

THE NEWS

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Photo by Mark Hannan
Paul Braun, who organized Citizens to Save Lake James, paddles canoe.

Lake preservation pursued

By SABIAN WARREN
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If none of the forested shoreline of Lake James is protected from development, it won't be for lack of effort.

A grass-roots movement to preserve some of the shoreline in its natural state has gained considerable momentum since last year, winning thousands of supporters and endorsements from local governments, conservation groups and sportsmen's clubs.

All the fanfare has gotten the attention of state officials, who have also become involved in looking at preservation strategies at Lake James.

"One of the main things we've tried to do is make this a priority for the state," said Paul Braun, who organized Citizens To Save Lake James last year. "For a long time the focus has been on the eastern part of the state."

Conservationists acknowledge that development will occur on the pristine lake, but they say some of the shoreline should be left undisturbed for water quality as well as aesthetic purposes.

At The Crossroads

"It's important that at least one

lake on the chain remain clean and clear and a haven for wildlife and natural beauty," said Donna Lisenby of the Charlotte-based Catawba Riverkeeper, a conservation group

that focuses on Catawba River environmental issues.

At the moment, the most promising possibility appears to be

purchasing land to expand Lake

James State Park. There's also been talk of expanding the bounds of the nearby Pisgah National Forest, among other possibilities.

No definite course of action has been decided upon, but talks are ongoing between Crescent

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