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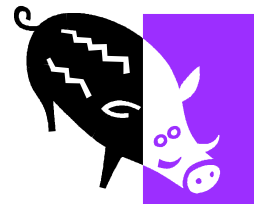
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Sunday, September 28, 2008

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Local

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Event at Fort Loudoun Lake held to promote clean water

BY BRITTNEY MOORE
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Local businesses and organizations came together Saturday with the Fort Loudoun Lake Association to "paddle for clean water."

Participants could canoe or kayak four miles from Gov. Ned McWherter Riverside Landing to Sequoyah Hills Park. Canoes and kayaks were provided along with life jackets, food, drinks and goodie bags.

ON KNOXNEWS.COM

Video: Scenes from Saturday's Paddle for Clean Water event

People of all ages participated, including members of the Oak Ridge Environmental Club, who also attended last year. Sponsors this year were the Knoxville Utilities Board, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Tennessee Clean Water Network and Earth Fare.

According to Rachel Matvy, lake association administrative assistant, the purpose of the event was to get people on the water who normally wouldn't and "to create a presence on the water so it's more utilized by people in the community."

Matvy said the group also wanted to boost appreciation for the lake and to encourage citizens to be more "protective" of the natural environment.

Paddle for Clean Water began in 2007 as a

group effort by FLLA members.

"The idea originally came from 'Paddlin' for Madeline' when Madeline Rogero ran for mayor against Bill Haslam in 2003," Matvy said.

Last year, around 40 people attended. This year, around 35 to 40 people attended once more.

"We had a good community response this year," said Matvy.

Penny Mitchell, executive director for FLLA, said she hoped the event would increase pollution awareness.

Mitchell said contributors to water pollution include trash and runoff from storm drains. Another contributor is in your own backyard.

"Everyone who lives in a four-county area bears responsibility from water from their own yards draining into the lake," Mitchell said.

According to Mitchell, the 52 miles of Fort Loudoun Lake are a key part of the overall quality of life in Knoxville.

"We've always felt that many people litter because people aren't as close to nature as they used to be," she said.

FLLA has five full-time staff members and two part-time members who pull trash from Fort Loudoun Lake as well as test the water quality, Mitchell and Matvy said. According to Mitchell, the association has grown to more than 500 members since it began in July 2006.

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