

# Healthy Lakes. Great Drinking Water.

As temperatures continue to rise and the days become longer, it's a perfect time to enjoy our precious natural resources. Summer is the best season to consider new ways that we can all work together protect Lake Bowen's ecosystem and ensure great tasting drinking water.



## LAKE BOWEN IS CHANGING

When it was first constructed nearly 60 years ago, the reservoir had many years to become a fully developed ecosystem. Now, the increased development around the lake and up in the watershed has resulted in the accumulation of nutrients—the result of run-off from properties around the lake and development up above the reservoirs. These changes impact the reservoir's ecology and inspire their own set of partnerships, challenges and opportunities—for the strategic management of the watershed, as well as how we enjoy our precious natural resources.

## WORKING TOGETHER

With your help, we'll be launching an ongoing awareness campaign called "Healthy Lakes. Great Drinking Water." We'll be sharing about what we are doing to keep Lake Bowen healthy and what you can do, as homeowners, to participate in this important program.

## WHAT WE'RE DOING

Spartanburg Water recently installed an oxygenation system to help improve the overall

health of the lake. This innovative approach to watershed management is largely invisible, but you might have seen tiny little bubbles working their way to the surface of the water. That's a sign of the system at work: an underwater network of pipes delivers a constant feed of oxygen to balance the ecosystem and help prevent algal growth.

Oxygenation has been successful, and the greatest example of this new approach is in the reduction of the environment that causes algae to bloom that might have an impact on the taste of our drinking water. It has also helped keep the fish population healthy. In fact, we've been told that the fish are jumping—and biting—in record numbers. But there's still more work to do.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

When planning your lawn maintenance for the summer months, please **consider the importance of reducing any kind of run-off into the lake.** The Lake Bowen Irrigation Plan must be consulted and followed to ensure 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



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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.

Our friends at Clemson Extension suggest that you establish a 10-to-30-foot **"no fertilizer, no pesticide" zone along the shoreline**. This one simple tip will help you keep your yard and Lake Bowen healthy and beautiful.

But, why? The fertilizers that we all use to keep our yards healthy and green—even the organic varieties—can actually have the opposite effect when introduced into a lake. Over time, these fertilizers encourage the growth of more algae, as well as invasive aquatic weeds, like Bladderwort. Quite simply, the drinking water for our community needs to be protected from these impacts.

Yet another way to protect the ecosystem is a little less obvious, but very important: **Performing maintenance on your septic system and making sure that it is pumped regularly by a septic cleaning professional**. Like a watershed, your septic system is its own ecosystem and must be managed carefully to prevent failures that can introduce harmful nutrients and bacteria to lakes and rivers.

## STAY CONNECTED

As always, our team at Lake Bowen is available to answer your questions about this vital, important ecosystem that so many in nature call home, including all of us! Please call us at **(864) 592-2240**.

For even more information about the watershed, be sure to visit us at [spartanburgwater.org/healthybowen](http://spartanburgwater.org/healthybowen), and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor to keep up with the latest news about Spartanburg Water. And while you're at it, share some pictures of these big fish we keep hearing about. We might even post them and share them so the community can see what you already know: **Lake Bowen is a beautiful place to spend a summer day**.

Be sure to use the hashtag **#healthybowen!**

We hope that you all have a safe and happy summer!

**Your Watershed Team,  
Ken and K.C.**

Ken Tuck, Director of Water Treatment  
K.C. Price, Water Resources Manager





# GREAT WATER HEALTHY LAKES

## CHOOSE TAP | SPARTANBURG WATER

### Simple Acts. Great Impacts.

Drinking water resources are a critical component in the health and wellness of our community, and we're grateful for your support and interest in our shared commitment to preserve them for generations to come. Remember: Simple acts, like maintaining your septic systems, keeping fertilizers from running off into the lake, or even properly disposing of your Christmas tree, can have great impacts, now, and well into the future.

Please read the following updates to learn more about the watershed, some exciting developments in our growing team, as well as for a few simple requests from us as we look towards the holiday season.

Thank you for all that you do to protect our precious natural resources!

Healthy Lakes equal Great Drinking Water.

## Passing the Paddle

DEARYBURY RETIRES, O'NEILL NAMED NEW RESERVOIR MANAGER



After 34 years of dedicated service to the watershed, Eddie Dearybury will be retiring from Spartanburg Water at the end of the year. His successor, Ron O'Neill (left), has

already joined the watershed team, using the remaining time in Dearybury's tenure to learn more about his new role.

"We are grateful for Eddie's service," said Sue Schneider, Chief Executive Officer of Spartanburg Water. "His history and knowledge of the lakes is impressive. I know that he'll not only be missed by Spartanburg Water, but also the countless people within the community and on the lakes."

Ron began his career in law enforcement in 1977 with the Columbia Police Department. In 1982, he joined the Lexington County Sheriff's Office as a deputy and enjoyed a progressive career with that office that continued to 2011, when he achieved the rank of captain. During

his tenure there, he coordinated the SWAT unit for more than 20 years, and transitioned to a different role in 2011, which saw Ron, among other duties, coordinating annual training for correctional officers, until 2013. Following his long career in uniform, Ron moved to Spartanburg to serve, most recently, as the facilities manager for the Chapman Cultural Center.

He has a B.A. in Criminal Justice from the University of South Carolina, and is a volunteer leader for the United Way of the Piedmont and the Helping Hands of Woodruff. Ron is certified in open water scuba diving.

"Ron has the experience we need to help us to continue to move forward in achieving our goals," Schneider said. "His law enforcement experience, coupled with his great enthusiasm for the community, and his love of the water, are a great asset to Spartanburg Water and our commitment to lakes and the communities that call these reservoirs in our watershed home."

Please be sure to stop by our office and welcome Ron to his new role, and to the community!

## Tis' the Season ...

TO PROPERLY DISPOSE OF FATS, OILS, GREASES—AND TREES!



**FOG:** Pouring fats, oils and greases (commonly known as FOG) down the drain can cause major problems. When these materials interact with pipes, they build up and create blockages that can cause septic systems to backup. By simply throwing away leftover FOG, you can protect your septic tank from the hazards of overflows and backups, not to mention keeping our environment safe from these preventable challenges. (TIP: Allow FOG to harden in an old coffee can or in the freezer before throwing away.)

**HOLIDAY TREES:** When you take down your tree this holiday season, please don't throw it in the lake. While many believe that this is healthy for the lake and provides additional fish habitat, the disposal of Christmas trees into the lakes is another opportunity to feed the lake with more nutrients. These nutrients can result in algal growth that can make your drinking water taste or smell funny. For more information on proper tree disposal, please visit your local county or city recycling center.



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## Warden Winter Office Hours

### Lake Blalock Warden's Office:

1925 Sandy Ford Road  
Chesnee, SC 29323  
(864) 578-5442  
8 – 10 a.m., Monday – Friday

### Lake Bowen Warden's Office:

8515 Highway 9  
Inman, SC 29349  
(864) 592-2240  
2 – 4 p.m., Monday-Friday

## Geese Waste Can Affect Water Quality

LAWNS ARE AN ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BUFFET FOR GEESE, LEAVING POUNDS OF WASTE IN THE WATERSHED

Large armies of geese living on our Lakes can pose an unnecessary risk to the drinking water supply. But, how? Lawns bring geese. The geese poop. As a result of the nutrients in the poop, algae can grow in the water that can make our drinking water smell and taste bad.

Poop. Yes, that's right: P-O-O-P.

Specifically, healthy geese are hungry geese. And they find no greater spread than the leafy green lawns that can thrive in our mild climate.

It's tradition: When we hear the plaintive sounds of low-flying geese overhead, we know that the seasons are changing. Those v-formations are nature's way of signaling the arrival of fall temperatures.

And, according to our watershed experts, while geese may be a majestic illustration of nature's beauty, they also leave a lot of waste behind during their winter sojourn to our reservoirs and points further south.

"When I was a child I lived where there were no geese, and I remember watching on television the V-flights of massive flocks of Canadian Geese, I was thinking that must be the greatest thing ever to witness that in person," said K.C. Price, Water Resources Manager. "Move forward 40 years and now, when I see a goose, I see their leftovers."

Price is referring to goose waste, and lots of it. In fact, he said, a single Canadian Goose can produce up to three pounds of, well, you know, poop, in a single day.

This waste can have a negative impact on our water quality. By defecating, geese release large amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus that can then enter the water to help create growing conditions for algae that can lead to taste and odor issues, not to mention bacteria associated with animal waste.

The solution is to "control the goose habitat." In other words, don't feed them.

You're feeding the geese if you're keeping a lush lawn. Geese are particularly attracted to lawns near water reservoirs and ponds. This is their food source and having a lawn is like putting out a buffet for geese. However, geese can quickly strip the area bare leading to even higher fecal loads and greater

opportunity for nutrient and contaminant runoff into the water. Therefore, minimizing lawns is a fundamental practice in controlling geese populations.

Ensuring trees are planted near the water's edge is a natural way to safely divert the geese and discourage them from viewing healthy lawns as Thanksgiving dinner.

Also, our natural, vegetative buffers with native plantings along shorelines also help prevent geese establishing residence.

Spartanburg Water asks that you work with our Watershed Management Specialist to help minimize lawns within the buffer, to maintain a natural buffer and most importantly, please don't feed the geese.

