

2023 Lake Alerts

October 27, 2023 Lake Alert: Lower Lake Levels and Planned Drawdown Process

Spartanburg Water's commitment to watershed maintenance is a critical component of our mission to preserve and maintain the reservoirs and rivers that supply our drinking water. Our watershed management strategy includes a wide variety of routine maintenance and monitoring activities, and this year we will again attempt an annual lowering of Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock as part of this strategy.

With the current low levels of precipitation, the drawdown of the reservoirs has begun naturally. Beginning December 1 and lasting through February 2024, we will try to bring both Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock down approximately 2.5 – 3 ft. in total. This will be dependent on weather, however, as higher levels of rain can make it difficult to achieve lower lake levels.

As the lake levels begin to fall, please plan to remove boats from boat lifts. For additional safety, we will have strategically placed, bright yellow warning buoys at certain intervals from shore to note potential shallow water hazards.

In the coming days please look for a letter from us with similar details, as well as a sheet of "Frequently Asked Questions."

Our team is committed to keeping you informed, and we appreciate your partnership and support as we move forward with this process.

September 1, 2023 Lake Alert: Important Labor Day Reminders

With the "end" of summer celebration this Labor Day weekend, we wanted to share a few friendly reminders with our watercraft permit holders.

Display Watercraft Permits – If you have purchased a watercraft permit for the 2023-24 boating season, please make sure it is displayed properly on your vessel. You can find directions for proper placement [HERE](#).

Safety First! Before heading out on the water, please remember these important safety tips:

- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Check the weather.
- Ensure your watercraft is in good working order. Always do a test run before you go out on the lake, and ask any of our wardens to help you do a safety check.
- SCDNR will be available on Sunday, September 3, from 10 a.m. – Noon to provide a safety check at Lake Bowen Park.

Be sure you have the following available on your watercraft:

Life Jackets – enough for each passenger, U.S. Coast Guard approved and in good condition. Life Jackets only work if you wear them, so be sure to keep a properly fitting floatation device on at all times when you are on the water.

- USCG approved Type IV Retrievable floatation device – For watercraft greater than 16'.
- Fire extinguisher – required by law, for gas powered watercraft.
- Navigation lights – on between official sunset and sunrise.
- Sound device – horn, air horn, or whistle.

And if you ever have any questions, please reach out to our watershed staff. They are more than happy to assist! Lake Bowen Wardens' Office: 864-592-2240, Lake Blalock Wardens' Office: 864-578-5442.

August 28, 2023 Lake Alert: One-Day Traffic Change at Lake Bowen Park – August 30

On Wednesday, August 30, the portion of the roadway beginning at the entrance to the peninsula, to our non-powered boat ramp at Lake Bowen Park will be closed to thru-traffic as we continue our shoreline stabilization project.

The Anchor Park playground will still be accessible, as well as our restroom facilities. For those who wish to park around the peninsula, we will allow traffic flow the “wrong way” on the peninsula, in order to access the available parking spaces.

We anticipate the road closure to last for just one day, dependent on weather.

If you have any questions, please reach out to our Lake Bowen Wardens’ Office: 864-592-2240 or e-mail healthylakes@spartanburgwater.org.

Thank you for your patience as we make these important and exciting improvements to our Lake Bowen Park.

June 2, 2023 Lake Alert: Shoreline Stabilization Project

Spartanburg Water will begin the first phase of a multi-phase project to stabilize the shoreline along Lake Bowen at Lake Bowen Park the first week of June.

Using native plant species, the project will address shoreline erosion and impervious surface run-off that can negatively impact Lake Bowen as a drinking water reservoir. The Lake Bowen Park will remain open throughout the project, which is expected to last through August. Monday through Friday, some parking spaces in the peninsula loop will be blocked off, but will re-open on weekends.

Residents with questions are invited to reach out to the Spartanburg Water watershed staff and lake wardens at the Lake Bowen Park office – (864) 592-2240.

This project is part of a 319 Grant awarded by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC).

319 Grants are awarded to fund projects that are intended to help reduce pollutants in an area of a watershed that will help lead to measurable water quality improvements. The grants are funded from an annual grant allocation from the EPA under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act.

To learn more about the project, please visit our website.

May 25, 2023 Lake Alert: Memorial Day Weekend Reminders

With the “official” start to the summer boating season beginning this Memorial Day weekend, we wanted to share a few friendly reminders with our watercraft permit holders.

Display Watercraft Permits – If you have purchased a watercraft permit for the 2023-24 boating season, please make sure it is displayed properly on your vessel. You can find directions for proper placement [HERE](#).

If you haven’t purchased a permit for either your powered or non-powered watercraft to use for Lake Bowen and/or Lake Blalock, please visit our Lake Bowen or Lake Blalock Wardens’ office to purchase. A listing of associated permit prices can be found on our [WEBSITE](#). (Please note that permits for non-motorized watercraft (i.e. kayaks and paddleboards) are a \$25, one-time fee that do not require renewal with each boating season.)

Safety First! Before heading out on the water, please remember these important safety tips:

1. Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
2. Check the weather.
3. Ensure your watercraft is in good working order. Always do a test run before you go out on the lake, and ask any of our wardens to help you do a safety check.

Be sure you have the following available on your watercraft:

- Life Jackets – enough for each passenger, U.S. Coast Guard approved and in good condition. Life Jackets only work if you wear them, so be sure to keep a properly fitting floatation device on at all times when you are on the water.
- USCG approved Type IV Retrievable floatation device – For watercraft greater than 16’.
- Fire extinguisher – required by law, for gas powered watercraft.
- Navigation lights – on between official sunset and sunrise.
- Sound device – horn, air horn, or whistle.

May 22, 2023 Lake Alert: Natural Fish Losses from Columnaris

In our most recent Lake Alert that we sent on May 16, we shared a link to a document that discussed how fish losses can occur naturally in reservoirs. Last week we began observing a number of fish, primarily Bluegills (Bream), either deceased or in obvious signs of distress in Lake Blalock and Lake Bowen. Area fishermen also noticed and shared this information with us. As with all losses of fish in our reservoirs, our watershed team alerted the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC).

In an effort to determine the exact cause of the fish loss we took the initiative to send several specimens to the Alabama Fish Farming Center at Auburn University who completed diagnostic laboratory testing on the fish. We received the results back today that showed that the cause of this recent fish loss was due to infection of the fish by *Flavobacterium columnaris* bacteria, resulting in a type of fish disease called Columnaris – commonly referred to as Saddleback disease. Columnaris is naturally occurring, originating from a very common type of bacteria that often spreads quickly among fish during times of stress – particularly during the spawning season that just concluded. To learn more about Columnaris, please view an informative Q & A document we created.

I hope you find this information helpful, and appreciate your continued partnership as we work together to ensure our reservoirs are not only a great source of drinking water, but a healthy environment for fish and other aquatic life as well as recreational activities. Please continue to feel free to reach out.

May 12, 2023 Lake Alert: CEO Guy Boyle Re: Upcoming Algaecide Treatment Beginning May 17

We are still waiting to hear the results of the report compiled by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) regarding the loss of shad that occurred at Lake Bowen on March 30. Once we have these details, as well as any details from the catfish losses that occurred during the second week of April, we will share the information with you.

Our detailed weekly water quality testing continues to show elevated levels of Geosmin in our drinking water reservoirs. Geosmin, though harmless, is a byproduct of increased algae growth that can lead to taste and odor concerns with our finished drinking water. At this time, the levels of this Geosmin byproduct that we have been monitoring require us to intervene and utilize algaecide applications in specific areas of both Lake Bowen and Municipal Reservoir #1. The treatments will begin this coming Wednesday, May 17.

The chelated copper algaecide prescription that we normally use for algaecide applications, and that was used on March 30, is considered safe, effective and is approved by the EPA for use in drinking water. However, with this application we will be using another EPA regulated algaecide treatment that does not utilize chelated copper. The application will utilize a hydrogen peroxide base to remove algae. This algaecide product will be applied in a targeted area of Lake Bowen and Reservoir #1. Hydrogen peroxide applications are not as effective as chelated copper in addressing algae growth, but have a shorter shelf life, so we are hopeful the application greatly reduces the potential risk of any additional losses of fish.

As with every algaecide application applied, we have contacted SCDNR and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) to inform both agencies of our intent to apply this round of treatment.

We understand that an additional algaecide application so close behind one that resulted in a fish loss can be concerning. Serving as stewards of our natural environment and the drinking water source for more than 200,000 customers can be a very difficult and challenging balancing act, but any action to perform treatments is well thought out prior to any application. I am confident in our team's ability to make the right decisions that protect our drinking water and the natural environment, and I fully support this team of professionals who are making every effort to protect and to provide clean, safe drinking water.

Thank you for your continued trust and support as we work to ensure continued access for our community to high quality drinking water services. Please continue to feel free to reach out at any time.

Friday, April 28, 2023: Elevated Lake Levels

With the recent rainfall, both Lake Blalock and Lake Bowen are currently over full pool. Please exercise caution when using watercraft, since there may be more floating debris.

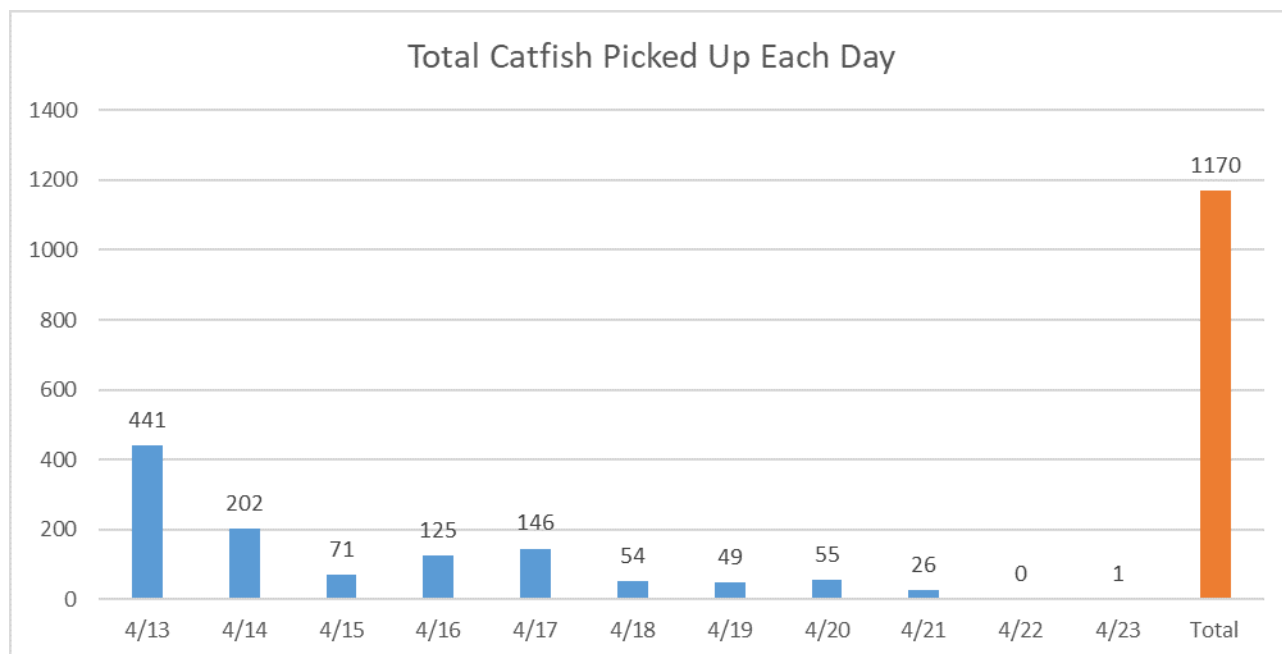
As with all rain events, with elevated lake levels and due to the risk of higher streamflows, we recommend ensuring your boat is well secured – either to your dock or elevated and secured to your boatlift.

April 24, 2023, Lake Alert: Current Update on Catfish Loss and Clean-Up on Lake Bowen

Our watershed staff continues to patrol Lake Bowen to document any remaining catfish losses and collect them from the shoreline and impacted areas. We continue to provide ongoing communication with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR).

Since our last communication regarding the numbers of catfish picked up each day, beginning April 13, we are very glad to say that it appears this catfish loss event may be ending. On both Saturday, April 22, and Sunday, April 23, our watershed staff picked up only one catfish during their patrol, which was in an advanced state of decomposition.

Please see below for an updated graph showing the total number of catfish picked up each day, along with the total number.



We are still awaiting the details of the laboratory studies performed to try to determine the exact cause of the catfish losses, and will communicate the results with you as soon as we hear from these experts.

April 18, 2023, Lake Alert: Eating Fish Caught in Local Bodies of Water

With our recent catfish losses in Lake Bowen, I have received some questions related to the safety of eating fish caught in the lake.

As with all state-wide health and environmental regulations and guidance, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) provides regular oversight of bodies of water, and through their Bureau of Water and Aquatic Science Program, they maintain up-to-date Fish Consumption Advisories: <https://scdhec.gov/bow/aquatic-science-programs/fish-consumption-advisories>

With these advisories, they also maintain a list of waterbodies across the state that have no advisories, and where they note you can “eat as many fish as you would like” - <https://scdhec.gov/bow/aquatic-science-programs/fish-consumption-advisories/waterbodies-no-advisories>

Both Lake Bowen and Lake Blalock are included in this list of waterbodies without advisories. Municipal Reservoir #1, though fishing on the shoreline does occur, SCDHEC does not include it on this list or consider it a recreational body of water, as no public fishing or boating is allowed.

As a fishing enthusiast myself, I have enjoyed having the opportunity to begin experiencing fishing in our Spartanburg Water reservoirs, and also the fish dinners that have resulted for myself and my family. I am confident in the health and safety of our reservoirs and resident fish, and look to our very capable team at Spartanburg Water to maintain this and our strong partnerships with SCDNR and SCDHEC.

April 13, 2023, Lake Alert: Update on Catfish Removal on Lake Bowen

We received notification from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) this afternoon giving us permission to begin the process of cleaning up the catfish from the recent loss event.

Starting today and working through the day tomorrow, our watershed team will work to collect the catfish from the shoreline and impacted areas of Lake Bowen.

Over the coming days, our watershed team will continue to monitor the situation at Lake Bowen on a daily basis, and will address any additional catfish loss as needed – providing ongoing communication with SCDNR.

Our entire Spartanburg Water team is committed to the health and well-being of our drinking water reservoirs, and we will continue to regularly communicate news and updates as needed in a transparent and open manner. Your trust in us as both a drinking water provider and community partner is not something we take lightly.

April 13, 2023, Lake Alert: Update on Catfish Loss and Clean-Up on Lake Bowen

We received notification from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) this afternoon giving us permission to begin the process of cleaning up the catfish from the recent loss event.

Starting today and working through the day tomorrow, our watershed team will work to collect the catfish from the shoreline and impacted areas of Lake Bowen.

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Our entire Spartanburg Water team is committed to the health and well-being of our drinking water reservoirs, and we will continue to regularly communicate news and updates as needed in a transparent and open manner. Your trust in us as both a drinking water provider and community partner is not something we take lightly.

April 12, 2023, Lake Alert: Update on Catfish Loss on Lake Bowen

It came to our attention Tuesday, April 11, that catfish had begun floating to the surface on Lake Bowen in relatively small numbers and in a confined area of the lake. We immediately contacted the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) for their guidance with this most recent event. However, on the morning of April 12, while staff continued to patrol the lake, we observed that additional catfish loss had occurred and reached back out to SCDNR.

SCDNR team members spent the afternoon of April 12 performing an investigation on the lake, supported by our lake wardens and Spartanburg Water boats as requested. Following their investigation, SCDNR shared that they believed the recent catfish loss is a result of the algaecide application that was performed on March 30.

Though it is troubling to have additional fish losses attributed to the recent algaecide application, I remain confident in the health and safety of our reservoirs, and as much, in the safety and quality of the drinking water we provide.

Our watershed and laboratory staff sample numerous sites throughout our reservoirs, and perform thousands of analyses each year. In addition to our widespread sampling sites, the water entering our drinking water treatment plant and entering the distribution system is tested daily – 365 days a year. All of our testing is also regularly reported each month to SCDHEC as the regulatory and oversight agency in our state, directed by the EPA. Each year, the multitude of data that is collected and provided to SCDHEC is provided to the public in the form of our Consumer Confidence Report/Water Quality Report which can be found at <https://www.spartanburgwater.org/waterqualityreports>. The 2022 report will be released in June.

For nearly 100 years, Spartanburg Water has provided our community's residents with safe and reliable drinking water services. I am confident in our team and our continued ability to provide the very best drinking water resources for our community now and in the years to come.

Thank you for your continued support and confidence in our team and the essential services we provide.

April 12, 2023, Lake Alert: Recent Catfish Loss on Lake Bowen

It came to our attention Tuesday, April 11, that catfish had begun floating to the surface on Lake Bowen in relatively small numbers and in a confined area of the lake. We immediately contacted the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) for their guidance with this most recent event.

This morning, while staff continued to patrol the lake, we observed that additional catfish loss had occurred. This recent event appears to have impacted only catfish and at this time there is no visual indication that any other species of fish are affected.

Spartanburg Water has requested that SCDNR perform an investigation into the cause of the fish loss.

Representatives from SCDNR are currently on site at Lake Bowen, and have requested the assistance of our Spartanburg Water Lake Wardens to transport SCDNR team members in our boats. SCDNR staff will be performing their investigation in the area where the negative impact occurred in order to try to determine if a natural or man-made event negatively impacted the fish.

There have been no additional algaecide treatments performed on Lake Bowen since Thursday March 30 and none are currently planned. Our team will continue to monitor the situation and communicate with SCDNR accordingly.

We remain committed to the health and wellbeing of our reservoirs, and to providing safe and reliable drinking water services to our community.

April 7 Lake Alert: Blalock POA to Host Litter Clean-Up Around Lake Blalock on Earth Day

The Blalock Lake Property Owners Association Friends of Lake Blalock will host their Spring Lake Clean-Up on Earth Day, April 22, from 8 a.m. - Noon. Supplies will be available at the Lake Blalock Park and Boat Landing, with lunch served in a picnic pavilion afterward.

Spartanburg Water will provide supplies and a pizza lunch for all who attend.

For more information and to sign-up, please contact Alik Malikov at alikmalix@me.com.

April 1, 2023, Lake Alert: Important Update Regarding Fish Loss on Lake Bowen

We wanted to share an update with you regarding the recent fish loss in areas of Lake Bowen. Yesterday afternoon, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) performed a thorough field assessment of the areas impacted.

Their team of biologists will compile a report within a 30-day timeframe to present to the SCDNR Board. Once the board accepts the report it will be available for release to the public. Based on SCDNR protocols there is no release of information from SCDNR to Spartanburg Water, so we will be awaiting the findings as well from SCDNR.

We were informed following the completion of their fieldwork that SCDNR has released the impacted areas back to Spartanburg Water to perform any clean-up as necessary. We are currently working on a plan to address the logistics of the cleanup over the next 48-72 hours.

Our Director of Drinking Water Services, Ken Tuck, met yesterday evening with leadership from Jones Fish Hatcheries & Dist., LLC – the algaecide applicator who performed the most recent algaecide application on Lake Bowen. Their team is committed to removing the deceased fish from the impacted areas of the lake, and cleaning up the shoreline.

The Jones Fish Hatcheries & Dist. team will be on site at Lake Bowen at first light on Monday, April 3, to begin the clean-up process. They plan to work all day Monday, as well as part of Tuesday, April 4, to ensure that the areas of the lake affected by the recent fish loss are cleaned to the satisfaction of Spartanburg Water and our neighbors around the lake.

We understand that this recent fish loss incident is concerning, but our entire Spartanburg Water team remains committed to sharing up-to-date and factual information with you as we move forward.

March 31, 2023, Lake Alert: Update: Fish Loss on Lake Bowen

As we previously shared with you, our watershed team observed fish losses in isolated locations on Lake Bowen yesterday afternoon following the completion of an algaecide application that was initiated to manage algae and Geosmin levels that were rising in Lake Bowen.

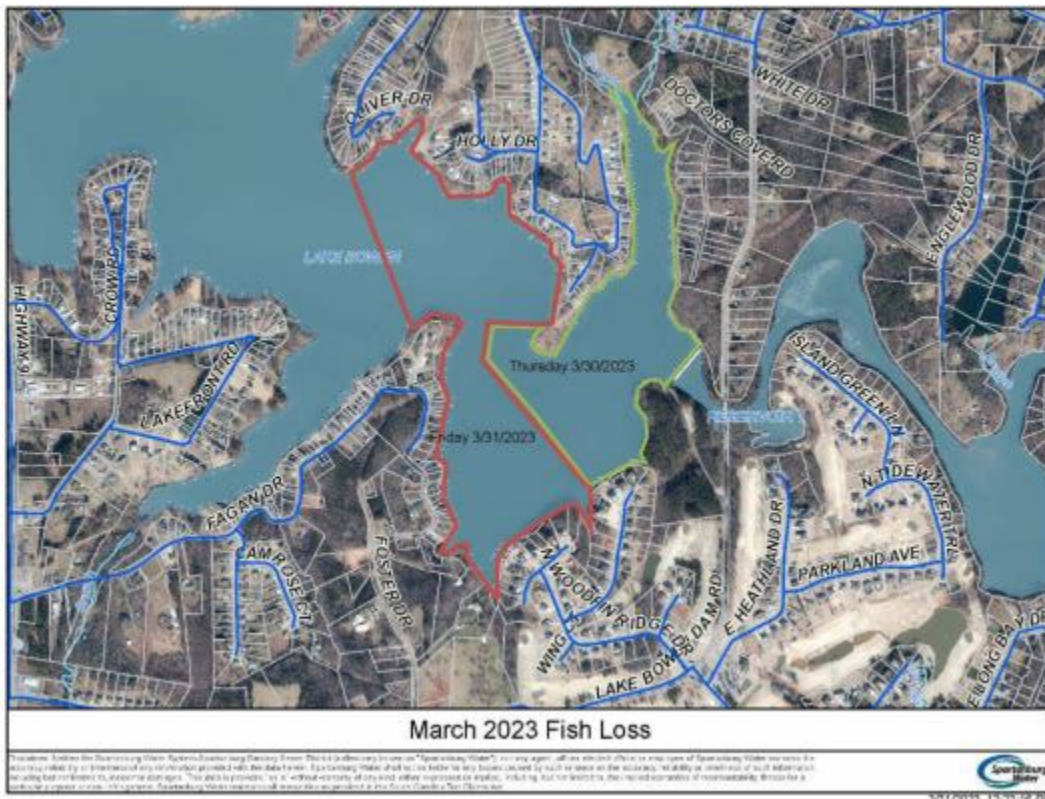
Our watershed team has been on Lake Bowen and Reservoir #1 since early this morning to continue the process of identifying specific areas of impact. As of this time, we have not found there to be an expanded area of concern. The fish loss we are observing remains the small, 1" – 2" Shad species of fish, and there are no current signs that larger game fish or other wildlife have been negatively impacted.

Please see enclosed map showing the impacted areas in green and red. The green area is where the concentration of Shad loss appears to have occurred.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) has been on the lake with us all morning and early afternoon. We are working with them, and will continue to assess the situation and share information, while continuing to look to SCDNR for guidance throughout this process.

While any loss of wildlife is concerning, we do maintain that algaecide treatments are a safe and effective method for us to maintain the quality of our drinking water reservoirs. Algaecide treatments are always conducted by a professional algaecide firm, with input from third party consultants and Spartanburg Water staff. Our CEO, Guy Boyle and all of our

staff remain committed to sharing factual information as we are updated throughout this process.



March 30, 2023, Lake Alert: Important Notice: Fish Loss Observed on Lake Bowen

Our watershed team has observed some fish loss today in a section of Lake Bowen, following the most recent algaecide application. We understand that this may be concerning, however, what we have been able to visually confirm this evening: it is isolated to two smaller coves of the lake near the Bowen dam and the fish affected are primarily 1" and 2" shad. Our algaecide treatments remain a safe and effective method for us to maintain the quality of our drinking water reservoirs.

Algaecide treatments are conducted by a professional algaecide firm with input from third party consultants and Spartanburg Water. We have been working with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and will provide more information as it becomes available.

March 28, 2023, Lake Alert: Algaecide Treatment for Municipal Reservoir #1 and Lake Bowen to Begin March 29

Spartanburg Water plans to perform a strategic and targeted algaecide application beginning Wednesday, March 29, on portions of Municipal Reservoir #1 and Lake Bowen with a licensed commercial applicator. The application will take place over 2 – 3 days, dependent on weather conditions.

The application targets the specific areas identified through our ongoing reservoir monitoring strategy. As is the case with all of our treatments, the goal is to manage algae growth in our drinking water reservoirs to ensure the highest quality drinking water for our community.

February 20, 2023, Lake Alert:**Algaecide Treatment for Municipal Reservoir #1 and Lake Bowen to Begin February 21**

Spartanburg Water plans to perform a strategic and targeted algaecide application beginning Tuesday, February 21, on Municipal Reservoir #1 and a portion of Lake Bowen with a licensed commercial applicator. The application will likely be completed by Thursday, February 23, dependent on weather conditions. The application targets those areas identified through our ongoing reservoir monitoring strategy.

As is the case with all of our treatments, the goal is to manage algae growth in our drinking water reservoirs to ensure the highest quality drinking water for our community.

February 17, 2023, Lake Alert: Lake Drawdown Process to End at Lake Bowen

Beginning today, the process to lower the water level in the Lake Bowen reservoir by approximately 3 ft., will end. This is several weeks earlier than originally communicated. We are taking a very proactive approach to help mitigate an increase we are seeing in Geosmin, a harmless byproduct of algae growth, but one that can cause changes in the taste and odor of drinking water.

We will maintain Lake Blalock at a lower level through the end of this month, as originally planned. By controlling algae growth in our drinking water reservoirs, we can continue to ensure our community has access to the highest quality drinking water.

January 25, 2023 Lake Alert: Algaecide Treatment for Municipal Reservoir #1 Planned for January 27

Spartanburg Water plans to perform a strategic and targeted algaecide application beginning Friday, January 27, on Municipal Reservoir #1 with a licensed commercial applicator. The application will likely be completed within one day, dependent on weather conditions. The application targets those areas identified through our ongoing reservoir monitoring strategy.

As is the case with all of our treatments, the goal is to control algae growth in our drinking water reservoirs to ensure the highest quality drinking water for our community.

January 16, 2023 Lake Alert: Anchor Park at Lake Bowen closed Tuesday, Jan. 17 and Wednesday, Jan. 18

Anchor Park at Lake Bowen will be closed for maintenance Tuesday, January 17, and Wednesday, January 18. We appreciate your patience while we continue to provide a safe, fun place to play for the children in our community. For more information, call the Lake Bowen Wardens' Office at 864-592-2240.