

# Grim White Lake Picture Is Painted

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ELIZABETHTOWN — More than 150 White Lake property owners and residents painted a grim picture Wednesday for state water officials of choking pollution and dwindling water levels at Bladen County's 1,000-acre resort lake.

For nearly three hours Wednesday residents took the podium in the Bladen County Courthouse to tell of pockets of pollution creating a foul odor and killing fish along what were once white, sandy beaches.

Of repeated fears of falling water levels at the lake were voiced anew Wednesday, but state water officials told the crowd that this winter — the driest cold weather season in North Carolina since 1965 — has probably caused the low water level.

A group of six state officials from the state's Water Resources Division and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission came to White Lake

early Wednesday for a tour of potential drainage spots around the lake.

About 75 property owners toured the lake with the state officials in a 25-car caravan that crisscrossed White Lake to examine culverts and other questionable drainage locations.

"Our conclusion, based on what we know now," said Carl Bailey, a state hydrologist, "is that there is no evidence of lake water moving out of culverts and drains around the lake."

Bailey said the lake level, which now is one foot below the monthly average for February, has fallen because of high evaporation rates during the summer and the lack of rainfall during the winter.

The lake's fabled springs — the source of clear water that gave the lake its name — are apparently providing less of the lake's water than they have in the past, Bailey said.

Reports from state officials, however, indicate (See GRIM PICTURE, Page 2A)



STATE HYDROLOGIST CARL BAILEY ADDRESSES CROWD AT WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEETING IN THE BLADEN COUNTY COURTHOUSE.

## White Lake Concerns Expressed

(Continued From Page One)

that the pollution has always been visible in various areas at the lake.

Not only were numbers of boats, but also kinds of boats, argued about during the three hour meeting. Some, led by Lumberton resident and White Lake property owner John Sharpe III, believe the high-powered inboards do more damage to the lake than the lower horse power outboards. Others disagreed with what Sharpe admitted was merely a theory. Inboards do no more damage than outboards, they contended.

The end result of the meeting was that the state officials promised to "digest" all the materials they had been presented, and attempt to make recommendations to proper agencies regarding not only lake water levels, but boating numbers and kinds, and water quality.

Two things above all others were obvious at the Wednesday night session: there is concern for the body of water known as White Lake, and there will be disagreements about how to best eliminate those concerns.