

OPINION

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Time is now to protect future water availability

When the resources of today must be preserved for the future, there's no better time to get serious about them than right now. That's why it's encouraging to see diverse discussions on the quality and availability of Lake Greenwood water take place.

One speaker at a meeting of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium the other day at the Drummond Center on the lake, called it "the diamond in the rough." It is that, to be sure. When water experts, local government and utilities officials and lakeside residents got together to explore future needs, it shows there is a serious recognition that preparations must be considered and made to assure the continuing viability of the "diamond in the rough" we have.

It's not unusual for those with vested interests to have varying opinions on what the situation is, what it will be, and what must be done to assuage the concerns for all.

A COUPLE OF CONCERNS IN particular always come to the fore and should. They are the recreational advantages the lake provides and the year-round water level.

That's been a concern for some time, of course, but as long as people are willing to talk and listen to each other with open minds, the walls that separate opinions and concerns will not create insurmountable hurdles on the way to finding solutions to satisfy everyone.

While the recreational considerations are up close, personal and important, there is another problem that will continue to grow as populations increase. That's a protected supply of water for home and industrial use. Already there is a dispute between the states of Georgia and Alabama over shared water sources. The City of Atlanta, for example, has such tremendous growth that water supplies already are a serious concern there.

THE ATLANTA QUESTION ALSO concerns South Carolina, particularly the sharing of water from the Savannah River. There have been indications that Atlanta would like to tap in to that supply, and that worries some officials in this state.

Of more interest locally, of course, is Lake Greenwood, which supplies water for Greenwood County. That is, or should be, a major consideration as talks on the lake go forward.

People with real concerns, upstream and locally, are at least talking. That offers opportunities to solve a problem that faces all of us, from Greenville on down. We take water for granted, but as a continuing supply depends on human activity and care, we have to take advantage of every opportunity to work together for the benefit of us, sure, but also for our children and their children far into the future.