Why are reservoirs important

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Reservoirs in the Water Cycle: Types, Roles, and Ecosystem Impact

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A lake really is just another component of Earth"s surface water. A lake is where surface-water runoff andgroundwater seepagehave accumulated in a low spot, relative to the surrounding countryside.

oWater Science School HOME oSurface Water topics o

If people had to pick their favorite water body, they might choose a crystal-clear lake nestled in the mountains. Not all lakes are clear or are near mountains, though. The world is full of lakes of all types and sizes.

A lake really is just another component of Earth"s surface water. A lake is where surface-water runoff (and maybe some groundwater seepage) have accumulated in a low spot, relative to the surrounding countryside. It"s not that the water that forms lakes get trapped, but that the water entering a lake comes in faster than it can escape, either via outflow in a river, seepage into the ground, or by evaporation. And if humans live nearby, then water levels can be affected by water withdrawals for human needs.

A reservoir is the same thing as a lake in many peoples" minds. But, in fact, a reservoir is a manmade lake that is created when a dam is built on a river. River water backs up behind the dam creating a reservoir.

Are lakes your favorite watery place to visit?If so or if not, why notvotefor your favorite water bodyin ourActivity Center.

The Earth has a tremendous variety of freshwater lakes, from fishing ponds to Lake Baikal in Siberia. Lake Baikal is the world"s oldest, largest, and deepest freshwater lake. Nearly a mile deep and holding over 23,000 cubic kilometers water, it would require the total volume of all the Great Lakes to fill it up if it were ever drained. (Source: NASA)

Most lakes contain fresh water, but some, especially those where water cannot escape via a river, can be classified as saline lakes. In fact, some lakes, such as the Great Salt Lake in Utah, are saltier than the oceans.

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Most lakes support a lot of aquatic life, but not all. The Dead Sea in the Middle East isn"t called "Dead" for nothing -- it is too salty for aquatic life! Lakes formed by the erosive force of ancient glaciers, such as the Great Lakes, can be thousands of feet deep. Some very large lakes may be only a few dozen feet deep -- Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana has a maximum depth of only about 15 feet.

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