

Press Release

February 25th, 2014

A Lake Country Pairing – Seaplanes and Wine Coming to Clarksville

Building on the great success of the Lake Gaston seaplane splash-in back in October of 2013, the Virginia Seaplane Pilots Association has paired with Mecklenburg County Tourism, the Clarksville Chamber of Commerce and the Lake Motel to bring a splash-in to Clarksville on Saturday, April 12th from 10am-5pm. This is the same day as the increasingly popular Clarksville Wine Festival; people will be able to attend the festival and then stroll right down to the lake to see these beautiful aircraft and meet the pilots. “This will be a great opportunity for the Virginia Seaplane Pilots Association to work together with the community and the Corps of Engineers in addressing compatibility issues and expanding seaplane use on the lake.”

Since the wine festival will remain a 21+ event as in years past, this new dimension of the seaplanes opens the weekend up to a whole new audience of families.

Factor in the great collection of shops and restaurants in the downtown area between the wine festival and the seaplane area, the nearby Occoneechee State Park, and the availability of boat and kayak rentals from the Occoneechee harbor, and “you’ve got a little of something for everyone,” says Sheila Cuykendall, director of the Clarksville Chamber of Commerce.

The seaplanes will primarily use the beach below the Lake Motel, which has been a critical partner in planning for this event. Their generosity in clearing the beach area and allowing the seaplanes permission to pull up there “has really made the difference between this event happening and not happening,” according to Mecklenburg County Tourism Coordinator Justin Kerns. “We’re really rolling out the red carpet for them.”

While the number of attending seaplanes relies heavily on the weather, the wine festival will take place rain or shine. Safety is always a major consideration for seaplane events, and professionals from several aviation organizations have checked out the site and are working in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and others on the lake to ensure a fun, safe and successful event.

Overnight accommodations are available at the Lake Motel, the Magnusson Hotel in Clarksville, Cooper’s Landing Bed & Breakfast, the cabins at Occoneechee State Park, and the Bay View Efficiencies. For more information on the splash-in, please contact Steve Harris/VA DOAV (Steve.Harris@doav.virginia.gov), Bill Fosdick/VA SPA (wfoz@yahoo.com), or Justin Kerns/Mecklenburg Tourism (justin.kerns@mecklenburgva.com), or go to <http://www.mecklenburgva.com/2014clarksvillesplashin.aspx>. Regular updates on the weather conditions for the splash-in will be available on www.facebook.com/VisitMeckVA in the week

leading up to the event. A live web cam of the landing site can be viewed at <http://clarksvilleva.com/live-webcam/web-cams-large-view/>.



Seaplane on Kerr Lake in Clarksville. Image by Justin Kerns/Mecklenburg Tourism.