



Staghorn Plantation Estates
Homeowners Association
P.O. Box 267
Nicholson, GA 30565

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWS FEBRUARY 2022

It is February and already winter has brought us rain, cold temperatures and one beautiful snowfall. It has been a special time for Staghorn as many residents have come together to celebrate our community by joining the HOA. I hope you will enjoy this issue focused on Staghorn wildlife.

The Eagle Has Landed

I live on Staghorn Lake. On February 1, 2022 my wife, Susan, looked out our kitchen window and saw with binoculars what looked like an Eagle. I got out our camera and shot the picture you see here.



I learned that Bald Eagles were introduced back into Georgia in 1979. Most can be found along the Atlantic Coast but Bald Eagles can now be seen at Lake Lanier. They like fish so maybe it isn't too surprising to find one on Staghorn Lake.

Kenny Rogers' Swans

In 1998, singer and song writer, Kenny Rogers, moved from his Buckhead home with his wife, Wanda Miller, and their twin 4-year-old boys Justin and Jordan to a 150-acre estate in Nicholson on Hwy 335, across from Staghorn Lake. The fenced 150 acres, sold by Jack Holder, included a 5,681 square foot Polynesian style house, a 2,675 square foot pool, an 8-acre lake, horse riding trails, go-cart track and other amenities.

As part of the move from Buckhead, Kenny wanted his two young sons to have their own kind of zoo and zoo keeper. Kenny bought llamas, a goat, donkey, two alpacas and even swans. He had to build an air-conditioned farm house for the animals. According to Rogers, it was a lot of trouble. Early on the animals weren't well caged. Two white trumpeter swans got away.

The trumpeter swans decided they liked Staghorn Lake better than Kenny's lake and stayed here. Barb Fox, who has since passed, loved the swans, fed them and named them Ashley and Aubrey. One year the pair had six little babies that unfortunately never survived. Aubrey, the male swan, was caught napping on the shore and was eaten by coyotes. Today, you can watch Ashley as she uses her long flexible neck to reach down and grab shoots while swimming along the Staghorn Lake shoreline.

Attracting Copperhead Snakes

Copperheads are poisonous snakes that often have a copper-colored head and reddish-brown, coppery body with chestnut brown crossbands. Copperheads have fangs that release a venom that causes the breakdown of red blood cells, used to subdue prey. Their bite is not deadly. You will almost never find any of these critters along the water shoreline of Staghorn Lake because our largemouth bass consider them such a special treat to eat.

I had a neighbor, who has since moved, that decided to raise chickens on his corner lot knowing full well the position of the HOA on this matter. It was generally a bad idea. You see chicken eggs are a popular meal for copperheads who are also partial to baby chicks. It didn't take long for my neighbor to see holes in his lawn near the chicken coop and missing eggs. When he started seeing baby copperheads in his lawn, he decided to no longer be a farmer.

Goats and More Goats

Recently after one of our major storms, there were goats strolling down Staghorn streets followed by two big dogs. Apparently, a white house across from Staghorn Trail on Cabin Creek Road had a tree fall on a fence and their goats escaped followed by two dogs trying to round them up. You may know more about this than me.

Did you know that one of the coyote's favorite foods is goats? Coyotes usually attack with a bite to the throat of the goat and aim to kill it quickly. It is recommended by one website that to protect your goats you should put up an electric fence, patrol the fence line at night or, even better, bring the goats inside your home at night for safe keeping.

Leave it to Beavers

One day as I walked along the shoreline of my property on Staghorn Lake, I could see where some young boy had used a hatchet to chop down a four-inch diameter poplar tree on my property. He managed to leave a stump that came to a point. It had to be explained to this city dweller that it was no child; it was a beaver.

These little loggers with four feet and a tail have inhabited Staghorn Lake since it was originally dammed. They can be a real nuisance. When I first built my dock, it didn't occur to me that these busy beavers would find enjoyment gnawing on my dock poles. I got upset at the ongoing damage. From my canoe, I could see that the beaver lived in one of my neighbor's trees along the shoreline. You couldn't miss it with all the twigs at the entrance to the den.

That beaver was eventually killed. But it was a waste of time because beavers travel down the creeks leading into Staghorn Lake all the time. My solution is now to live and let live. I use chicken wire to protect all the small trees I want to save and leave the trees I don't want to the beavers. Like I said, "leave it to beavers."

Final Thoughts

Our sympathies go out to the family of Steve Chambers who lived on Staghorn Lake. Steve is survived by his wife and high school sweetheart of 61 years, Lisa Hamilton; three sons, Steve and wife Jerrie, Jeff and wife Mitzi, Chris and wife Val; nine grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Steve contracted Covid-19 and required hospitalization. He eventually came home for hospice care and died peacefully surrounded by his family. Please stay safe. Craig Gieler VP