentiment. As growth on the lake accelerates, public access issues are in the minds of many. Resi-

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