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## Residents hit the water



OWEN RILEY JR. / Staff

Boaters compete Friday on Lake Hartwell as Memorial Day weekend begins.

# Big holiday crowds likely on all Upstate's lakes

### Hartwell is up nearly five feet from start of summer last year

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Big crowds are expected this Memorial Day Weekend on Upstate lakes — including Lake Hartwell, which is up nearly five feet from this time last year.

The combination of higher water and a tight economy is expected to draw more people to the lakes, said Capt. Larry Holbrooks of the state Department of Natural Resources.

Lake Hartwell, the largest of the Upstate reservoirs, was within four feet of full pool, at 656.37 feet above mean sea level Friday, compared to 651.6 feet going into Memorial Day Weekend last year, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**BOAT SAFETY**
To find out where to get a free state Department of Natural Resources boat safety check this weekend, go to this article on GreenvilleOnline.com for a list of times and locations on Upstate lakes.

The Upstate was recently downgraded to moderate drought after months of extreme drought, according to the state Climatologist's Office. The area was in severe drought a year ago.

**Upstate lakes rebound**

| Lake | Full pool | Level* |
|---|---|---|
| Blalock | 710.00 | 710.68 |
| Bowen | 815.00 | 815.10 |
| Greenwood | 439.00 | 439.15 |
| Hartwell | 660.00 | 656.30 |
| Jocassee | 1110.00 | 1100.60 |
| Keowee | 800.00 | 796.10 |
| Russell | 475.00 | 472.34 |
| Thurmond | 330.00 | 326.68 |

*Feet above mean sea level

SUZIE RIDDLE / Staff

Lake Keowee was four feet below full pool, and Lake Jocassee was 10 feet below full pool, according to Duke Energy.

Andy Thompson, a Duke Energy spokesman, said Memorial Day Weekend at the start of the summer boating season is a good time to remind people that camping isn't allowed on

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# LAKES

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Duke-owned islands in Keowee, Jocassee or any of its lakes.

Duke islands can be used for fishing from sunrise to sunset, but nighttime use and fires at any time are banned, Thompson said.

All major corps recreation and swimming areas and boat ramps are open, said Tanya Grant, park ranger with the corps.

Islands in Lake Hartwell are open to overnight camping unless otherwise posted, Grant said.

Although water is up, Holbrooks said boaters should continue to take the same precautions as last year when the lake was lower and the risk of encountering objects just below the surface was greater.

"You never know what's under the water," Holbrooks said. "Keep a proper lookout at all times." Be alert to other boat traffic as well, he said.

Have a designated boat operator if lake activities include drinking, Holbrooks said. Extra officers will be on the water Memorial Day weekend to enforce drinking laws, he said.

DNR will offer free safety checks at numerous spots on Upstate lakes over the holiday weekend. A listing is available at GreenvilleOnline.com.

Life jacket loaner stands will be open at Twelve Mile, Twin Lakes, Singing Pines, Elrods Ferry, River Forks, and all seven corps campgrounds on Hartwell for use by boaters and swimmers.

Wearing a life jacket is the No. 1 way to prevent drowning, Grant said.

People who haven't used their boats in a year need to be sure they are in good working condition and all safety gear is on board, Grant said. This is a greater concern this year because with the drought conditions over the past year, a lot of people may not have used their boats recently, she said.

It's also good to have a navigational map and keep an eye on the weather when on the water.