

Stewardship makes a difference

In February, Lake Watch of Lake Martin held its 28th annual meeting at the StillWaters Home Owners Association. The venue was great, and the crowd included long-time Lake Watch members and, to our delight, several new faces. We are always on the lookout for – and in need of – new members to help carry on the cause of preserving and protecting our Treasured Lake.

This year, in addition to our normal program that included an overview of the lake's water quality as indicated by results from our Lake Watch monitors' water testing (see the summary in *Lake* magazine's January 2019 edition), we initiated a special award – the Bronson Environmental Stewardship Award. This award has been established to honor the decades of effort by Dick and Mary Ann Bronson in environmental stewardship focused on Lake Martin and its watershed. Their efforts have positively impacted not only the waters of Lake Martin but also thousands of students and scores of adults, culminating in Lake Martin being designated as Alabama's one-and-only Treasured Alabama Lake.

The Bronson Environmental Stewardship Award is to be presented to a group, organization, business or individual for outstanding efforts in the preservation and protection of the waters in the Lake Martin watershed. This award recognizes contributions that safeguard the quality of the waters of Lake Martin, the Tallapoosa River and the tributary streams that feed into the lake through conservation, protective land management, sustainable water quality practices and/or environmental education and outreach.

At the February meeting, the inaugural Bronson Environmental Stewardship Award was presented to John Thompson, president of Lake Martin Resource Association. In addition to his administrative and leadership duties with LMRA, Thompson spearheaded efforts to partner with Alabama Power Company and numerous volunteer groups in the annual Renew Our Rivers lake cleanup.

More than 300 volunteers participated in the 2018 cleanup and removed an estimated 20 tons of trash from the lake. Thompson coordinated volunteers and



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resources from the Dixie Sailing Club, LMRA, Alabama Power Company, Lake Martin Dock Company, Wind Creek State Park, Russell Lands, the Boy Scouts, the Campfire Girls, third- and fourth-grade students from Stephens Elementary School, the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce, students from Reeltown High School, residents in the Real Island area, Real Island Marina and County Commissioner Steve Robinson.

In addition to the mammoth effort in coordinating the annual Renew Our Rivers cleanup effort on the lake, Thompson

has also fostered a partnership with Prosperity Again Thru Health (a group that promotes walking and healthy

lifestyle choices) in conducting Trash Walk campaigns. Thanks in large part to Thompson's efforts, we all enjoy a litter-free Lake Martin.

The traditional Lake Watch award, the Woodfin Martin Award, was established in 1997 to recognize Lake Watch volunteers who have gone above-and-beyond the call of duty. Woodfin Martin

(1915-1995) was a charter member of Lake Watch who reflected the spirit of those who care about protecting the beautiful waters of Lake Martin.

This year's Woodfin Martin Award was presented to Dianna Porter, who has served for many years as Lake Watch of Lake Martin secretary, along with being a water chemistry monitor. She has also spread the good news about Lake Watch and watershed stewardship through numerous outreach activities at the Tallapoosa County Water Festival, Montgomery Zoo Earth Day, 4-H RiverKids program, the Dadeville Fall Festival, the Horseshoe Bend School Living Streams program and the Dadeville High School Environmental Science Club stormwater runoff program. Job well done, Dianna!

If you care about preserving and protecting our Treasured Lake, give us a shout and come join in our efforts – see www.lakewatch.org for more information. We'd love to welcome you aboard.

Eric Reutebuch is president of Lake Watch of Lake Martin. Learn more about Lake Watch at lakewatch.org.

Become a water monitor

Lake Watch of Lake Martin needs volunteers to test the waters of the lake. Monitoring the water on Lake Martin is a great way to make a difference and contribute to the welfare of the lake and the community while spending a few relaxing minutes on your own dock. Training programs are fun and not hard. Learn more about training workshops at www.alabamawaterwatch.org/training-workshops.