

From Staff Reports

A collision on Main Street in Old Fort Wednesday afternoon sent two moped riders to an Asheville hospital.

Angela Melissa Lane, 34, of Hoover Hollar Road in Old Fort and Barbara Cook, 32, were

transported to Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville by ambulance. Both women were treated and released.

At 2:20 p.m., Lane was driving the moped east on Main Street, when a car traveled into her path. Delores Elaine Russell, 74, of North Church Street in Old

Fort pulled her 1994 Chrysler from Church onto Main and into the path of the moped, according to a report by Cpl. Jerry Gillstrap of the Old Fort Police Department.

Lane and Cook were thrown from the scooter. Both women wore helmets, but neither had

the headgear strapped, the report stated.

Lane suffered abrasions and a possible concussion. Cook's injuries were not life-threatening, said Gillstrap's report.

The corporal charged Russell with a safe movement violation.

Easley makes Lake James State Park expansion official

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into developing an overall plan that creates a regional economic driver for the Lake James region," said Fields. "Expanding the state park at Lake James is a key component to that plan and today's announcement is clearly good news for this area."

The expansion will mean the protection of an additional 30 miles of Lake James' shoreline. This will help protect the lake's water quality and protect the

natural scenery of the region.

"It will provide much-needed public access to recreational opportunities for people from all over this and surrounding states, while providing good economic opportunities for area businesses through tourism," said Paul Braun of Citizens to Save Lake James.

The expanded state park could also become a junction point for three principal trail systems: the state's Mountains to the Sea trail, the National

Park Service's Overmountain Historic Victory Trail and the Linville Gorge Wilderness Trails. In addition, the state will purchase from Crescent another 1,000 acres along the Linville River for use as a gameland.

Easley thanked the efforts of Rep. Mitch Gillespie, R-McDowell, and Rep. Walter Church, D-Burke, and Sen. Joe Sam Queen, D-Haywood, in getting the legislation passed through the General Assembly.

Gillespie said the deal be-

tween the state and Crescent will create approximately 3,500 jobs for the region through the commercial developments, new home construction, the larger state park and other new features on Lake James.

McDowell hopes to strike balance at lake

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discussion. We certainly want to be cooperative."

In addition, McDowell officials are still pursuing the idea of leasing more than 300 acres of land at the Black Bear section of Lake James for use as a county-operated recreation park. That would include Big Island.

For a few years, county officials have looked at the possibility of leasing the land on the north shore from Duke Power. The land would be turned into a county-operated recreation park with campsites, walking trails and places for fishing. Duke Power has offered to lease land along the Catawba River chain of lakes to other counties. McDowell officials are still looking at the offer and what kind of park could be built.

While some sections of the lake will be preserved for public access, other areas will remain open for housing and commercial development. Crescent Resources is developing Black Forest on Lake James, located in the Black Bear section. The housing development has lots ranging in size from 3 acres to 21 acres. A 3.8-acre waterfront

developer announced plans for the construction of Bear Cliff.

Since then, no other plans for developments on the McDowell side have been submitted, according to Abernathy.

Walker said he feels Crescent will develop its land in larger tracts that will help preserve the natural beauty of the lake. "I think their master plan is to sell bigger acreage tracts," he said.

An area conservationist said he was pleased with the plan for the Burke side of the lake but wishes more could be done in McDowell.

"I feel like it's an absolutely wonderful thing that the state of North Carolina has stepped up to buy this land," said Ken Harris, who is chairman of the advisory committee for Lake James State Park. "This is one of the most monumental things to happen for Lake James. There's a few people who have worked many years for this to happen."

Harris, a local real estate agent, is also a member of the Lake James Environmental Association and an active supporter of preserving the natural resources around the lake.

"I am disappointed it's not here," he said. "Burke County

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