

# TRASH TO TREASURE

BY Telena Moore



Lorena, Amanda & Telena

Growing up very poor with an extremely frugal mother (Hallie Moore) utilizing whatever she could to meet our needs, we learned how to make treasures from trash (e.g., Halloween costumes, school projects, Christmas, etc.).

The oldest sibling (Telena Moore) was able to purchase a small cabin on Boone Lake. The lake looked fine from the pontoon boat but once we started kayaking, we were devastated by all the trash along the shoreline. Additionally, fishing lines covered the shores like spider webs. After finding a few animals that had fallen victim to these fishing lines (birds and turtles), we (Telena, Amanda Moore, Lorena Bennett) started carrying knives to clear any fishing lines we could reach. This made us even more aware of the extent of the underlying shoreline trash such as plastic bottles/containers (most numerous in our removal list), toys (for both humans and dogs), old dock floats (breaking up into countless impossible to remove smaller pieces), tires, lighters, blasting containers residuals (fireworks, shotgun shells, etc.), biohazards (needles, tampon applicators), and countless miscellaneous junk including bowling balls (seriously, they do float). Next thing we knew, we were collecting large bags of trash (THANKS for the bags Ms Eva with City of Johnson City!). With our mother's historic influence, we began segregating items from the trash that we thought would make fun and unique art. We started making mobiles, table toppers, trashmas trees, and murals/abstract pieces with the only non-trash parts of the assembly being a few screws and/or calk to hold items



in place (we even use old fishing line to secure parts when practical). We wanted to make people aware of the fact that trash thrown into the lake doesn't disappear, so we joined the Boone Lake cleanup in 2013 and brought one of our Trashmas Trees created in 2012 along with a poem in hopes we would influence people to recognize trash thrown into the lake often accumulates into large piles of comingled floating debris. It was to our pleasure to learn that this Trashmas Tree was adopted by a lake lot owner for display on their dock last summer and ultimately made it into the 2013 Christmas Parade, where we were told it won 3rd place! We continue to make trash art which includes a mural started for the 2015 Boone Lake cleanup (if you like I Spy™, you will probably enjoy this piece) and an approximately 9 foot tall Trashy the Trashman (sung to tune Frosty the Snowman™, but with two eyes made out of skoal) that we hope may be used in this year's Christmas parade.



We did not count how many bags of trash we removed the first year but we collected over 97 bags last year and to date this year, we are up to 54 bags. After the first year, we could not really see much difference, which was depressing, but after last year and this year's cleanup, we can finally travel around Deerlick Island (the TVA stretch closest to cabin) and can finally enjoy the shorelines beauty with minimal trash. We could not do it alone and Boone Lake Association employee Keith is to be thanked for this huge decrease in trash in our immediate living areas (Thanks Keith for all your hard work!). We have tried to ensure we have kayaked every shoreline of Boone Lake and take the kayaks to various areas throughout the year. We sometimes park at the marinas and most are willing to take the trash we collect for disposal at their premises so we do not have to carry it back with us. As for favorite locations,



we love the boat pullover spots that TVA provides along their shorelines, where we often carry the kayaks to by using the pontoon boat anchored to these TVA provided spots. Plus the TVA spots have trash cans to support our cleanup efforts. We find most of the inlets are fairly clean which I think might be in part to the residents within such areas picking up along their shorelines. We also enjoy the headwaters of Boone (both Holston and the Watauga) but were heartbroken yet again this year when we realized that the headwaters continue to accumulate massive quantities of trash, and knowing these floating blobs of debris will flush down with the next big flood to the areas we have worked so hard to clear. I think over time we are starting to realize that many folks who boat the lake are usually a little more courteous with how they handle their trash but after seeing the headwaters with sooo much debris, it appears that efforts are also needed to help educate those that utilize the headwaters into understanding the harm they pose to the environment when discarding trash into the waters just to watch it float away... its not gone and unless picked up by volunteers, will continue to litter the shorelines well past their grandchildren's adult lives. Not sure how to tackle this action but it's on the back of our brains seeking the right opportunity. Maybe starting with trash art or catchy posters in local county fairs? Schools? Postings to trees at common fishing spots? Sport events? TWRA fines? Our ultimate goal is to run out of lake trash for our trash art... but changing mindsets often takes more than one generation. We will continue to work it as long as we can and appreciate others like the Boone Lake Association who thankfully have similar goals. Thanks for your interest and support in helping to make Boone Lake become a safe haven for animals and a visual pleasure for mankind.

