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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DREDGING BAN BEGINS NEXT MONTH WITHIN SMITH MOUNTAIN PROJECT BOUNDARY

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE, Va., Jan 29, 2024 – Now is a good time for property owners to start preparing for the four-month ban on dredging within Smith Mountain Project lake boundaries.

Dredging by property owners at Smith Mountain and Leesville lakes is typically done to remove sediment and debris from the bottom of the lake to increase water depths. The ban, which runs yearly between Feb. 15 and June 15, helps to protect fish habitat during spawning season.

“The four-month pause in dredging helps to protect critical fish spawning,” said Neil Holthouser of Appalachian Power’s shoreline management group. “Fish depend on undisturbed shallow-water environments for nesting sites. The temporary dredging ban helps keep the fish population healthy and stable over time.”

Holthouser mentioned that the Shoreline Management staff is ready to assist with all the necessary permitting, but proper planning helps to eliminate potential delays. When considering dredging at Smith Mountain or Leesville lakes, shoreline property owners and contractors should remember these key requirements:

- Only accumulated sediment may be removed; the original lake bottom cannot be disturbed. Dredging or excavation of all designated wetlands areas is prohibited.
- Property owners must consult with Appalachian Power prior to performing any dredging activity within the Project boundary (800-foot elevation contour at Smith Mountain Lake; 620-foot elevation contour at Leesville Lake). Property owners should also consult with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- The removal of less than 25 cubic yards of sediment may be allowed without a permit from Appalachian, provided certain conditions are met. Property owners must consult with Appalachian at least 10 working days prior to the planned dredging activity to review the requirements of the Shoreline Management Plan. Property owners must also consult with the USACE to determine if the planned dredging activity is allowed under the USACE Nationwide Permit 19.

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- The removal of more than 25 cubic yards of sediment requires a permit from Appalachian and may also require an individual permit from the USACE.

To contact Appalachian's shoreline management staff, email Neil Holthouser at nholthouser@aep.com. To contact the USACE, send an email to cenao.reg_rod@usace.army.mil. Visit www.SmithMountainProject.com to find the Shoreline Management Plan. Dredging information begins on page 71.

Smith Mountain Project is a 636-megawatt pumped storage hydroelectric facility on the Roanoke River that utilizes an upper reservoir (Smith Mountain Lake) and a lower reservoir (Leesville Lake). Combined, the project includes about 600 miles of shoreline. Water stored in Smith Mountain Lake first passes through turbine-generators in the powerhouse to produce electricity and is discharged into Leesville Lake. From there, some water is released through the Leesville Dam or pumped back into Smith Mountain. The project was built and is operated by Appalachian Power.

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