

Watauga River Intake Project FAQs Sheet

What is the Watauga River Intake Project?

This project will secure a secondary supplemental water source for the Town of Beech Mountain by drawing a small amount of water periodically (approximately 60 days a year) from the Watauga River. The water will travel from a small pumping station 7.2 miles to Buckeye Lake. This water source will only be used in times of drought, catastrophic emergency or if Beech Mountain's current water system fails.

Who is planning and building the Watauga River Intake?

The Town of Beech Mountain has been researching a secondary supplemental water source since 2010 with the help of several consulting firms. On February 25, 2020, during a special meeting, the Beech Mountain Town Council gave unanimous approval to staff to start the process of developing plans and submitting permit applications for a Watauga River Intake Project near Guy Ford Road.

How much and how long will this project take?

The estimated cost of this supplemental water supply project is 16 – 18 million dollars. This project is expected to take 5 – 7 years. It will be funded by USDA Loan.

What is the Town's current water source?

The Town of Beech Mountain's current and only water source is a man-made reservoir, Buckeye Lake, on Buckeye Creek. In 2015, the N.C. Division of Water Resources reported that the single water source doesn't meet the needs of the town and requested that the town explore and seek a secondary supplemental water source.

Will this project change any recreational activities on the Watauga River?

This Intake Project will not change any of the current water activities on the Watauga River. The new watershed classification will not change any permitted use of the Watauga River for hikers, fishermen, bikers, swimmers or any other individuals and everyone can continue to use the Watauga River as before. The new classification will further protect the Watauga River watershed by limiting certain future development in the protected area.

How will the Watauga River Intake affect the environment?

To date, all experts the Town has consulted have agreed that there will be minimal environmental impact from the intake. However, the Town is initiating an environmental review, using outside experts as needed, to provide a more detailed analysis of any environmental concerns, and the Town will take all steps necessary to comply with relevant State and Federal laws and regulations to minimize any environmental impact.

Will property owners along the Watauga River notice a reduced water flow? No. Drawing only .3 percent of the water flow on an occasional basis (approximately 60 days a year) will have no noticeable difference.

Will the Watershed Classification for the area need to be changed?

Beech Mountain is seeking to reclassify a portion of the Watauga River watershed located in a 10-mile radius east of Guy Ford Bridge to WS-IV. Part of this area is already classified High Quality Water (HQW) and its land use restrictions will not change. The change to WS-IV would place certain limits on the density of new residential development (15A NCAC 02B.0624), but will have no other impact on the area. This new classification will not change any permitted use of the Watauga River for hikers, fishermen, bikers, swimmers or any other individuals and everyone will continue to use the Watauga River as before. The new classification would further protect the Watauga River watershed by limiting certain future development.

How much water will the intake pull from the Watauga River? It will draw up to 500,000 gallons on an as-needed basis. For a simple reference, this would equate to drawing 20 fluid ounces (approximately 2.4 cups) out of a 50-gallon rain barrel.

What are some ways I can conserve water?

There are many ways you can help. Here are a couple of ways to conserve water every day:

- If you are hand washing a lot of dishes, fill up your sink with water instead of letting it run while you're scrubbing.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth. Water comes out of the average faucet at 2.5 gallons per minute. Don't let all that water go down the drain.
- Don't run the dishwasher/washing machine until its full. Those half loads add up to gallons and gallons of wasted water.
- Take shorter showers.
- Replace old toilets with new water efficient models.
- Get a rain barrel and have free water for watering your lawn and garden and washing your car.

How can I stay updated on the project?

By visiting <http://Beechmtnwater.com> you'll find current news regarding the project. On the website you will find project updates, events, and ways to conserve water each day.

