

Two letters you can send this week

Fill in the brackets, attach one dated photograph of your own bank with the day's USGS elevation in the filename, and send it. Fifty named letters from people who live here outweigh five hundred signatures.

A letter you can send to the Corps

Subject: Shoreline and bank condition under sustained operation at 656 feet

To the Savannah District,

I own property on Lake Hartwell at [location], and I have followed the announcement of the 656 foot year-round guide curve and the work at the Clemson Lower Diversion Dam Saddle Dike. I understand the dam safety reasons and I am not writing to object to them.

I am writing about the bank. The Hartwell bank stabilization application states that "in no instance will materials be placed below 655' msl elevation." With the operating target now at 656 feet, that leaves one foot between the normal pool and the lowest elevation at which I am permitted to place stone. On the USGS gauge at station 02187010, the lake has been below 655 feet on a substantial share of summer days even under the previous target, and a sustained lower target will make that the ordinary condition rather than the drought condition.

My questions are these. First, is a National Environmental Policy Act document being prepared for sustained operation at 656 feet, and if so, when would a draft be available for public comment? Second, does its scope include shoreline and bank condition? Third, will the 655 foot placement limit in the shoreline stabilization permit program be reviewed in light of the new guide curve?

I have attached dated photographs of my own shoreline with the gauge elevation noted. I am glad to provide more.

Thank you for your time.

[Name, address, phone]

A letter you can send to your legislator

Dear Senator [Name],

I live on Lake Hartwell at [location] in [county]. I am writing about something small that would make a real difference, and it costs the state nothing.

Lake Hartwell is one lake with two different rules. South Carolina's wake surfing law, section 50-21-870(B) (9), protects docks, piers, bulkheads, moored vessels and people in the water within 200 feet. It does not name the shoreline. Georgia's law for the same lake, OCGA 52-7-13.1, does cover the shoreline next to homes, parks, beaches and marinas. The practical result is that on our side of Hartwell, a residential bank with no dock on it has no wake surf protection at all, while the identical conduct is a violation a few hundred yards away in Georgia.

At the same time, the Corps has set Hartwell's permanent target at 656 feet for what it says could be five to ten years or more. The Corps' own bank stabilization permit does not allow stone to be placed below 655 feet, so the band of bank now taking the waves is the band we are not allowed to protect.

I would ask you to consider one standard for Lake Hartwell: no wake enhancement within 500 feet of shore, none in water shallower than 20 feet, and the activity kept to the main body of the lake where there is room for it. This is not a ban. Wakesurfing stays legal, and the main body is where most of it already happens.

I have attached a photograph of my own bank. I would welcome the chance to show you in person.

Respectfully,
[Name, address, phone]

Do not state that a federal comment period is open. Ask when one will be. As of 2026-09-21 the lake stood at 649.39 ft, 5.6 ft below the 655 ft placement floor: check USGS gauge 02187010 for the reading on the day you write.

Keep the Wake Off the Bank is a volunteer effort by Lake Hartwell residents. Not affiliated with USACE, SCDNR, the Georgia DNR or the Lake Hartwell Association. Corps inbox: CESAS-HartwellPoolRestriction@usace.army.mil