

# ***Quarterly News Letter*** ***Spring 2009***



It is hard to believe that Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management has been in business for two years on March 1<sup>st</sup>. I do not miss State Government, but I have missed the wonderful people I was privileged to work with over the years. I want to thank all our clients for taking a chance with us, suppliers for helping us and providing advice, and my friends for their support and encouragement that has helped build this dream of mine into something that looks like will stand for a while, even during rough economic times.

Now that hunting season is over it is time to do some things for the aquatic and terrestrial critters before fishing and turkey seasons start.

## ***Aquatics***

Early spring is the best time to install things like fountains, aeration systems, fish feeders and docks. This quarter I will be discussing fountains and aeration.

Making the decision whether or not to install a fountain or aeration system can be difficult with all the manufacturers and advertising campaigns. Many of the systems out there have not had much scientific backing, and honestly do not perform as us managers or the landowners would like. Generally the fountain has more aesthetic value, where an aeration system has more value towards improving water quality and reducing certain types of algae. In some instances both are done to add aesthetics and greatly improve water quality.

A fountain does some aeration, but a bottom aeration system both de-stratifies the lake and adds oxygen to the water. There are both onshore and traditional floating fountains. Traditional is where the fountain head, pump and intake are suspended in the lake, with only an electrical cord running to shore. These are not recommended for waterbodies where swimmers may frequent or a timer needs to be installed and off when people may be in the water. The onshore fountain only has water pipes and hoses going into the lake, with the electricity, motor and control valves up on shore. This type of system draws water off the lake bottom (not enough to de-stratify), pulls to shore and sends back to the fountain head. These systems are easier to maintain and adjust the spray height. With fountains there are numerous nozzle types and lighting packages that can be added for additional "Ooohs & AAHs"

A surface aerator will only add oxygen to the water, it will not de-stratify a waterbody. Surface aerators are used on shallow lakes where de-stratifying is not necessary. In some instances where a lake may have a deep hole or two, but also has considerable shallow areas, both surface and bottom aeration may be prescribed. A deeper lake during summer and winter becomes stratified, like a cake, with high oxygenated water near the surface and low or oxygen free water near the bottom. The depth at which the drastic change from good to poor water occurs is called the thermo cline. In better lakes this line is much deeper than in poor water quality lakes. By de-stratifying the water column, this allows the fish to use the entire water column and not just the top few or several feet (depending on lake depth). In the

summer it also slightly reduces the over-all water temperature and in the winter slightly raises the water temperature by bringing warmer water from the bottom to the surface. In my opinion, there are currently no good solar or wind driven aeration systems on the market. These products do not deliver the oxygen when it is needed the most – the last few hours of darkness and just after dawn.

It is best to have a professional fit your lake with an aeration system or fountain to make sure you get what is required and to meet your expectations. Even with aeration, a fish kill can occur if the situation is right and/or the system is not properly sized. However, aeration greatly reduces the chance of a low Dissolved Oxygen (DO) fish kill. We recommend only Great Lakes Superior Aeration Systems and Desert Rain Fountains. Both brands are high quality and have been extensively tested to do what is claimed.

## ***Uplands***

The following are excerpts from Dave Edwards, Manager, [Westervelt Wildlife Services](#) March/April Management Calendar:

Throughout most of the southeast, April and May are the desired planting dates for many summer crops such as millets, sorghum, peas, corn, soybeans, etc. Because many of the seed producing grass type crops that benefit birds are summer crops, wingshooters devote a lot of energy and effort into planting during this time of year. Deer hunters are well aware of fall food plots because they are so attractive to deer during hunting season, which helps hunters see deer, but often overlook the benefits of summer crops for deer. If you are not fortunate enough to have commercial agriculture on your property or nearby, planting summer crops will benefit your deer herd if adequate acreage is planted. Many biological processes such as fawning, milk production, and antler development are taking place. Most summer plantings for deer are very nutritious and high in much needed protein. Commonly planted summer crops for deer include many varieties of peas, soybeans, corn, lab lab, vetch, and clovers. Regardless of whether you are planting for birds or deer, a successful planting starts with testing the soil and applying required fertilizers and lime to ensure good soil quality. Create a clean, smooth seed bed and plant under favorable conditions. Favorable conditions mean adequate soil moisture and a good chance of rain after planting takes place.

If you included fall annual clovers such as crimson, arrowleaf or other red clovers in your fall food plots, you will notice a strong burst of growth during spring. These clovers will provide excellent wildlife value through early summer. Deer, turkeys, and other wildlife will eat the nutritious foliage of these clovers until the clovers die in early summer. Another benefit of annual clovers is that insects are attracted to the flowers produced as the clover produces seed. Insects are an important source of protein for turkey poults and quail chicks. If properly managed, these clovers will produce seed that will germinate next fall and produce another good stand of clover. To ensure this happens, do NOT mow your food plots before the clover produces seed. We generally leave these fields alone and let them go fallow through late summer. After the clovers die, many weeds will begin to take their place. On many properties, these weeds provide some wildlife value. The next management we apply is early fall when we mow the plots as low as possible, allow the existing weeds a week or so to start growing again, then apply a glyphosate herbicide to prepare the ground for fall. When fall planting time arrives, apply needed fertilizer, lightly disk, then broadcast or drill cereal grains such as winter wheat and/or oats. So, if you want to regenerate annual clovers and

take advantage of the free seed produced by the crop you planted last fall, do not mow your food plots before the clover seeds out.

### **Upcoming 2009 Events of Interest**

- Quail Unlimited National Sporting Clays, March 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, Sylvania, Georgia
- Ducks Unlimited National Convention, May 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Denver, Colorado.
- Forest Landowner Association National Convention, May 27 - 29<sup>th</sup>, Fernandina Beach, Florida

I hope you find these News Letters informative and your feedback is always welcome for suggested topics and upcoming events that readers may be interested in attending. Anyone with fish or game pictures please submit to me and we can include them in the Quarterly News Letter and/or add them to the “Photos” page of the company web site. All previous Quarterly News Letters and links of interest are at: [southernsportsmanaquaticsandland.com](http://southernsportsmanaquaticsandland.com) if you would like to observe past editions or forward them to a friend. If you wish to be removed from this mailing list please E-Mail me and you will not receive these in the future.

If you are pleased with the services and products you receive from Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management, please tell your friends and associates about us. The best compliment you can give us is a referral! We are looking for additional clients from Texas to Florida. Also, if you are inclined to write a short paragraph to be published on the “Testimonials” page of our web site, please do, as we are in the process of updating it and would like to have more of those now that we are heading into our third year of business.

I will be in Florida, Georgia and Alabama working over the next several weeks. I will be making site visits in Texas and Louisiana the last two weeks of April. There is water chemistry to be monitored, plants to plant, aeration systems to install and landowners to meet and plan with. I have already contacted most of you to set up site visits and meetings. If you want me to order or bring fertilizer, feeders (parts), aeration (parts), etc. please contact me ASAP so I can make all the necessary arrangements.

***Thank you for your support!***

***Scott G. Brown***