

Joint Water System Issues Call for Water Conservation

Benjamin Franklin is quoted as saying “When the well is dry, we know the worth of water.” Duke Energy and Mr. Preston have told us of the worth of water to the community and how the lack of water has affected the entire community. We must all take proactive steps to help ensure that the well does not run dry.

The Anderson Regional Joint Water System owns and operates the Lake Hartwell Water Treatment Plant that provides the treated water sold by 8 water districts, 5 municipalities and Clemson University—all located in Anderson and southwestern Pickens County. I want to stress that Anderson Regional Water remains committed to meeting the water needs of the over 190,000 residents living and working in its service area. As of today, water levels are at 646’ above mean sea level, the water system can safely pump until water levels fall below 620’. However, now is the time to act to ensure water remains in the well as long-term precipitation forecasts do not look kind.

Anderson and Pickens counties are blessed with an abundance of water during normal years. Lake Hartwell is a precious resource that is the envy of many communities. We rely on the Corps to manage the lake for a wide variety of purposes—all of which benefit our community. It is critical for all users of the Lake ensure that they are not wasting the resource—this is especially true during a drought.

The Anderson Regional Joint Water System understands the fundamental need to make efficient use of the limited and valuable water resource under its stewardship. In order to protect the public’s health and safety and environmental integrity, Anderson Regional Water is issuing a call for the voluntary elimination of all nonessential water use within the service area. Residents are advised to take appropriate actions to reduce water use by reviewing their need for outdoor water use and seeking to conserve on indoor uses.

Outdoor water use comprises over 50% of total summer demand. Many of our customers double or triple their winter water use in the summer months. A majority is used for lawns and gardens, and most of this could be maintained with 25% to 40% less water! This corresponds to up to a million gallons per day today and 4 to 6 million gallons per day of potential savings during summer months.

While Anderson Regional Water will focus primarily on outdoor water savings, our website (www.arjwater.com/news) has a list of over 30 measures that each of us could take to conserve water inside the home.

Becoming a more water efficient community will provide more water to be shared with the other uses—the environment, recreation, and hydropower. It will also help reduce the cost of future infrastructure borne by all water customers and finally help ensure that water supplies remain available to sustain the future economic development of the region.

Anderson Regional Water will lead the call for water conservation and help ensure water conservation information reaches the community. The Anderson Regional Water website (www.arjwater.com/news) and the member water agencies will be providing additional information on how residents can conserve water.

Each of us in the community will determine if we are to be successful—make every drop count. It is critical that we heed the voluntary restrictions called for today to avoid mandatory restrictions and financial penalties that will follow if water use continues to increase and rains do not return. These measures will be in place until water levels return to normal.

Thank you.