



Gaffney Board of Public Works
Policies and Procedures

Lake Whelchel

Effective Date – July 13, 2026

www.gbpw.com

Lake Whelchel

1. The Gaffney Board of Public Works (BPW) owns the property beneath Lake Whelchel (the “Reservoir”), as well as a buffer area of real property surrounding the Reservoir (the “Buffer Area”).
2. BPW maintains an office (the “Lake Whelchel Office”) at 151 Boat Landing Dr., Gaffney, SC. BPW has staff assigned to this location, and visitors can obtain copies of the Lake Whelchel Policies and Procedures and other information. BPW also provides a picnic area, lake access, boat ramp, and fishing pier at this address known as the Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility. Lake Whelchel and associated recreational areas are generally open daily for the hours posted on www.gbpw.com.

General

1. All persons using Lake Whelchel, the Buffer Area, the Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility, or other property owned or governed by BPW (collectively, “BPW Property”), are subject to, and governed by, all applicable BPW policies and procedures. All persons shall use BPW Property in accordance with applicable law.
2. In the event of a dispute as to the location of the boundary line separating a Contiguous Landowner’s property from that of BPW will provide any relevant survey information it may have to assist in locating the property line. If the Contiguous Landowner disagrees with the location depicted by the BPW survey information, such landowner may, at such landowner’s expense, obtain additional information from a registered land surveyor in aid of resolving any discrepancies.
3. Any permit, license or agreement issued by BPW may be revoked if the permit holder willfully or continuously violates any of the conditions of the permit(s), agreement(s), policies, procedures, or restrictions governing the use of BPW Property, any applicable laws or regulations, or any contractual obligations. Contiguous landowners are responsible for any contractors conducting work on their behalf in their Buffer Access Area. No person shall pollute BPW Property or the waters of the Reservoir with any sewage, garbage, rubbish, tree limbs, stumps, debris, or waste of any kind. No person shall use gasoline, oil, lubricants, pesticides, herbicides, or any other toxic or hazardous substance that may cause pollution of the water supply. The use of gasoline and lubricants is permitted exclusively for the proper operation of permitted watercraft or home and lawn maintenance equipment. Under specific and limited circumstances, herbicides and pesticides are allowed with written approval by BPW for pest management, removal of poison ivy, poison sumac, and/or poison oak or the removal of exotic species as identified by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (“SCDNR”).
4. Commercial activity is not allowed on BPW Property other than permitted work for BPW.
5. No wading, bathing, or swimming is permitted. Except for designated picnic areas within the Roger D. Harris Recreation Area, no picnicking or cooking of foodstuffs is permitted on BPW Property. No camping is permitted on BPW Property.
6. Controlled substances are prohibited on BPW Property.

7. Persons showing evidence of intoxication will not be permitted to operate a vessel on the Reservoir or otherwise occupy BPW Property.
8. All watercraft must be launched from the boat ramps at the Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility.
9. All pets on BPW Property must be on leashes or otherwise controlled in accordance with applicable Cherokee County ordinances.
10. Contiguous landowners shall not direct concentrated stormwater runoff into the Buffer Area or into the Reservoir. No septic tanks, septic tank drain lines or drain fields are allowed on BPW Property.
11. No phone service lines, cable television lines, gas lines, satellite dishes, or similar items can be installed on BPW Property.
12. No unpermitted items can be stored on BPW Property at the Reservoir.
13. No fences of any kind may be installed on BPW property. Any existing fence must be removed from BPW property at the time of property transfer.
14. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PROVIDED BY APPLICABLE LAW, BPW IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOSSES, DAMAGES, OR INJURIES OF ANY KIND THAT ARE SUSTAINED WHILE USING BPW PROPERTY

Lake Wardens

1. The Lake Wardens are the official custodians of BPW Property and are responsible for the enforcement of these policies and procedures. The Lake Wardens are authorized to revoke any permit and to deny access to persons (including Contiguous Landowners) who willfully or continuously violate BPW policies and procedures. Permit holders will comply with all conditions or restrictions of such permit; failure to do so may result in revocation.
2. The Lake Wardens have the authority to take necessary measures to ensure the safe and wholesome use of the Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility, the Reservoir and surrounding property and watershed and to remove anyone interfering with the peaceful and safe use of BPW Property or the Reservoir.

Boating

1. No boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel can be placed on the Reservoir without a valid permit.
2. No boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel shall be operated within 500 feet of a pump station or water intake of the dam.
3. Hydroplanes, powered racing hulls, airboats, airplanes (including seaplanes), hovercraft, and houseboats are prohibited.
4. Operators of any boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel must have all required equipment as specified by SCDNR regulation, including, without limitation, a U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifesaving device for each person aboard such vessel. Towing of any person or object behind a watercraft is prohibited on the Reservoir.
5. No person shall operate a boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel at a speed that will produce a wake. No person shall operate a boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel in such a manner as to endanger the passengers or the safety of other persons or property.
6. The operator is legally responsible for the wake of his or her boat, watercraft, or vessel. The entire lake is a NO WAKE ZONE. No boat may operate more than idle speed.
7. At no time shall any vessel carry more than the recommended weight specified by the manufacturer or carry so many persons that an unsafe or hazardous condition is created.
8. No boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel shall operate, anchor, moor, or dock within 150 feet of the public fishing piers on the Reservoir.
9. At times when the Lake Wardens deem the Reservoir to be too congested with boat, watercraft, vessel, or vehicle traffic, the Lake Wardens, in the interest of safety, may close boat landings and otherwise restrict access to the Reservoir or park. South Carolina law prohibits the operation of any boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel on the Reservoir between midnight and one hour before sunrise.
10. Kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, and all other non-motorized vessels are prohibited.

Fishing

1. A valid South Carolina Fishing License is required to fish in the Reservoir.
2. Bank fishing may only be conducted in the designated fishing areas that are posted in the Lake Whelchel Office.
3. Fishing is permitted for boaters on the Reservoir. All fishing is to be conducted in accordance with state law. Fishing is prohibited within any restricted or posted area.

Watercraft Permits

1. The permit sticker must be attached to the boat, watercraft, or vessel in a highly visible location on the starboard (right) side of the vessel.
2. BPW boat permits are valid from January 1 through December 31.
3. BPW staff may deny a permit to an owner of any boat, watercraft, or any other type of vessel which is deemed not to be lakeworthy.
4. Permits may be denied or immediately revoked if alterations to the exhaust system on any motor result in excessive noise.

Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility Reservations

1. Overview

The Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility at Lake Whelchel is available for private reservations for family gatherings and approved organizational events. A reservation provides exclusive use of the covered picnic shelter and picnic tables within the designated picnic area.

All reservations and visitors are subject to the General Lake Whelchel Policies and Procedures contained in this document. The following rules are in addition to those general requirements.

The following amenities remain available for public use during all reservations:

- Restrooms
- Fishing Pier
- Sundeck
- Boat Landing
- Public Fishing Areas
- Adjacent Parking Areas

Reservation of the picnic facility does not grant exclusive access to any other portion of Lake Whelchel or BPW property.

2. Eligibility

Reservations are available to:

- Cherokee County families
- Religious organizations
- Social organizations
- Fraternal organizations
- Professional organizations

Political groups are not eligible to reserve the facility.

3. Reservation Procedures

- Reservations may be made up to 120 days in advance.
- Telephone inquiries do not guarantee a reservation.
- A reservation is confirmed only after:
 - A completed reservation application has been submitted; and
 - Full payment has been received.
- The Gaffney Board of Public Works reserves the right to cancel or reschedule reservations when necessary for official BPW business.

4. Hours of Operation

Please see www.gbpw.com for hours of operation.

All guests, vehicles, decorations, and personal belongings must be removed, and cleanup completed at least 30 minutes before closing.

5. Facility Rules

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone, all guests must comply with the following:

- Children must always be supervised.
- The facility and surrounding property must be treated with respect.
- Guests must follow all instructions provided by BPW staff and Lake Wardens.

6. Noise Policy

Lake Whelchel is intended to provide a peaceful recreational environment for all visitors.

- Disc jockeys (DJs) are not permitted.
- Live bands and amplified entertainment are prohibited.
- Public address systems are not permitted.
- Personal speakers may be used only at a reasonable volume that does not disturb other visitors.
- BPW staff and Lake Wardens may require music to be lowered or turned off if it becomes disruptive.

7. Prohibited Items and Activities

The following are prohibited at the Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility and on BPW property:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Firearms

- Fireworks or explosives
- Confetti

8. Facility Responsibilities

The individual reserving the facility is responsible for:

- Supervising all guests.
- Cleaning the picnic shelter and surrounding area after use.
- Removing all decorations and personal property.
- Placing trash in the proper receptacles.
- Cleaning the grill, if used, with supplies provided by the Lake Warden.
- Leaving the facility in the same condition in which it was found.

Picnic tables located outside the reserved shelter area remain available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

9. Fees

- Reservation Fee (non-refundable): **\$50**
- Security Deposit (refundable): **\$50**
- Total Due at Reservation: **\$100**

Payments may be made by cash or credit/debit card.

The security deposit will be refunded following inspection of the facility, provided no damage has occurred and all cleanup requirements have been met.

10. Enforcement

The Lake Wardens are responsible for enforcing all Gaffney Board of Public Works policies governing Lake Whelchel.

Failure to comply with these rules may result in:

- Immediate termination of the reservation.
- Removal from the property.
- Forfeiture of the security deposit.
- Denial of future reservations.

11. Liability

Use of the Roger D. Harris Recreation Facility is at the user's own risk. The Gaffney Board of Public Works is not responsible for injuries, accidents, damage to personal property, or lost or stolen items occurring during use of the facility. By reserving the facility, the responsible party agrees to comply with all Gaffney Board of Public Works Lake Whelchel Policies and Procedures.