

# EASLEY: *Anticipation swirls*

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The possibility of an expanded state park on the lake did not even seem probable for county and Crescent Resources officials two years ago.

Crescent, the real estate arm of Duke Energy, filed suit against the county in April 2002, saying ordinances created

on how land could be developed at Lake James were too restrictive. Not only did Crescent file suit in state court, but federal court as well.

The county, as well as environmentalists, started to work on ways to fight Crescent and protect the water quality and land surrounding the lake. Environmentalists, lead by Paul

Braun, made protecting the water and land around the lake a priority long before the county passed the land use ordinances and Crescent filed suit.

By 2003, county and Crescent officials, along with environmentalists, started negotiations, and in early May, Crescent and the county agreed to development ordinances that, in most instances, were stricter than the original ordinances that were in dispute.

After Burke County Board of Commissioners passed the new ordinances, Crescent unveiled its plans in April for development at the lake that included a state park.

Because of the new ordinances and the new, friendlier relationship between Crescent and the county, the lawsuit was, in essence, over.

The park at the lake is expected to include walking trails, camp sites, an expanded

beach and better public access.

Plans for the lake also include a lodge, cabins and homes.

The development around the lake is expected to bring more than 2,000 jobs to the county during the construction process. And after the construction phase is complete, nearly 2,500 permanent jobs in the county are expected to be created, with an additional in-

come of more than \$89 million, according to an economic impact study by the North Carolina State University.

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