

Leftover Funds Help Clean Jack Lakes Area

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This series of photos provided by Borough Code Enforcement Officer Jack Maker shows before, during, and after stages of the Jack and Lee Lakes recreation area clean up. "As you can see, it's a massive improvement," Maker said. "Items that had been abandoned there for years have been removed."

Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Anyone who's been to Jack and Lee Lakes in Bells Flats recently might have noticed an aesthetic improvement in the area. The popular recreational area is owned by the borough, and Code Enforcement Officer Jack Maker said it has long been a dumping ground for abandoned vehicles and other miscellaneous materials. He said community comments and input from the parks and rec committee led to the recent clean up of the area.

"As well as the fact that we were at the end of our fiscal year and we had some funds left in our borough property clean up fund. So we wanted to make use of that and clean up areas that the public utilized recreationally."

The borough contracted with Nick Troxell of Nick's Auto Wrecking to clean up the large items.

"We had two burnout car frames and bodies. We had two burnt complete vehicles. We had a whole bunch of scrap metal. Shot up items, barrels, we had a Toyota truck bed, a

canopy, three engine blocks, a freezer, tires and just a whole bunch of other miscellaneous junk that had been abandoned back in the area. I mean it was to the point where the Womens Bay Fire Department actually responded to a vehicle fire on one of the vehicles, and they did that three times. So it was time to get that junk out of there and actually make the area more appealable for a multitude of recreational users. Because the area is borough property, it's public property. It just had tons of uses and it really is a beautiful area so I think cleaning it up was the right thing to do.

Maker said there has been discussion about whether or not to place boulders at the entrance to the area to prohibit large vehicle passage.

"That was discussed and we are considering putting a couple large boulders on the entrance to that unimproved roadway at the end of Sargent Creek Road in an attempt to keep full-sized vehicles out. And that's not a given right now, we have received some feedback from concerned citizens because elderly and some of the other users that might bring kayaks back in the area might not be able to access that area. So that's something we'll take into account. And if we get enough feedback to not do that we'll probably bring it to our parks and rec committee for a discussion item on a future meeting."

He said access would still be allowed for ATV's, motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrian traffic. In general, the goal is to make it more difficult to abandon junk back there.

Judi Kidder is organizing a community clean up in the area on July 13. She said the borough got the big stuff out of the way and now trash and smaller items that still litter the trails need to be cleared out.

Maker said he hopes the clean up will encourage more public use, but asks that people keep an eye out for abandoned junk and folks misusing the area.