Student Scientists Active on Lake Lanier

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Planned for the New Home of the Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center

August 8, 2018 (Gainesville, Ga.) – Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Elachee Nature Science Center and Hall County Parks and Leisure Services will host a ribbon cutting ceremony at 10 a.m., August 21, 2018, for the newly built Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center (LLALC) boathouse and two-slip dock at River Forks Park.

After brief remarks from the host organizations’ representatives, a limited number of invited dignitaries and guests will have the opportunity to participate in a LLALC program aboard the Chota Princess II floating classroom. This signature aquatic studies program will take place alongside fourth grade students from Myers Elementary from 10:30-11:30 a.m., followed by an onshore environmental education program.

“We are very excited to have moved into the new home of the Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center,” comments Jason Ulseth, Riverkeeper for Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. “River Forks Park is the perfect place to host this wonderful program and thanks to the recent construction of the new boathouse, we have everything we need to host over 5,000 kids each year.”

In March 2018, River Forks Park in Hall County officially became the new home for the 18-year LLALC program. Most recently, the program operated for 15 years out of Aqualand Marina in Flowery Branch. The LLALC program serves K-12 schools throughout north Georgia, college and universities, church and civic organizations and its operational costs are funded in part by charitable donations.

“The Lake Lanier Aquatic Studies Program has been a successful collaboration between Elachee Nature Science Center and Chattahoochee Riverkeeper for 18 years and has hosted more than 50,000 students during that time,” explains Andrea Timpone, CEO/President at Elachee. “This move to River Forks Park adds Hall County Parks and Leisure Services to this educational endeavor and gives this important program an excellent home base. We look forward to expanding these educational opportunities made possible by this unique cooperative effort.”

From early spring through late fall each year, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper’s catamaran, the Chota Princess II floating classroom, carries students from around the north Georgia region on aquatic study adventures. During peak school field trip times, each weekday as many as 90 K-12 school children climb aboard as student scientists. Elachee instructors guide them in collecting lake sediments, sample plankton, measure turbidity, and determine pH and dissolved oxygen levels. Then on shore, they engage students in environmental management activities related to the watershed.

Elachee’s Director of Education Peter Gordon has been involved since the program’s inception and feels River Forks Park is the ideal setting for the LLALC because of its beauty, convenient location, and its friendly and hospitable staff. “Thanks to Hall County Parks and Leisure for its support of this important program,” Gordon comments. “With the construction of the new dock and boathouse, courtesy of our great friends at Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, the program’s facilities are second to none.”

“At Hall County Parks, we believe the education of young people, to preserve and protect our wildlife and our natural resources, is paramount,” says Mike Little, Director, Hall County Parks and Leisure. “It has been a natural fit because our values and philosophies regarding environmental conservation and
education line up together so well. Our partnership is a prime example of three agencies working well together for the greater good of our community. Hall County Parks and Leisure is honored to be a part of that collaboration.”

To learn more about the Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center at River Forks Park, visit Riverkeeper’s web site, www.chattahoochee.org. To schedule a LLALC program, contact Elachee at 770-535-1976, or visit www.elachee.org/school-programs or email elachee@elachee.org.