FAQ's about Boone Lake:

Updated September 13, 2022

Boone Pool Levels

All evaluations of the new cutoff wall show it is performing as expected. TVA began draw down after Labor Day according to the normal operating guide curve.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why do Boone Lake levels come down in the fall?

TVA takes a system wide approach to managing the 41,000 square mile integrated river system. Boone is one of 49 dams in that system. In August, Senior River Forecast Manager James Everett provided a series of updates to stakeholders, marinas and the media to get the word out about the fall Boone Lake drawdown. What happens at Boone has an impact on downstream communities. Allowing for storage capacity during the rainy, winter months enables TVA river management to bump up capacity during rain events. Flood risk, power generation, water quality and water supply are all factors considered in Boone Lake's operating guide curve. In addition to meeting flood control targets, releasing water from Boone during September, October and November supplements water into the Holston and Tennessee Rivers during a time of year when natural inflows are lower due to normally dry fall conditions. Plants like Eastman Chemical Company, and TVA nuclear plants are downstream of Boone Dam, and rely on minimum river flows to operate. During his update, Everett said that Boone Lake, because of its fixed docks and dense population, actually comes down later than many of the other TVA reservoirs, including South Holston and Watauga which start down in June. Although it may seem like holding water for an extra few weeks may not pose any challenges and be easily achievable, the reality is that even minor changes to water levels and timing can have domino effects across the system. For example, the water that is released from Boone Dam passes through 11 other downstream dams and is used to produce hydroelectricity.

What about that fluctuations map you had up that showed the lake full until the end of September?

That graphic contained a dotted line and explanation that the lake could stay up ***in case*** our engineering team needed to perform additional testing and evaluation during the 2021 period of fluctuations and evaluations. The underground cutoff wall met its performance expectations with the reservoir at summer pool (1382 feet), so TVA made plans to return to the normal operating guide curve with a post Labor Day gradual drawdown of Boone Lake (initially 3-4 feet per month and later in the fall 4-5 feet per month). It should be at winter pool (1362 feet) around mid-December, then start the raise back up according to guide curve levels next spring. TVA plans to return Boone Lake to normal operations summer 2022.

Boone reservoir is an important part of TVA's integrated river system and a lowered reservoir with increased storage capacity helps provide flood protection downstream.

What can I do to change the date of the Boone drawdown?

TVA recognizes that lake levels play a significant economic role to local communities and regions. This is one reason why Boone Lake already sees very stable and reliable summer recreation levels from mid-May through Labor Day. Because changes at Boone would affect other components of TVA's reservoir release policy, a drawdown date change would involve a formal policy and environmental review for TVA. The last comprehensive study was conducted in 2004. TVA believes the current policy affords a great deal of balance across the many competing demands for water across the reservoir system. Although there are no formal plans to revisit reservoir operating policy, TVA recognizes that eventually an update and review will be necessary. While holding Boone Lake levels higher through September may not currently pose immediate or extreme increased flood risk, events like the recent flash flooding in Waverly, TN are examples of new data points that would be used to help assess hydrologic impacts associated with any late summer or early fall policy change.