

THE NEWS HERALD

Copyright © 1994

Morganton, N.C., Monday afternoon, August 15, 1994

A Park Newspaper - 12 pages

Vol. 109 No. 180

Lake James

Is more protection needed now?

by KEVIN ELLIS
News Herald Staff Writer

The Burke County Planning Board will use a special meeting on Wednesday to gather information as it considers whether to recommend adding regulations on development around Lake James.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at the Human Resource Center on East Parker Road.

At the meeting, Planning Board members and the public can hear what impact adding restrictions on the lake could have from the viewpoint of water quality experts, county environmental health and agricultural extension workers and those developing land around the lake, Planning Director Steve Erikson said.

"When considering something like this you can't just flip a coin and decide. You've got to find out some things first," Erikson said. "This is an opportunity for the Planning Board to hear what everyone's got to say and get them all in one spot so that there's no misunderstanding over the information they're providing."

Citizens for Clean Water prompted the meeting in July when the group asked the county's Planning Board to recommend a 100-foot setback for construction around Lake James. The state's Watershed Protection Act requires just a 30-foot setback.

The additional setback would offer a natural filtration system and protect the lake by keeping runoff containing fertilizers, chemicals and silt from entering the water, says Dixon Carroll, a spokesman for the environmental group.

Lake James needs more protection now because of the increased development taking place on its shores, some residents say.

"When considering something like this you can't just flip a coin and decide. You've got to find out some things first."

— Steve Erikson
County Planning Director

Since 1990, Crescent Resources has built 65 homes around the lake with the potential for another 70 to 80 homes in the next five to eight years, says Jim Belote, the realtor handling the sale of the land.

A representative of Crescent Resources, the land holding division of Duke Power Company, is also expected to attend Wednesday's meeting, Erikson said.

In the past several years the Planning Board has faced questions over development around Lake James and several members have said it's now time to make a decision on whether more regulations are needed.

Erikson said that decision could come at the Planning Board's meeting in September. The decision on adding any regulations would be left up to the Burke County Commission.

The Planning Department asked the county for \$25,000 to make a land use study of Lake James this year, but that was one of the items the Burke County Commission cut from its budget.