

~ Smith Mountain Lake ~

A HISTORY

Smith Mountain Lake (SML) is a large power (and now drinking) reservoir in the Roanoke Region of Virginia, located equidistant southeast of the city of Roanoke and southwest of Lynchburg. The lake was created in 1963 by the Smith Mountain Dam impounding the Roanoke River. The majority of the south shore of the lake lies in Franklin County while a small portion, including access to the dam, lies in Pittsylvania County. Bedford County makes up the northern half of the lake with the Roanoke River as the dividing line. The lake has before a popular recreation spot and has also experienced significant development in the last decade. It is the largest lake contained entirely within the state of Virginia.



Initial proposals were made in the late 1920s to dam the Roanoke River and the Blackwater River at the Smith Mountain gorge to generate electricity. Construction on the SML Dam began in 1960 and was completed in 1963. The lake reached its normal water level in March 1966. The lake covers 20,600 acres (83 km²) and has almost 600 miles (800 km) of shoreline. The north shore of the lake lies entirely in Bedford County.

Throughout the 1960's & 1970's, the area around Smith Mountain Lake remained rural and remote with tobacco farms and other agriculture. Marinas provided the bulk of public access in the early years of the lake. The limited early residential developments around the lake consisted largely of small trailer parks and modest homes. However, residential growth has been steady since the mid-1980's and increasingly upscale with large lakefront houses, condominiums, and communities centered on golf courses. The lake has attracted many who commute to Roanoke and Lynchburg, as well as many retirees – many of whom have relocated from the Northeast.

By the late 1990's, the number and affluence of the new residents resulted in the construction of new retail and commercial developments near the lake. Recent shoreline development has been limited to residential construction. With the enactment of Federal oversight of shoreline development in 1998 coupled with soaring real estate values there is an escalating loss of public access to the lake as the lake's marinas are sold for residential development.

State Route 122 is the only primary highway that crosses the lake, though State Route 24, State Route 116, and State Route 40 are nearby. We're a short 4-hour drive southwest of Washington D.C. and two hours north of Raleigh, NC.

Vacationers come from all over the world to fish, enjoy numerous water sports and play on our 580 miles of shoreline. They usually end up discovering the many unexpected delights of SML. Friendly people and genuine hospitality make everyone feel welcome and there's always something new to do. World-class historical landmarks, unique shopping opportunities from antiques to art galleries, the latest fashions, fantastic dining & entertainment options, and simply sitting back enjoying the glorious scenery that makes every day complete. Wait till you see the beautiful sunsets!

Often once people visit our little slice of heaven, they'll end up wanting to make SML their home. In fact, our little community of 22,000 has grown in large part to the many vacationers who've eventually decided to relocate permanently. The temperate weather, our central location along the East Coast and our small-town atmosphere make Smith Mountain Lake a wonderful place to raise a family state a business or – our favorite – just kick back and relax.

At SML you'll find wonderful place and equally wonderful people. Our area's great natural beauty – from the waters and woods to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia – is the perfect destination for your very own style of fun, whether you seek days full of activities, or just plan relaxing. Smith Mountain Lake – Jewel of the Blue Ridge!

>> This will be Drifter's ***second*** season!

>> Crystal Shores Marina was previously the Smith Mountain Lake Yacht Club, as well.

>> The lake borders three counties – Bedford, Pittsylvania, & Franklin – all of which are full of history!

**** PLEASE LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ABOUT
THE LAKE & OUR COMMUNITY. GUESTS WILL ASK
YOU EVERY QUESTION UNDER THE SML SUN, SO
PLEASE BE INFORMED! ****