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By SABIAN WARREN
News Herald Staff Writer

An environmental forum focusing on a rising tide of development at Lake James started out as a class project at Western Piedmont Community College.

But the event Thursday evening in Moore Auditorium wound up being a community "town meeting" of sorts on the impact of rapid growth along the shoreline of the pristine lake, drawing some of the key players in the unfolding Lake James drama.

A seven-member panel representing a cross-section of interests, from developer to environmentalist to lake dweller, presented their views on lakeside development, then answered questions from the audience.

"We wanted different people with different viewpoints and different perspectives," said biology instructor Pam Lookadoo, who helped organize the forum as a project for her environmental biology class. "Someone who's a developer would look at it differently than an environmentalist. We're looking at both sides."