



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

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWS JANUARY 2023

Staghorn Lake is Back

Because of all the rain we have had recently, Staghorn Lake is at full capacity. It sure took a lot longer than I expected to refill.



Please feel free to use the boating ramp and launch your boat into the pristine water of Staghorn Lake. The water has become so clear that you can see the lake bottom in many places along the shore.

In January, **Garrett Resources** will begin maintaining our Staghorn Lake and if chemicals are needed to protect our water quality, they have the ability to get that job done. In addition, you can expect more fish added to Staghorn Lake in May and June. They will be **Large Mouth Bass, Shad and Triploid Grass Carp.**

Wildlife Returns to Staghorn Lake

I was recently surprised to see that our **Juvenile Bald Eagle** had returned. It is still missing the white head that we are familiar with. The addition of small minnow size blue gills may be the reason.

I failed to mention that I was swimming at sunrise this past summer and it was very overcast. As I got out of the lake, I looked to my right on the shore, I saw something very strange. It looked like five small otters.

They saw me and the parents and two of the three young ones flopped into the water. One of the babies just stared at me and when it realized that its parents had left it let out a loud screeching sound. The parents quickly returned to the relieved little one.



I later realized that the little guys were **Mink** and are quite common here. They will eat virtually anything they can catch and kill, including fish, birds, bird eggs, insects, crabs, clams, and small mammals.

Beavers are Back

When our Staghorn Lake water level dropped, beavers headed down stream. Now they have returned and in December ate half way through one of the Long family's larger trees at the Lake.



It is an ongoing problem. A few years ago, I noticed that a beaver had been eating my dock poles and I contacted the **Georgia Department of Natural Resources** in Athens to resolve the problem.

A representative of the GDNR and I canoed around Staghorn Lake and found the home of the beaver(s) in the root system of a large oak tree. You could tell by all the small branches in the lake around the entrance to their den.

Beavers don't usually bother docks, so the GDNR representative surmised that it was an adolescent beaver sharpening his teeth. Female beavers have four young "kits" a year. After two years the beavers head down stream looking for mates.

Beavers prefer eating 2-to-6-inch diameter trees, but will eat larger ones on occasion. I found over the years that placing chicken wire loosely around the base of trees to a height of 2 feet works well to eliminate beaver damage.

Shooting the beavers generally doesn't work because others just come down stream to take their place.

Recent Weather Creates Challenges

December and January weather with high winds and heavy rains have resulted in many trees falling near our Staghorn Recreation Facilities. A two-foot in diameter tree fell just in front of our dumpster and very recently another fell close to our newly upgraded swim dock.



The downed trees were removed by a contractor and **Andy Fowler**. We are so fortunate to have the Fowlers commitment to Staghorn.

Heavy rains damaged the electricity and pipeline flowing to our lake side bathrooms. We hired an electrician and plumber to get the repair work done.

The good news is that the new Staghorn Lake dam spillway is working very well. We will celebrate the financial support of our community for the dam spillway repair on **June 4, 2023 at the Lake Celebration**. More details will follow soon.

Volunteers and dues paying residents are the life blood of our community. If you still haven't contributed or paid your annual dues, **I respectfully request that you make your payment now.**

Craig Gieler, President SPEHOA