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Update on Fish Loss at Lake Bowen from Spartanburg Water

SPARTANBURG –The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) finalized their field assessments on March 31 of the recent fish loss that occurred in two cove areas of Lake Bowen.

The fish loss occurred within hours of an algaecide application that was performed on March 30 to strategically address areas of the reservoir where testing has shown algae are releasing taste and odor compounds, such as Geosmin. While harmless and regularly found in lakes and rivers, Geosmin can produce an earthy, musty taste and/or smell for drinking water if not addressed.

Having completed their field assessment, SCDNR will take their findings and complete a report to submit to the SCDNR Board within a 30-day timeframe. Once the SCDNR Board reviews and approves, the information it can be released to the public. At this time, SCDNR is not permitted to share any information regarding the report with the public or Spartanburg Water, per SCDNR protocols.

Spartanburg Water CEO, Guy Boyle, shared that upon completion of the fieldwork on Friday, “SCDNR gave permission to release the affected areas back to Spartanburg Water, to clean up the fish in the affected areas if we chose to do so. We will be working to stage and address the cleanup over the next 48 hours.”

On Friday evening, representatives from Spartanburg Water met with leadership from algaecide applicator, Jones Fish Hatcheries & Dist., LLC, who performed the recent algaecide application on Lake Bowen. The leadership team shared their commitment to performing a thorough and organized cleanup of fish in the affected areas, and will begin staging their work team on Sunday so that they can begin their cleanup work first thing on Monday, April 3.

“Our team has done everything to get timely communications out to the public, and we worked quickly to notify independent resources like SCDNR to assist with the investigation, ensuring that we took no actions to restore the affected areas until the areas were officially released back to Spartanburg Water by SCDNR and SCDHEC,” says Boyle. “I communicated two primary directives to my team when this event occurred. The first was that we will communicate quickly and often with the public, and the second was that we will be as transparent as possible given the facts that we have at any given point in time.”

Boyle also added, “Our team is incredibly dedicated to the citizens and environment of this community, and they are the utmost professionals in both good and in challenging times.”

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ABOUT SPARTANBURG WATER: Spartanburg Water, an industry leading utility, is comprised of Spartanburg Water System and Spartanburg Sanitary Sewer District. It serves a population of more than 200,000 within Spartanburg County, as well as others in parts of Greenville, Union and Cherokee counties. With the help of its dedicated team of about 300 employees, each day it produces an average of 25 million gallons of drinking water and cleans 12 million gallons of reclaimed water for its customers and community.