

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
United States Senate
SR-416
Washington, D.C. 20510-1005

Dear Senator Chambliss:

I am writing you in regards to an issue that is of great concern to me. As you are aware, the United States Army Corps of Engineers owns and operates Lake Sydney Lanier in North Georgia. Lake Lanier was built in the 1940's to provide a source of water, hydro electric power and recreation for all of North Georgia. For the last 50 years, the Corps of Engineers has done an excellent job managing Lake Lanier and its shoreline for the use of the general public, whose tax dollars paid for the construction and maintenance of Lake Lanier. Due to the proximity of Lake Lanier to Atlanta and due to the recent population boom in North Georgia, Lake Lanier is the most visited Corps operated lake in the United States with over 7.5 million visitors annually.

However, in times of tight budgets and ongoing commitments in Iraq and in Louisiana, the Corps of Engineers has been forced to indefinitely close a number of Corps' owned parks to public use. Recently, it has come to the attention of the community that the YMCA of Greater Atlanta is seeking to lease and permanently closed Bethel Park to the general public. Currently, Bethel Park is a 70 acre wooded day use park owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Forsyth County and it remains one of the few fee-free Corps' owned parks on Lake Lanier. Bethel Park is a popular destination of over 21,528 visitors from all across Georgia who utilize its boat ramp, boat dock, restroom facilities, hiking trails and picnic areas 365 days a year.

I'm writing you for your support in saving Bethel Park so that all your constituents can continue to enjoy Bethel Park. As I stated above, Bethel Park was built with our tax dollars and should remain open for all to enjoy. Please contact the Corps of Engineers and express your opposition for the YMCA's plans to privatize Bethel Park. Additionally, you can assist the community by supporting the proposed takeover of Bethel Park by Forsyth County, who would operate Bethel Park as a public park open for all to enjoy.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention and support. I look forward in working with you and your staff to save Bethel Park for all to enjoy!

Sincerely,

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