

# THE NEWS VIRGINIAN

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WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

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## ENVIRONMENT

## CARPE DIEM



JEFF REID, FRANKLIN NEWS-POST

Tennessee angler Nick Hatfield lands a fish in May during the Championship Round of the B&amp;W Trailer Hitches Heavy Hitters All-Star Tournament at Smith Mountain Lake.

### The future of fishing at Smith Mountain Lake could hinge on this decision

**JASON DUNOVANT**  
Roanoke Times

The Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission will make a decision next month that could have far-reaching ramifications on the future of recreational fishing at Smith Mountain Lake.

Plans are underway to stock as many as 1,300 sterile grass carp into Smith Mountain Lake this spring. The goal is for the carp to devour the fast-spreading invasive hydrilla spreading in several areas of the lake.

The aquatic weed started appearing last year in areas of the Blackwater River arm of the lake. The largest amounts are in the lake's Bull Run and Little Bull Run sections, where hydrilla grew to several acres over the summer, making recreation such as boating or even swimming difficult for people living on the shore.

"We couldn't swim at our dock at all late last summer," said Marshall Prillaman, a lakefront property owner who lives on Little Bull Run. "And you can't run a boat through it."

Prillaman, like many lakefront property owners where the hydrilla growth is worst, want to see TLAC stock sterile grass carp to eat up the plants — their favorite food source.

There's just one problem: sterile grass carp have been introduced into Smith Mountain Lake before, and it didn't go perfectly.

In 2013, TLAC stocked 6,000 sterile grass carp into the lake. The carp ate all the hydrilla but then quickly moved on to devour every other piece of aquatic vegetation.

Aquatic plants can be a useful tool in fishing. Fish such as bass, which are popular at Smith Mountain Lake, often use vegetation as cover. Anglers know that an underwater patch can often be the best place to reel in a fish.

Local anglers know hydrilla is back, and they see it as a win for recreational fishing that could make the lake even more popular as a fishing destination.

Anglers are pushing TLAC to hold off on any decisions to stock more carp.

Many of them question if the move is necessary, fearing it could remove all aquatic vegetation in the lake for another decade.

"It's in a small area right now," said Chad Gilmore, president of the Smith Mountain Striper Club. "Why would we put in grass carp that are gonna go anywhere and everywhere? They are going to eat not only the hydrilla, but all the other vegetation."

#### What happened last time?

Sterile grass carp were first stocked at SML in 2013 after years of TLAC trying unsuccessfully to stop hydrilla from spreading. The weed was first discovered in the lake in 2007 — just the latest body of water at the time to be infected after hydrilla began spreading through the U.S. in the 1950s.

Hydrilla, originating in Asia, is believed to have first been dumped from an aquarium into waterways in Florida.

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## INDIE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

## Indie Short Film Festival returns

With rock 'n' roll, brunch and movie magic

**JANE DUNLAP SATHE**  
The Daily Progress

A hometown festival that celebrates small but mighty cinema is ready to bring more than 100 original films to downtown Charlottesville.

Documentaries, dramas, animation, music videos, international fare and other genres are expected in this year's Indie Short Film Festival, which is set for Friday

through Sunday. The schedule includes 16 different blocks of short films, plus panel discussions, a cinematography workshop and the popular Sunday brunch awards ceremony at the Bradbury.

In all, film buffs can look for 131 films from more than a dozen countries and 27 different events to attend. That number is up from last year's 114 films, and from about 75 in the festival's inaugural outing.

The variety and diversity of the offerings keep Charlottesville film fans and

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INDIE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Charlottesville's Indie Short Film Festival offers film enthusiasts, creatives and industry professionals more than 100 international and domestic short films, panel discussions with filmmakers, a cinematography workshop and community-driven events that celebrate the spirit of independent storytelling.