

City of Monroe Water Resources Department

Questions & Answers

About City of Monroe Lake and Boating Activities

What are the lakes that the City of Monroe own and when/why were they built?

- The City of Monroe owns three man-made lakes, Lake Twitty (1972), Lake Monroe (1958), and Lake Lee (1929). These lakes were constructed to supply drinking water to the City of Monroe.

What regulations govern the use and operation of the City Lakes?

- Use and operation of City Lakes is regulated by stringent North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources drinking water supply regulations, Title 15A, Subchapter 18C. The City of Monroe City Lakes Ordinance also regulates lake activities. In all cases, the regulations are designed to protect the quality of water that will be needed to supply the City's drinking water needs.

What are the operating hours of the City Lakes?

- Lakes are open seasonally from approximately March 1st to November 1st. Press releases are issued announcing the actual open and close dates. As required by State law no recreational activities are allowed on the lakes during closed season. During open season, the lakes are open five (5) days per week from approximately sunrise to sunset. Hours are posted on the individual lake entry signs.

If I have lake front property, can I access the lake any time?

- No. Due to the water supply classification level of our lakes, we are required by law to provide on-site supervision for any activities on the lakes, and prohibit activity on the lakes from sunset to sunrise. To meet these requirements, activity on the lakes can only be permitted when the Lake Inspector is on duty during the open season. In addition, it is prohibited for any motorized boat to be launched from any location other than the City supervised boat ramp. Small non-motorized craft can launch during open season only from the City ramp or permitted access point.

How do lake front properties obtain a permit for a private dock and/or lake access?

- Permitting of private docks and lake access is governed by the City's Lake Ordinance. The City offers two options for lake front property to access the lakes. The first option is a private dock for motorized craft (see restrictions below); the second option is an access marker for non-motorized craft. Docks must be constructed to certain standards and from materials that will not potentially harm drinking water quality. Docks will be inspected and if repairs are needed the owner must make the repairs or remove the dock from City property. Private docks and access locations must renew their permits annually and pay the applicable fees.

If I have a private dock and/or annual permit do I have to follow the same rules as other lake users?

- Yes. Regulations governing lake activities apply to all users. During off-season, when the lakes are closed, all use of the lakes from private docks or access points is prohibited. Boats that operate from private docks or access points should be removed from the lakes during the closed season. For extenuating circumstances, a dock permittee may make a written request to leave their boat secured and locked to the dock for the winter, so long as a City inspector confirms that gasoline has been removed and the boat is safe.

What kinds of boats are allowed on the City Lakes?

- Boats or vessels not in excess of 20 feet in length are allowed.
- Boats or vessels with motors not in excess of 20 horsepower are allowed (variance for 25 horsepower is allowed).
- Sailing craft may be used on Lake Twitty during hours designated by the Superintendent of Water Treatment. No sailing craft are permitted on Lake Lee or Lake Monroe.

Where are the property lines around the City Lakes?

- Property lines vary around the lakes and can be determined by survey if needed. Generally, the City owns from 10 to 30 horizontal feet from the normal high water line. Property owners are advised to be very aware of ownership/property lines and the legal vegetation buffer requirements before performing any clearing or modifications around the lake. State law requires a minimum of 30 feet of undisturbed vegetation be kept on each property around each lake.

Do lake front property owners have to pay to fish or boat?

- If the property owner has a seasonal access permit and has paid the fee, their household family members do not have to pay for fishing or boating during open season.
- If they do not have an access permit, then access and use of the lakes is allowed from the boathouse and ramp/landing only, and they will need to pay for the use of the lake.
- A property owner with a valid access permit may allow up to 10 guests on a particular day to fish, providing each guest has paid for and obtained a fishing permit from the Lake Inspector.
- Activities from permitted access points and properties must be confined to open season and normal hours of operation. Proper sanitation facilities are required.

Does the City clean up trash around the lakes?

- The City of Monroe has three lakes. These three lakes combined have a large amount of shoreline. The City of Monroe does not have the staff or resources to regularly remove all the trash, logs, and debris that wash into the lakes from the many streams that feed into them. We do however try to pick up items when we are patrolling the lakes. Property owners can aid in the effort to keep the lakes clean by ensuring that they do not allow their trash to blow into the lakes or put yard waste into the lakes. Blowing yard leaves into the lakes is prohibited by law.

Do the Lake Inspectors inspect the lakes daily and check for any problems?

- No, but they patrol the lakes at least two times per week in season and once per week off-season. City staff does make additional patrols as needed to ensure the legal requirements of protecting our drinking water supply are being met.

Can property owners around City lakes pump water from the lake to use for irrigation?

- No. All City lakes have been constructed at a very large expense for the purpose of drinking water supply. Uncontrolled or un-metered water use from the lakes for irrigation purposes can have a negative impact on the water available for treatment and is unlawful.

Is swimming allowed in City lakes?

- No. North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources drinking water supply regulations stipulate that no swimming or body contact is to be allowed in any City lake.

Does the City remove logs from the lakes? Is there any plans to dredge sediment from the lakes?

- Logs washing into City lakes are a normal part of the aquatic ecosystem. As such, the City only removes logs that may interfere with drinking water supply intake structures. Therefore, all lake users should be alert for logs and submerged objects and understand that they utilize the lakes at their own risk.
- Dredging lakes is a very expensive activity. The City plans to only perform dredging near the water supply intakes to ensure water can be withdrawn for drinking water supply.

Where do I call to report a concern or to get additional information?

For routine questions call (704) 282-4601. After hours leave a message and we will respond the next business day. For emergencies call 911.