

# Hyco Heaven

by Bob James

Donnie Boone's friends and acquaintances call him the

"Mayor of Hyco Lake." He and his wife have commuted 45 minutes, five days a week for 15 years from the lake to their jobs in Burlington. Boone says, "It's really not that far and worth it to live on the lake." Hyco Lake, about 15 minutes from Roxboro, N.C. and covering parts of both Person and Caswell counties, is not only a great place to live but is also a great place to visit. With the rural setting it seems like you are miles away from civilization.

The lake was a well-kept secret until the late 1980's, when it grew much more popular. Today, it has become a wonderful place for Alamance County residents to consider vacationing this year. Even with the price of gas down this summer, the state of the economy makes travel locations closer to home much more desirable. Whether searching for an overnight trip, a weekend get-a-way, or a spot for a full week away from home, Hyco Lake is a relaxing and exciting destination not too far from home.

The word Hyco comes from the Indian word Hicotaminy, which means 'great turkey buzzard.' Not only were the turkey buzzards living around the lake many years ago, but they are still seen daily. The lake, which covers 3,750 acres and has 120 miles of shore line, was constructed in the early '60s by Carolina Power and Light Company, now Progress Energy, as a cooling reservoir for their steam electric generating plant. The stacks of operating power plant tower above the water and can be seen from most locations on the lake.

Since the lake was built it has been under the jurisdiction of the Person-Caswell Lake Authority to govern and develop its full recreation potential. Lake authority officers are busy patrolling the lake and watching out for boaters, fishermen, jet skiers, wake boarders, skiers, swimmers, campers and day time visitors to the recreation park. The fishing is great and the water is the smoothest around for various water sports.

Kirk West of West and Woodall Real Estate says, "There are about 1,500 houses on Hyco Lake with about 600 being full-time residences. Tax records reveal that about 40% of property owners on the lake are from Alamance County." West relates that there are several rental properties available for overnight visitors to Hyco. They have rental listing on their website: [www.westandwoodall.com](http://www.westandwoodall.com). More listings can also be found at real estate agent Brian Brenner's website: [www.hycolakerental.com](http://www.hycolakerental.com). Brenner reveals that most of his renters are from Alamance County.

For the more rugged outdoors type, the lake authority maintains a 65-acre recreation park located off Kelly Brewer Road. It includes boat ramps with boardwalks and piers, a public swimming area with numerous docks, and 60 camp sites located on a n access road with natural buffer on three sides. Each camp site has a charcoal grill, water and electricity, and a clean centralized bath house with showers and flush toilets. Playgrounds, tennis courts and vending machines are also close by.

Many visitors use the various picnic tables and charcoal grills along the shoreline at the park while four large covered shelters with grills are available by reservation with the lake warden. For nature lovers, there is a nice walking trail with an observation deck in the park.

A new community house has also been added and includes a kitchen, baths, decks and air conditioning. This facility makes an excellent location for meetings and social functions while lake-front day cabins are also available for rent at the public access area for a quieter time at the lake.

The Marina, within walking distance of the campground, offers food items, fishing supplies and gasoline for visitors, while a sit down restaurant is even open in season.

Fisherman find Hyco Lake to be a great vacation and recreation destination as well. The warm water discharge from the power plant assures fishing opportunities and tournaments all year long. Bass, crappie and catfish are plentiful, but do not forget your fishing permit because N.C. Wildlife officers do patrol the lake.

While there are obviously plenty of activities on the lake to keep vacationers busy, Hyco is best known for its water sports. Whether cruising around the lake on a pontoon boat or blasting through the waves on a ski boat or jet ski, the clean unpolluted waters of Hyco are a great location for enjoying the outdoors. Skiing, wake boarding, tubing and knee boarding are just some of the activities enjoyed by lake visitors. A ski course is located on the north east end of the lake.

Hyco Lake Boats 'N Boards, located beside the Marina, has a ski boat and various water toys for rent and can be reached by phone at (336) 598-4926 or by visiting the website at [www.boatsnboards.com](http://www.boatsnboards.com).

If relaxation is the goal, the serene environment of this beautiful lake will not disappoint. Riding around the lake and enjoying the many beautiful homes or finding a quiet cove to park in and maybe take a dip or have a picnic on the water are popular ways to relax. Wild turkeys and deer are abundant and many beavers, geese and ducks call the lake home.

Whether looking for action, fun, or relaxation, one can find it all less than an hour from Alamance County. When planning a getaway this spring, summer, or fall, do not forget Hyco Lake. More information is available on the lake website at [www.hycolake.com](http://www.hycolake.com) or you can reach the Lake Warden's office at (336) 599-4343.

*(Bob James is a retired physician living in southern Alamance County.)*

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