



News

Lake Watch may sue Wadley over violations

By Dale Liesch

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Lake Watch of Lake Martin and the Conservation Alabama Foundation will threaten the city of Wadley with a lawsuit over documented violations of the Clean Water Act, a move that Lake Watch President Dick Bronson hopes will lead to additional action by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the State Attorney General's Office.

Bronson said the group sent a formal letter or notice of intent to sue on legal letterhead from the offices of David A. Ludder to Wadley Mayor, Bruce Albright listing various violations from the past five years found on the Environmental Protection Agency's website. The city now has 60 days before the lawsuit may be filed against them.

"It's a technique to get ADEM to enforce the law and their own regulations," Bronson said. "By doing this it forces their hand."

The letter listed pages of violations including an excess of Nitrogen and Ammonia being discharged into the Tallapoosa River, which directly affects Lake Martin.

Bronson said ADEM and the Fisheries Section of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources were originally notified about the most recent violations when a fisherman reported pollution and dead fish in the Tallapoosa River near the sewage lagoon system near Wadley on June 14 and 15. Lake Watch was also notified at that time.

Bronson hopes the letter will lead to a similar response Dadeville had in March of 2007 when the city received the same intent to sue letter.

"My prediction is ADEM will step in and file suit followed by a lawsuit by the Attorney General's office," Bronson said. "That is what has happened every time."

Bronson hopes the threat of a lawsuit from the state level will help get the problem cleaned up.

"A lawsuit from the Attorney General will preempt a possible lawsuit of Lake Watch," Bronson said. "There will be a timetable, a modest fine-a little slap on the wrist but they must fix it."

Attempts to reach Wadley Mayor Bruce Albright were unsuccessful. Attempts to reach ADEM inspector Gail Holcombe and DCNR inspector Dan Catchings were also unsuccessful.

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