



Spartanburg Water has developed a policy aimed at protecting water quality and quantity by managing withdrawals around Lake Bowen for private irrigation. Spartanburg Water solicited input from interested residents during two community meetings in April 2009 and is providing this Fact Sheet to answer frequently asked questions regarding the policy.

Why is the Lake Bowen Irrigation Plan necessary?

Citizens of the Spartanburg area depend on Lake Bowen for drinking water. Protecting the quality and quantity of this source is critical to ensure that current and future generations have high quality drinking water, as well as opportunities for outdoor recreation and education. That protection begins with the area around the lake – its watershed – and the land use practices that go on there, such as irrigation.

How does irrigation impact water quantity in the lakes that serve as our drinking water supply?

More significantly than you probably imagine. The more than 400 existing irrigation pumps located on Spartanburg Water lakes have the capacity to pump out approximately 13 million gallons of water per day. That's nearly 100 million gallons per week withdrawn from the community's drinking water supply. In growing communities like Spartanburg, preserving water resources is an essential goal. In times when the region is struggling through a drought, this amount of water withdrawal is of particular concern.

What about water quality – how does irrigation impact it?

Residents around the lake obviously have a significant interest in protecting water quality. The homes around Lake Bowen are served by septic tanks, and over-saturation of the soil from irrigation practices can lead to runoff of household and human waste into the lake. This is unhealthy for all those who live around the lake and for recreational users, and is a threat to the entire community's drinking water supply.

Will the Irrigation Plan totally eliminate irrigation withdrawals from the lake?

Not at all; the plan merely aims to better manage withdrawals. Under the plan, property owners adjacent to Lake Bowen who wish to withdraw for irrigation purposes will apply for a permit that allows residential-only irrigation, with a one acre limit on the cumulative total coverage area of all irrigated zones. Spartanburg Water conducted a cost of service study to determine appropriate program fees to administer the irrigation program.

FACT SHEET

Is there a fee for the irrigation permit?

Yes, a fee study was undertaken to determine the amount needed to support the cost of the program. Spartanburg Water relies on user fees, not tax revenue, to operate and provide safe drinking water and sound wastewater treatment services to the Spartanburg community. The fee for new or currently unregistered irrigation systems on the lake involves an initial application fee of \$115, and an annual renewal fee of \$40. Irrigation systems currently registered will be assessed only a \$40 annual renewal fee.



Will irrigation be affected by any future water restrictions?

Yes, whenever Spartanburg Water deems it necessary to declare water restrictions, permitted irrigation systems around the lake will be expected to abide by the water restrictions.

When will the Lake Bowen Irrigation Plan take effect?

January 1, 2010

Are irrigation systems connected to the public water supply affected when water restrictions are declared?

Yes, any future water restrictions would also be in place for public water supply customers throughout Spartanburg County. Residents who irrigate their lawns through metered connections to the public drinking water supply are billed directly for the amount of water they consume, generally making them take care in the amount of water they use because their water bill goes up or down based on usage.