



## **Spartanburg Water – Watercraft Permits 2022-23 Boating Season Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. When do the new watercraft permit prices for the 2022-23 boating season go into effect?**

The new watercraft permit prices for Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock took effect March 15, 2022.

### **2. What has changed with the new watercraft permit prices?**

The watercraft permit fee schedule will now be designated as “Spartanburg County Resident” and “Out-of-County Resident.”

Pricing for watercraft permits will also increase, which is the first time since the 2008 boating season.

### **3. Why were these changes necessary?**

Recreational traffic on both Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock has increased more than 70 percent over the past several years. With this escalation in watercraft usage, we have seen a significant rise in erosion and shoreline damage around both reservoirs; most notably in the last five years. Though we are glad to provide recreational opportunities on Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock, the primary purpose of these lakes is as drinking water reservoirs. Over time the increased number of watercraft using our reservoirs has put a strain on water quality and increased the cost of providing exceptional drinking water for our customers.

Our new watercraft permit fee schedule more accurately represents the current cost of maintaining our two reservoirs for recreation and as drinking water resources for our rapidly growing community; including the ongoing mitigation of shoreline effects from increased watercraft traffic and the hiring of additional watershed staff.

### **4. Why are the Out-of-County fees so high?**

The City of Spartanburg residents own our drinking water reservoirs. These reservoirs were built to provide drinking water service to the residents of the City of Spartanburg and Spartanburg County. Spartanburg County is experiencing record population growth that is projected to continue. The safety of individuals that utilize our parks for access to recreation continues to be of high importance, and our lake parks have set capacities for parking. With our County growing each year, we want to focus on safely accommodating those residents in the City and County.

### **5. Why are the non-motorized fees increased?**

As with all other watercraft, the safety of individuals that utilize our parks for access to recreation continues to be of high importance, and our lake parks have limited capacities for parking. We also have concerns about safety issues that arise from providing access to too many motorized and non-motorized watercraft simultaneously.

#### **6. Did the changes to the Bowen Landing cause the increase in watercraft usage?**

The changes that have taken place at Lake Bowen Park and boat landing have made the park safer and more enjoyable for all visitors. The changes have not caused more watercraft usage. In fact, our park now has an official parking capacity of 77 cars with boat trailers and 64 individual cars. The changes made have separated the traffic and parking, making it much safer for all visitors. The increase in watercraft usage can be linked to the population growth Spartanburg County has seen over the past few years.

#### **7. Why don't you close the Bowen and Blalock landings to watercraft?**

While many of our watercraft permit holders access our reservoirs from their personal docks, we do recognize that the reservoirs were created for the benefit of all Spartanburg City and County residents, regardless of whether they live around the lakes. We want to allow for safe and enjoyable recreation for all residents, while remaining good stewards of our drinking water reservoirs.

#### **8. I only fish on weekends, can I get a weekend only permit?**

We do not currently offer a "weekends only" permit, but do offer daily boating permits on both Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock. For the cost of a full-year permit, however, you would pay the same in most cases as you would pay for a daily rate, whether you live in Spartanburg County or outside of the County.

#### **9. Are you trying to discourage out-of-county use of the lakes?**

Spartanburg Water System continues to welcome residents from outside of Spartanburg County. However, our first and foremost concern is assuring the sustainability of these lakes as drinking water reservoirs that serve our Spartanburg County residents. With the increase in watercraft traffic, we are seeing erosion and shoreline damage that in turn cause the water quality concerns that have increased our costs for producing drinking water. The primary function of our reservoirs is to serve our community's drinking water needs for many decades to come.

#### **10. Why did the cost of the Jet Ski permit increase so much?**

Jet Skis are a fun and enjoyable way to spend a day on Lake Bowen. However, the increase in use is cause for concern. Jet Skis cause some of the worst damage to our shoreline around Lake Bowen due to their fast speeds and the wakes that are generated. The wave action along the shoreline contributes to erosion, impacting water quality. Erosion issues we experience have led to increasing costs to produce our community's drinking water.

#### **11. Where can I go to access the new watercraft permit fee schedule and additional information?**

To access the new watercraft permit fee schedule, please visit: [www.spartanburgwater.org](http://www.spartanburgwater.org)

For questions, please feel free to reach out to our Lake Bowen Office at (864) 592-2240, or our Lake Blalock Office at (864) 578-5442. Both offices are open from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m., seven-days-a week.