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Lake's levels determined by Duke (and God)

Willie,

The drought has been declared officially over. Most lakes in our region are at full pond or slightly below. Lake Jocassee, which had been down 28 feet, is now down about 1.5 to 2 feet. Lake Keowee, which has been down for about 5 feet for three years, is still down 5 feet. Have we not had any rain over Lake Keowee? What is Duke doing with our water? And more importantly, why? When will Lake Keowee get its fair share of higher lake levels?

Willie says:

For goodness sakes people! Willie has answered this three times, and I'm not answering it again other than to say Keowee will get more water when Duke wants it to have it. Let's move on.

And ...

Willie,

Now that South Carolina has been declared no longer in a drought, can we expect Lake Keowee to return to its normal level of 800 feet above sea level?

Willie says:

Lake Keowee will be what Lake Keowee will be. Like Willie has said a thousand times, God and Duke Energy determine the lake levels. Praying to God and paying your power bill are about the only options you have for making an impact.

Willie,

You said we are still in a moderate drought. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, none of South Carolina is in a drought. Only the far western edge of Oconee County and the extreme northern edge of Greenville, Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties are "abnormally dry." You also said Duke is trying to "equalize" lakes Keowee and Jocassee. Whoever you talked to at Duke Energy either misled you or didn't know what they were talking about. See, the turbines at Jocassee (and Bad Creek) can be run in reverse like pumps. If you plot the daily lake level reports from the paper for Keowee and Jocassee for a few days, you'll see that as Jocassee goes up, Keowee goes down, and vice versa. In extreme rain or drought conditions, both may trend up or down over time, but there's no "equalizing," it's just the opposite. What Duke is doing by filling Jocassee is like charging a big battery. They'd suck Keowee dry if they could. Then when demand for electricity is high, they can generate hydropower almost for free and delay firing up an old coal burner. Why this makes sense is a longer story, but only when Jocassee is 100 percent full will we see a significant rise in Keowee. It's just good business.

Willie says:

OK, you got me on the "moderate drought" call. We are no longer in a drought. However, you're all wet if you think that water levels are ALL about making money. Some of it is about cooling reactors. I suppose you could say that's about money as well, and you may be right. But, Duke Energy is in business to make money, and it does that by selling electricity generated directly or indirectly by water. That's why it built those lakes. Along with the federal government, it controls them. It's a natural resource only to the extent it allows it to be. God may fill 'em, but Duke decides how full.