DHEC to allow Walhalla to tap lake for water

Keowee drinking water permit to go into effect April 22

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WALHALLA — Efforts by Walhalla city officials to secure Lake Keowee as a drinking water source to meet future growth are getting a boost from state regulators, The Journal has learned.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control has issued a draft surface water withdrawal permit to the city as part of Walhalla's plans to build a new water plant, according to a DHEC spokesman.

Once finalized, the permit will be good for 20 years - 50 MGD

effect April 22 and expiring April 22, 2036.

Councilman David Underwood called it a positive development for the city.

"It's a good sign," said Underwood, who chairs city council's utilities committee. "It'll allow us to get water from Lake Keowee. A final permit should be issued at the end of the month."

The permit would allow Walhalla to withdraw a maximum of 202.5 million gallons a month from the lake, according to the draft document.

City officials acquired about 21 acre of lake

WATER: New plant estimated to cost $15M

FROM PAGE A1

property near West Union through a land swap, according to Underwood.

Earlier this year, Walhalla City Council approved a $1.77 million contract with Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood for the design, permitting and construction management of the water plant and intake from Lake Keowee.

Mayor Danny Edwards and council made the water plant project a top priority during the municipal elections last year.

City officials are on a tight schedule to get DHEC permitting so they can apply for State Revolving Fund loan with low interest.

DHEC spokesman Jim Beasley told The Journal that the agency has yet to receive any engineering reports from the city.

DHEC established a deadline of April 2018 for Walhalla to complete a new water plant as part of a consent order. DHEC issued the consent order after it fined the city $3,000 in 2014 because of deficiencies found in the city's old and dilapidated drinking water plant.

A new water plant is estimated to cost Walhalla more than $15 million.

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