

# Lake Martin Home Owners & Boat Owners Association

*Preserving the Memories for Future Generations*

[www.LakeMartin.org](http://www.LakeMartin.org)

September 19, 2007

Colonel Byron Jorns  
Commander, Mobile District  
Corps of Engineers, US Army  
P. O. Box 2288  
Mobile, AL 36628

Dear Colonel Jorns:

The Lake Martin Home Owners and Boat Owners (HOBOs) Association, Inc., represent the thousands of residents and users of Lake Martin. The drought over the past two years has been an extremely difficult time for homeowners and marinas and other local businesses that depend on the Lake to earn a living. Lake Martin is currently more than eleven feet below its normal summer levels and never reached full pool from the winter drawdown.

Now we learn that the Corps of Engineers is considering further draw downs of the entire Coosa and Tallapoosa river systems so that dredging can be completed on the lower portion of the Alabama River. The parties requesting the dredging represent a small special interest business group. The HOBOs request that the Corps require an economic impact study of the ACT basin be conducted by this group prior to approval of any further draw down. When Alabama Power Company requested a variance to reduce the flows into the Alabama River this past May, the Corps of Engineers required a study which lasted until the Governor Riley intervened at the end of July, and flows were reduced. Lake Martin lost over six feet of water during these COE studies. The drought is more severe now, the National Weather Service forecast indicates the drought will last at least until May 2008, and because of the mismanagement of the available water resources from May until July, the supply of available water is depleted. Now is not the time to open the last dam on the ACT and let our waters flow into the Gulf of Mexico, for the possible benefit of very few companies that want to utilize barges, but currently use alternative modes of transportation.

The industries along the Alabama River have enjoyed a summer with an abundance of water, while those areas of the basin supplying the water are in an economically disastrous situation. Unfortunately, it is time for all to equally share these drought conditions.

In a recent report, the COE decided that the Alabama River could function properly with a reduction of more than 20% in down stream flows. We ask that you immediately put these flow rates into effect so that Alabama Power Company can try to conserve its remaining resource.

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*Post Office Box 1030  
Dadeville, Alabama 36853*

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Also, we ask that you issue a variance now for Lake Martin that will increase the **winter pool level from 480' to 483'** so that any rains which may begin to fill the lake can be stored for the possibility of another drought in 2008.

Finally, I have recently received an article (attached) written about actions taken by the COE to improve the lake level conditions on Lake Hartwell in South Carolina. It seems that a workable plan has been devised on this lake, with help and input from citizens. The Corps of Engineers has listened to all of the stakeholders of Lake Hartwell and has improved the area for everyone. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your staff and other stakeholders to devise such a plan.

Sincerely,

Jesse M. Cunningham  
President  
Lake Martin HOBOs

Cc: Governor Bob Riley  
Mr. Willard Bowers, VP, Environmental Affairs, Alabama Power Company  
Mr. Charles Stover, System Operations Manager, Alabama Power Company  
Senator Jeff Sessions  
Senator Richard Shelby  
Congressman Mike Rogers  
Congressman Spencer Bachus