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Walmart Open Not Coming Back In 2010

Beaver Lake Excluded As Tournament Site

LAST UPDATED MONDAY, JULY 13, 2009 10:01 PM CDT IN NEWS

 By [John Henley Jr.](#)
 THE MORNING NEWS

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ROGERS — The FLW Walmart Open will not be returning to Northwest Arkansas in 2010.

The schedule for the 2010 Walmart FLW Tour was released Friday and Beaver Lake was not listed as a tournament site. Beaver Lake has been the host site of the FLW Walmart Open since 1998.

A tournament at Lake Ouachita in Hot Springs is scheduled for May 27-30, according to the 2010 schedule. The Beaver Lake Tournament was May 14-17 this year.

The news was relayed to Mayor Steve Womack when a reporter called asking what he thought of Beaver Lake being excluded from the schedule.

Jeff McCoy, director of public relations for the FLW, said he did not know why FLW officials did not contact Womack or other local officials before the schedule was announced.

Womack later spoke with Charlie Evans, president and chief executive officer of FLW.

The tournament in Hot Springs will coincide with a BFL All American tournament at Lake DeGray during the same weekend, according to a letter Evans sent Womack on Monday. The events will share the Hot Springs Convention Center and Summit Arena.

BFL All American tournaments are part of the FLW series.

"It's a trial to see how successful two events can be together," McCoy said.

There is no Walmart Open currently on the 2010 schedule. McCoy said none of the Open tournaments have been assigned because FLW staff has not had a chance to speak with sponsors yet.

McCoy said he did not know if Wal-Mart officials were informed of the decision to exclude Beaver Lake as a tournament site.

A request for a reaction from Wal-Mart officials was not received by 7 p.m. Monday.

Womack said it was his understanding, from the phone conversation with Evans, that the FLW will see a six-figure savings by hosting the events in Hot Springs simultaneously.

"We regret the Walmart Open is not going to be in Rogers in 2010," Womack said. "However, I understand the FLW's need to capture an economy of scale."

Tom Galyon was also disappointed Beaver Lake was left off the schedule.

Galyon is the executive director of the Rogers Convention and Visitors Bureau. Galyon was informed of the news by Womack.

"It's disappointing because it was good business for Rogers and Northwest Arkansas," Galyon said.

The visitors bureau gives about \$20,000 annually in sponsorship money to the FLW, Galyon said. The money comes from Rogers' 2 percent hotel tax.

The economic impact of the 2008 FLW Walmart Open was about \$2 million, according to an impact study prepared by the Center For Business and Economic Research in the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas.

The study was prepared by the Center for the Rogers Arkansas Convention and Visitors Bureau.



More than \$98,000 was spent on hotels and the FLW spent more than \$180,000 locally during the 2008 tournament, according to the study.

Evans stated in his letter to Womack that the FLW, "will return to Rogers down the road." McCoy agreed, although he could not say when that might be.

Galyon said he is working to schedule other events in Northwest Arkansas during May.

"There are other people, other organizers of events, who want to come to Northwest Arkansas," Womack said.

AT A GLANCE

2010 Walmart FLW Tour Schedule

Date Fishery Location

Feb. 11-14 Red River Shreveport, La.

March 4-7 Table Rock Lake Branson, Mo.

March 25-28 Lake Norman Charlotte, N.C.

April 15-18 Lake Chickamauga Chattanooga, Tenn.

May 27-30 Lake Ouachita Hot Springs

June 24-27 Lake Guntersville Huntsville, Ala.

Aug. 5-8 Lake Lanier Atlanta, Ga.

Source: Staff Report

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bvilleguy wrote on *Jul 13, 2009 11:22 PM*:

" Forrest L. Wood, founder of Ranger Boats and developer of the Ranger bass-fishing boat. "

geek67 wrote on *Jul 13, 2009 11:33 PM*:

" Hopefully the Rogers Visitor's Bureau will cancel their 20 thousand donation for next year's FLW. "

ozarks wrote on *Jul 14, 2009 2:57 AM*:

" Seems like a slap in the face to Walmart? "

BCR wrote on Jul 14, 2009 8:52 AM:

" Good. Maybe now Wally-world will stop stocking all that FLW junk and start selling good fishing gear. "

racefan wrote on Jul 14, 2009 9:51 AM:

" What not doing this in Wal-Mart's backyard? Vendors that sponser these kind of events need to be aware who butters the bread and sells the products that they are pushing. "

BCR wrote on Jul 14, 2009 11:14 AM:

" To tell the truth, Beaver lake was a good striped bass lake until FLW came along. Now there's no big bass left because they don't stock striped bass BECAUSE the FLW catches large mouth bass... Bid political issue. Now that FLW's gone, maybe Beaver can get back to being the big bass lake it used to be. The area has lost more money year round from lost striper guide business than it ever made on FLW. "

bassfishn74 wrote on Jul 14, 2009 7:14 PM:

" Wal-mart's not involved anymore...FLW's new "big" sponser is Cabela's. Besides the "pros" hate Beaver anyway..they'd rather go where they can catch big bags not 8 an 9 lb bags. "

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