

## **Lake Bowen & Lake Blalock Irrigation System Q&A**

*Q: I live on Lake Blalock (or I live on Lake Bowen); Are the irrigation pump owners at Lake Bowen (or Lake Blalock – depending on where the homeowner lives) having to comply with the same request to implement voluntary conservation measures?*

**A:** Yes. Spartanburg Water has requested in writing that anyone who irrigates from Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock conserve water by using a twice per week watering schedule.

*Q: Is there a web site available that I can utilize to view the stream and lake levels?*

**A:** Yes. Real-time stream and lake level data can be found by searching the USGS website at [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov) . Links to lake levels for Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock, as well as links to the stream flows to the rivers that feed these lakes, can be found on the Spartanburg Water website at [www.spartanburgwater.org](http://www.spartanburgwater.org).

*Q: If I adhere to the two day per week watering schedule will my lawn survive?*

**A:** Turf grasses / lawns typically only require 1 acre inch per week of water to remain healthy. Grass does not need to be watered every day; make sure your lawn really needs it before irrigating. If you can stick a screwdriver into your lawn easily – don't water. Always, stop watering if you notice any signs of water run-off.

*Q: If I see someone that appears to be watering too much or on days not assigned for irrigation, who do I call?*

**A:** If you observe someone that appears to be over-watering or otherwise not following watering guidelines feel free to call one of the Lake Wardens Offices during normal business hours or the Spartanburg Water System Water Resources Department at 578-2764 after hours. The Lake Bowen Office # is 592-2240 and the Lake Blalock Wardens Office # is 578-5442. You may also report concerns to the Spartanburg Water - Watershed Watchdog program by contacting our Lake Wardens directly or visiting our web site and completing the Watershed Watchdog form. The web site for Spartanburg Water can be found at [www.spartanburgwater.org](http://www.spartanburgwater.org).

*Q: I am confused about the watering schedule we are supposed to follow; would you explain the watering schedule?*

**A:** Spartanburg Water is asking that owners of irrigation systems that pump water from either Lake Bowen or Lake Blalock to follow a twice per week watering schedule in support of requested conservation measures. At the current time, the schedule allows irrigation two times per week based on odd or even street addresses. If your street address ends in an even number, we are asking you to water on Thursday and Sunday, and only then if necessary. If your street address or rural route number ends in an odd number, we are asking you to water, only if necessary, on Wednesday and Saturday.

*Q: Why did you pick Wednesday & Saturday or Thursday and Sunday for watering schedules?*

**A:** The two day per week schedule was selected for irrigation pump system owners around the lakes to ensure that it is consistent with watering schedules for irrigation systems that are supplied by public water. In an effort to avoid confusion that could arise

from differing schedules, Spartanburg Water has initiated a conservation measure watering schedule that is consistent with other water providers in our region, including our own service area.

*Q: We have a neighborhood association where I live on the lake. Is there someone available to come out and speak to our group?*

**A:** Yes. For lake associations that are interested in learning about a variety of conservation topics and updates on lake related issues, please contact Ken Tuck at 864-578-2764 to schedule a presentation. You may also contact Wayne Rice at 864-580-5686 to learn about additional educational opportunities that Spartanburg Water offers to the public.

*Q: What can I do to help spread the word and be a good neighbor?*

**A:** Practice the efficient use of water and encourage others to use water efficiently. The following tips are interesting facts about landscape irrigation:

- Thirty percent of water used by the average American household is devoted to outdoor water use, and more than half of that is used for watering lawns and gardens.
- More than 50 percent of residential irrigation water is lost due to evaporation, runoff, over-watering, or improper system design/installation/maintenance.
- Automatic timers might be convenient but can increase water waste. Residences with automatic timers use more water than residences without timers; irrigation systems use 47 percent more, in-ground sprinklers use 35 percent more, garden systems use 30 percent more, and drip irrigation systems use 16 percent more.
- Weather-based irrigation controllers can reduce water use by 20 percent compared to conventional equipment, potentially saving more than 24 billion gallons per year across the United States – approximately equal to more than 7,000 hoses running non-stop for a year.
- The best time to water your yard is early morning, when winds are calm and temperatures are cool.
- Grass doesn't need to be watered every day; make sure your lawn really needs it before irrigating. If you stick a screwdriver into your lawn easily – don't water!
- Using native plants that require less watering and are adapted to your climate can reduce outdoor water use by 20 to 50 percent.

*Q: How long will it take before you can tell if the voluntary conservation measures are working?*

**A:** Spartanburg Water officials track water supply and water usage trends on a daily basis. Spartanburg Water is encouraged that individuals will play an active role in helping us achieve goals in conserving our community's water supply. Since a benchmark trend has been established related to water supply and water usage, Spartanburg Water is confident that conservation measure efficacy can be determined within a few weeks.

*Q: Will we continue to be notified as the conditions get better or worse and, how will I be notified?*

**A:** Yes. Spartanburg Water values the relationships we have built with our customers and stakeholders. Should conditions change that require additional conservation strategies or communication, Spartanburg Water may notify homeowners by mail, phone or in person.

**Q:** *What will happen (what are the consequences) if I do not comply with the voluntary conservation measures?*

**A:** The current conservation measures are necessary to ensure that we all play an active role in management of a precious resource. If water supplies continue to fall to critical levels we all lose. If voluntary conservation measures are ineffective in minimizing the effects of the current drought, Spartanburg Water may require the total suspension of irrigation around the lakes. Spartanburg Water may require the complete removal of irrigation systems in certain situations as deemed appropriate to protect water supply.

**Q:** *Are there any predictions on how long the drought will last?*

**A:** With current projections by local, State and Federal agencies, there is no short-term relief to the drought anticipated. Spartanburg Water officials regularly monitor drought projection models, participate in State Drought meetings, and interact regularly with industries or agencies in the water and climate profession. Recent isolated thunderstorms have had little effect in improving hydrologic conditions for our region but we remain hopeful that a shift in global weather patterns will bring us some localized relief as the summer progresses.

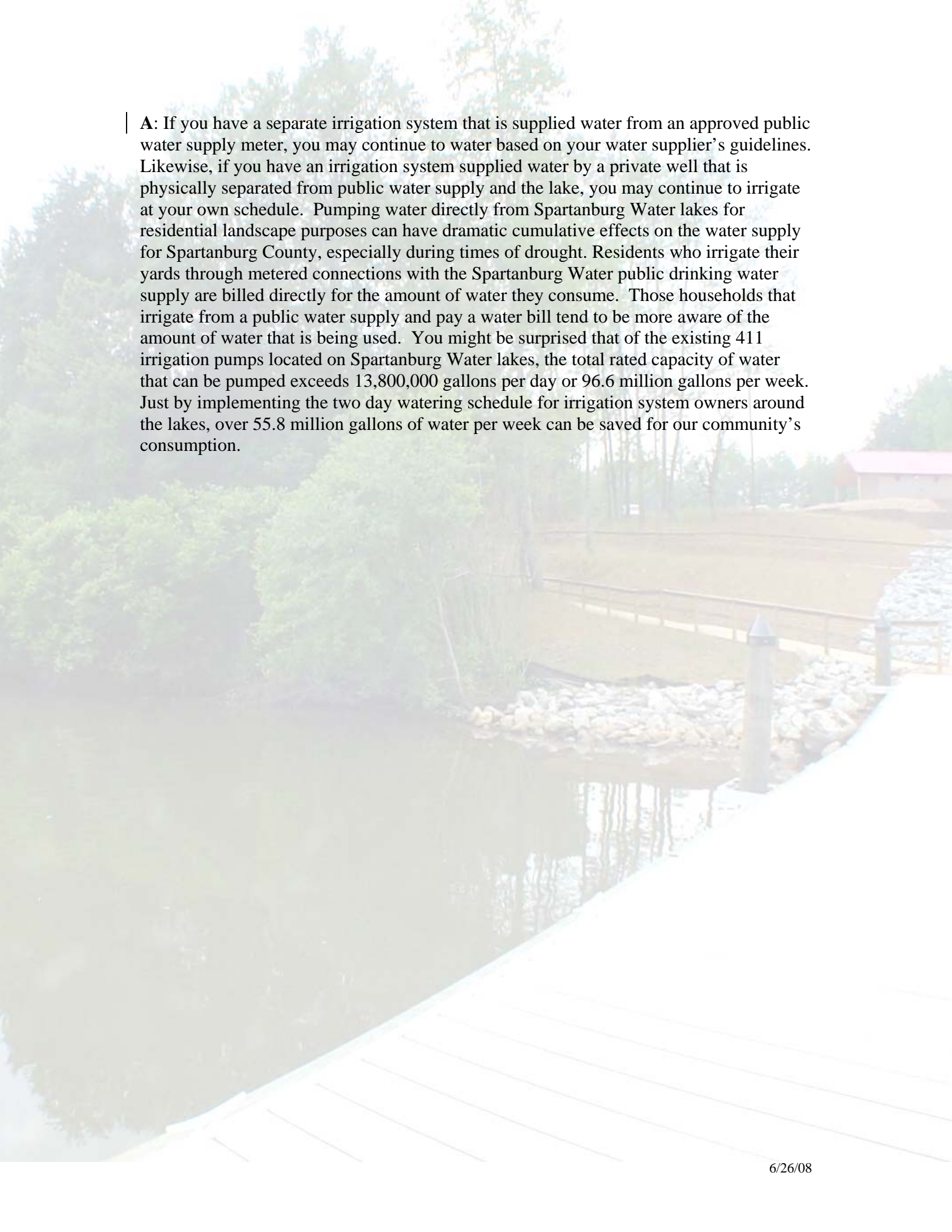
**Q:** *You state in the letter you mailed on June 23 that you may require the future removal of my irrigation pump equipment and suspension of irrigation water withdrawals from the lake for a period of time should a drought persist. If we get to the mandatory letter, can I just suspend watering or does the pump really have to be removed?*

**A:** The intent of further, more restrictive water conservation strategies in the future related to the pumping of water from the lakes for landscape irrigation purposes will be to stop all irrigation activities at Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock. Yes, the homeowner will be asked to simply suspend all water use. However, should individuals water or otherwise pump water from the lakes after mandatory restrictions are implemented, Irrigation pumps and/or associated components will be required to be removed from the property of Spartanburg Water.

**Q:** *How long do you plan to continue irrigation restrictions involving the pumping of water from Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock?*

**A:** Spartanburg Water will continue to monitor stream flow levels of the streams that feed water to Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock on a daily basis. Once Spartanburg Water believes these stream levels have returned to a level that will provide enough water to maintain the water needs of our community, we will determine how to adjust the restrictions related to pumping water from Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock.

**Q:** *Why don't you treat lake residents and their watering like you treat others in Spartanburg County? Why would we need to stop watering when others still may water on a reduced watering schedule?*



A: If you have a separate irrigation system that is supplied water from an approved public water supply meter, you may continue to water based on your water supplier's guidelines. Likewise, if you have an irrigation system supplied water by a private well that is physically separated from public water supply and the lake, you may continue to irrigate at your own schedule. Pumping water directly from Spartanburg Water lakes for residential landscape purposes can have dramatic cumulative effects on the water supply for Spartanburg County, especially during times of drought. Residents who irrigate their yards through metered connections with the Spartanburg Water public drinking water supply are billed directly for the amount of water they consume. Those households that irrigate from a public water supply and pay a water bill tend to be more aware of the amount of water that is being used. You might be surprised that of the existing 411 irrigation pumps located on Spartanburg Water lakes, the total rated capacity of water that can be pumped exceeds 13,800,000 gallons per day or 96.6 million gallons per week. Just by implementing the two day watering schedule for irrigation system owners around the lakes, over 55.8 million gallons of water per week can be saved for our community's consumption.