

Lake Tahoma – Helene Cleanup - Update October 15, 2025

Note: This document was sent prior to the annual Stockholders meeting, any updates/changes appear in red below

Top 10 FAQs for Lake Tahoma Stockholders Regarding the Cleanup Project

- 1. What is the purpose of the cleanup/dredging project?**
The city of Marion and the county of McDowell have driven the clean-up of our lake through McDowell Emergency Management – specifically, Will Kehler, who is the director of McDowell Emergency Management. The project aims to remove storm debris, sediment buildup, and potential obstructions to restore the lake's health, safety, and long-term sustainability. The ONLY reason the State of NC and the Federal Government are working together to clean up the lake is that Buck Creek provides more than 70% of the drinking water to McDowell County. Again, this is the only reason we are eligible for any assistance!
- 2. Who is performing the work, and why were they selected?**
Crowder Gulf, a nationally recognized disaster recovery contractor, was approved through the North Carolina Emergency Management team based on its expertise in environmental cleanup and dredging operations. Crowder Gulf is an approved contractor for the State of North Carolina, and they have extensive experience in this kind of work, as evidenced by their website. <https://crowdergulf.com/>
- 3. When will the project begin, and how long will it last?**
*Work is scheduled to within days, the pad for the crane is nearing completion and the first of two cranes were delivered to Lake Tahoma this morning. **Work will continue for approximately six-eight months, operating seven days a week.** The first signs of the project are already in place, a turbidity curtain has been placed in front of the penstock and removing debris around the edges of the lake will begin after a channel has been cut through the opening of Big Buck Creek, just past the bridge to allow equipment to float to other areas of the lake. **This will be disruptive to the lake, but the lake will NOT be lowered during the cleanup work.** Part of the reason for this is that Helene impacted other water intake locations, and the Water Department needs to maintain a water flow of 2,100 cubic gallons per minute from Buck Creek.*
- 4. What areas of the lake will be affected during the work?**
Please refer to the attached map below for a list of zones to be worked on, which includes staging areas, access points, and temporary closures. Note that debris will be collected throughout the lake; however, the focus will be on the four areas depicted in the map below.
- 5. Will there be any impact on boating, fishing, or recreational use of the lake?**
Yes, there are restrictions in active work zones for safety reasons. Do not go within

75 yards of any working equipment. Any additional restrictions will be communicated as we receive them from the State and the Contractor.

6. How will noise, traffic, or environmental impact be managed?

It's our understanding that work will be from sun-up to sunset. You should expect "construction type" noise levels, construction hours, truck traffic, and staging equipment. The contractor is required to monitor the "tributary levels in the lake during the cleanup process, and they will be required to comply with environmental and community standards.

7. What role does the HOA or Lake Tahoma stockholders have during this project?

*Lake Tahoma is serving as a liaison between the state and county, the contractor Crowder Gulf, and the Stockholders, ensuring community concerns are communicated and addressed. Mark Ayers, the current President, will serve as the primary point of contact for communication. *If you have any questions or concerns, please do not go to workers on site. Send an email to mwayers@outlook.com.**

8. Is this project costing the community anything?

No, this project is being run through a State program called "SMART," which in turn is reimbursed by the Federal Government. The estimated cost is approximately \$70 million.

9. How will updates and progress reports be shared with stockholders?

*We plan to report monthly to the Stockholders on progress and concerns. As with any project, questions should be directed to Mark Ayers, who will then forward them to the appropriate point person within the State, County, or Crowder Gulf contractor. *In addition, we are installing a live "webcam" that will be added to our Lake Tahoma website to view ongoing cleanup activities. More information to follow on that project.**

10. Who will be involved in the communication process and make decisions on this project?

Your current Board will be the final decision-maker on items brought to the Lake Tahoma Community. Nate Harrison will continue to lead the contact with McDowell Emergency Management, and Board President Mark Ayers will remain the primary point of contact for this recovery effort. We will also seek guidance from others as required. Stockholders, such as Knox Tate, have agreed to assist us in this effort.

New Questions:

1) When will digging begin?

Expect it to begin next week, the first few weeks will be clearing Big Buck Creek to allow access to the entire lake.

2) How will the actual cleanup process work?

It's our understanding that there will be two cranes onsite, one in the lake, the other on the pad by Big Buck Creek. The timber, vegetation, construction items, and other miscellaneous items will be unloaded right next to the bridge and taken back to the area north of the work shed waiting to dry and then to be grounded into mulch. The sand, soil and snared will be placed directly on to truck to be sent to the final collection area which is approximately 12 miles from Lake Tahoma on land owned by Duke Energy.

3) Will any of the roads be closed or restricted during the cleanup?

Nothing is planned currently, and the contractor is very aware of the issue. They plan on having approximately 20-25 trucks in rotation to allow continuous work on the project and maximize their equipment. Expect some delays and additional traffic on Rt. 80. We will work with the state, Crowder Gulf, and our Caretaker to minimize the disruption, but please realize it's a work in progress!

4) Are the pits being used?

Maybe. The contractor has installed a road up to the bigger of the two pits as a contingency plan in the event the material coming out of the lake is so saturated that it needs to dry before taking it off-site to the final collection area. The smaller of the two pits will be used for debris, including logs, construction material, vegetation, and miscellaneous items that need sorted. Subject to getting a final permit (which the application has been submitted and is awaiting final approval) Crowder Gulf's subcontractor will grind the timber and vegetation on site and then remove it to the final collection area. We've been assured that the pits will be left in the same or better condition they were in prior to Crowder Gulf starting their work.

5) What about fishing? Will they take all the debris out, or are they planning to leave some in for fish habitat?

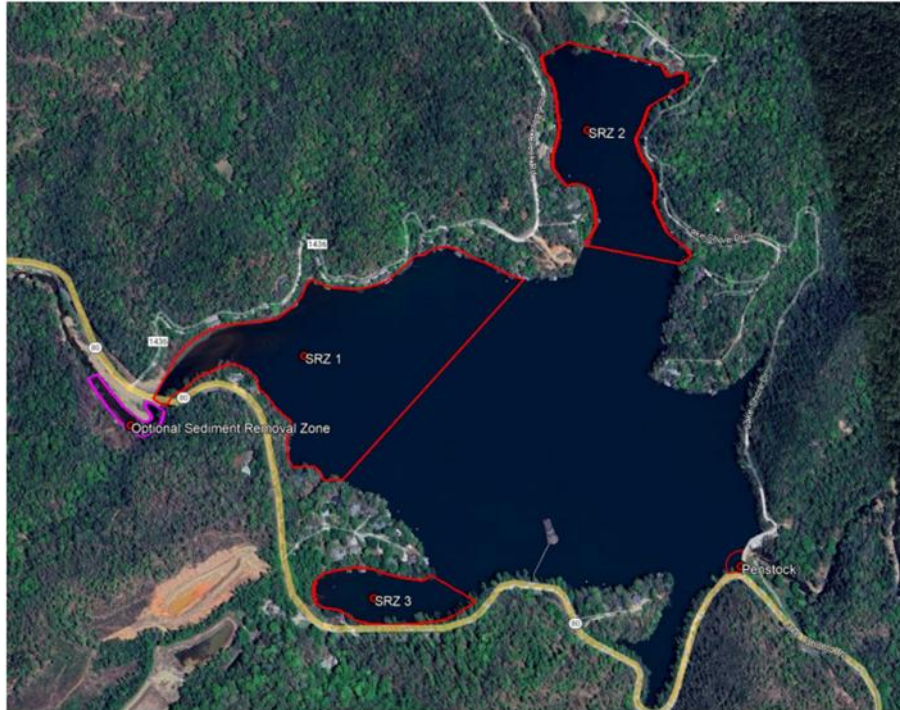
The plan is to leave 4-5 areas of fallen timber in the lake to allow for fish habitat. This will be coordinated with the contractor and subject to the approval of the Fish and Game Committee. However, please understand we want to get as much debris out as possible.

6) Are we waiting for any additional approvals?

Yes, we are waiting on final approval from the State and FEMA for the Big Buck area (highlighted in pink on the attached drawing) approval. Yesterday, October 14th, the State and McDowell County Emergency Management folks were onsite to view Big Buck Creek and now have submitted the application to remove 12 feet of sediment. This amendment to the project has not yet been approved, but the indication was that we would also see

that area cleaned up. Again, we are also waiting on the permit to grind the material onsite as mentioned above.

Attachment "A"
Proposed Sediment Removal Zones "SRZ"



Tribidity curtain installed around the penstock

Friday, October 10th





Cane being delivered

October 15, 2025



Crane Pad



Timber/Debris Removal Site