

For Immediate Release
March 26, 2009

SILLOAM SPRINGS—City Lake’s makeover is going under the surface. While other construction continues, the bottom of the lake is being dredged. The dredging began March 20 and should be completed in about a month.

Water/Wastewater Director Trevor Bowman said that the last time the lake was dredged was in the early 1970s.

“Since the lake was going to be down anyway, we do not have to lower the level of the lake to dredge,” Bowman said. The lake was drained for the improvements being made to the dam, spillway and pump station.

Bowman said a study by environmental consultants GBMc & Associates, which was completed in March 2006, indicated the lake, while not entirely eutrophic, and was tending toward a eutrophic state.

Eutrophism occurs when certain nutrients in the water become excessive, causing excessive growth of algae and other nuisance plant life. These plants reduce the oxygen in the water as they die and decay, sometimes making it difficult for other forms of life to be sustained.

“Even though it wasn’t entirely eutrophic yet, it was moving in that direction, and taking out the sediment should help reverse that trend,” Bowman said. “It should make a healthier lake, from an aquatic life standpoint.”

A temporary road has been constructed along the lake bed, allowing access to the silt. From its position along the temporary road, a trackhoe scoops the silt from the lake bottom and deposits it into a waiting dump truck. The truck then drives the silt to an adjacent City property, where it is spread out to dry.

The silt along the lake bottom has been staked and each stake is marked with a color-coded ribbon, which tells the dredging crew the depth of the silt to be removed in each location. GBMc probed the silt for depth and placed the stakes so that the right amount could be removed.

“We only want to take out stuff that’s built up over time,” Bowman said. “We don’t want to take out the natural bottom of soil because then we could expose a rocky layer. In this area rock tends to be fractured. Exposing rock fractures would cause the lake to leak, so it’s very important not to over-excavate.”

Sweetser Construction is performing the dredging, as part of a \$209,560 change order made to the original lake improvements contract.