



# **LAKE BOWEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

## ***Watershed maintenance and lake levels***

### **1. What is a “drawdown?”**

Our watershed management strategy includes a wide variety of routine maintenance and monitoring activities to not only protect the health of the lake, but also to provide adjacent property owners the opportunity to conduct maintenance activities that support water quality goals and safe recreational access. As part of this ongoing maintenance, Spartanburg Water has planned to initiate a lake level “drawdown” that will slowly lower Lake Bowen’s water level approximately 2 ½-3 feet.

### **2. Why do you need to reduce the levels of the lake in Lake Bowen?**

Spartanburg Water staff has received requests from several adjacent property owners wishing to perform maintenance on their docks or stabilize certain areas of the shoreline that may be experiencing erosion. Our watershed team will work with adjacent property owners that may have questions or want to perform maintenance on Spartanburg Water property during the projected drawdown period. Spartanburg Water also plans to take advantage of the lower levels to survey the lakeshore and exercise the valves and gates used to control and maintain “full pool” status.

### **3. When is the last time that Spartanburg Water lowered Lake Bowen?**

While a drawdown of the lake is not an annual process, our watershed management team does lower the levels when necessary in our reservoirs. We last organized a “maintenance” drawdown between December 2014 and February 2015. We also recently dropped the water level approximately one foot for a short time this fall in anticipation of rainfall projected from Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael. In both of these instances, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Dam Safety Program officials requested that dam owners in South Carolina start lowering reservoir levels several days ahead of the storm(s). This was further supported by the governor’s office in preparation for significant rainfall within the state during this time.

### **4. How long will Lake Bowen’s levels be lower than normal?**

We will begin this project in early December. The drawdown will continue until the end of February, providing our watershed management staff and you, as adjacent property owners, an opportunity to examine the shoreline and perform other routine maintenance. The reservoir water level may fluctuate during the drawdown period, especially in the event of heavy rainfall. This may result in a longer time to reach our target drawdown level and, if wet weather patterns persist, may actually prevent us from reaching or sustaining these lower levels in Lake Bowen.



## **5. I like to fish and enjoy the lake in the wintertime. Will the lowered levels interfere with my recreation plans?**

While we do not expect this drawdown to have any drastic impact on normal recreation activities like fishing, there may be areas of the lake that may be harder to navigate during the drawdown. Our staff will be posting signs to alert boaters of the potential hazards of using their watercraft while the reservoir is at a lower level. As always, we encourage safety. Please speak with a Lake Warden to ensure that your plans do not involve taking your boat into a portion of the reservoir that may be difficult to navigate during December, January and February.

## **6. What kind of maintenance can I do on my property?**

Adjacent property owners may benefit from the lower levels, which provide perfect conditions to survey erosion and perform shoreline maintenance projects, including the construction or repair of docks, shoreline stabilization structures and walkways. Spartanburg Water is providing advance notice of the drawdown to allow you time needed to consider and schedule any maintenance or upgrades to the shoreline or permitted structures, including those that require obtaining certain permits. Adjacent property owners are reminded that maintenance activities do **not** include pushing yard debris or any other material into the lake. In addition, no fires are allowed on property that Spartanburg Water owns (i.e., below the 827' MSL contour line).

## **7. How do I get a permit?**

Other than minor maintenance as defined by Spartanburg Water, permits are required for any work that falls below the 827' contour line, and we encourage you to make permit applications to ensure adequate time for them to be processed and issued by our watershed management team and lake staff. Assess your needs and start planning now - do not delay seeking a permit if you plan to perform work during the drawdown period. Contact the lake warden's office immediately if you are planning on maintenance/shoreline stabilization activities.

Applications are available at the Lake Bowen Wardens Office, located at 8515 Highway 9, Inman. For more drawdown information, sign up for our Lake Alerts at <https://www.spartanburgwater.org/lakealerts>. For information about when permits are needed, visit <https://www.spartanburgwater.org/bowen-permits> or call (864) 592-2240.

## **8. Do I need to move my boat or personal watercraft?**

Although not required, we recommend that any boats or personal watercraft be moved from the water during the drawdown. Please call our office at (864) 592-2240 if there are specific questions regarding boats or other personal watercraft on the lake.



**9. How consistent will you be able to hold the level of Lake Bowen in order for adjacent property owners to perform maintenance?**

While Spartanburg Water will be working towards lowering Lake Bowen by 2 ½-3 feet, keeping it lowered may be challenging during rainfall events or wet weather patterns. While we do have valves and piping that can release supplemental water from Lake Bowen Dam into Municipal Reservoir #1, we must ensure we can provide adequate quantities of water to the drinking water treatment facility for our community.

It is expected that the water level will fluctuate during the drawdown period due to projected weather patterns that are projected for December through February 2019. As adjacent property owners consider and begin to implement permitted projects, it is recommended that weather forecasts be monitored on a regular basis, especially when planning key shoreline work.