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...
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, 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