

# Greenville thirsts for Keowee water

City looks to get early jump on a new permit

BY CARLOS GALARZA  
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SENECA — Seneca Utilities Director Bob Faires is sympathetic to Greenville Water System's thirst to secure more water from Lake Keowee.

"They're in the business of producing clean water for their customers just as we are," Faires said.

To meet future demand for water, the Greenville Water

'They're in the business of producing clean water for their customers just as we are.'

**Bob Faires**  
Seneca utilities director

System is pushing hard to lock in a new long-term interbasin transfer agreement. The current pact authorizes Greenville to take out 150 million gallons

daily from the Savannah River Basin, which includes Lake Keowee.

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However, unlike Seneca, GWS takes water from the Savannah River Basin and discharges water into the Broad and Saluda River Basins, making it an inter-basin transfer.

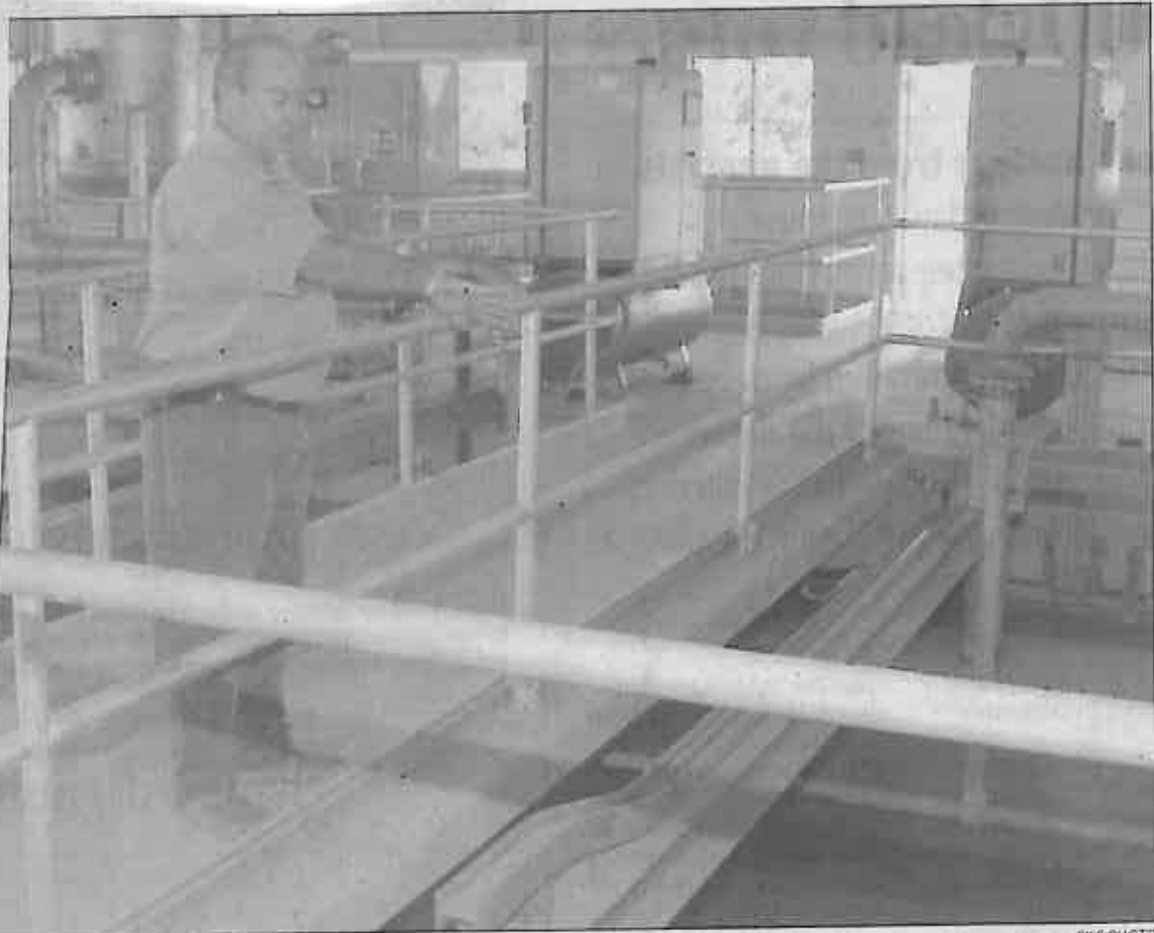
State regulators, however, insist GWS must wait until its inter-basin transfer registration of 31 years expires Sept. 1, 2016, before it tries to get a permit under the new South Carolina Water Withdrawal Act.

GWS Executive Director David Bereskin fears that waiting four years to get a permit would allow other users on both sides of the border with Georgia a head start on getting permission to put their straws into the Savannah River Basin, and possibly limiting the amount of water GWS could draw in the future.

Faires said he fully understands Bereskin's concerns, and said he, too, does not want to have to worry about meeting his customers' demands for a safe and reliable product.

Seneca's water plant has a capacity of 20 million gallons daily, but currently uses less than one-third of that capacity. He said Seneca is producing about 6 to 6.5 million gallons daily, and that includes selling water wholesale to Pioneer Rural Water District,

## WATER: Seneca's plant has a capacity of 20 million gallons daily



FILE PHOTO

Steve Fletcher, manager of Seneca's water plant that draws about 6 million gallons daily from Lake Keowee, explains the treatment process at the facility. Seneca officials are closely monitoring Greenville's push to secure future withdrawals from the lake that could top 90 million gallons daily.

state Department of Health and Environmental Control's position that it has to wait until 2016. A hearing on the dispute is expected later this month.

Aside from the inter-basin water transfer registration, Greenville signed a 43-year water withdrawal agreement with Duke Energy in 1973 that lasts until Sept. 1, 2016, and beyond, as long as Duke remains licensed to operate the Keowee-Toxaway Hydroelectric Project.

The agreement restricts Greenville to incremental withdrawal amounts from Lake Keowee. In 2010, the average daily withdrawal permitted was 20 million gallons daily, with a maximum day draw of 100 million gallons. In 2020, Greenville would be allowed 90 million gallons daily on average with maximum day draw of 150 million gallons.

Duke spokeswoman Sandra Magee said Duke is not a part of the Greenville-DHEC dispute.

Magee said that as part of Duke's relicensing the company will study what the water needs are going to be. Duke's initial 50-year license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ends Sept. 1, 2016.

**Salem and Keowee Key.**  
Ben Turetzky, executive director of Friends of Lake Keowee Society, said the new state Water Withdrawal Act

requires GWS to get an additional license.

"They're just trying to make sure they have right of withdrawal," Turetzky said.

GWS wants to get a 30-year permit right away to draw from the Savannah River Basin, and is disputing before an administrative law judge the