

C-W DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Member Organizations Present:

AbitibiBowater
Catawba River Water Supply Project
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities
Chester Metropolitan District
City of Belmont
City of Camden
City of Gastonia
City of Hickory
City of Lenoir
City of Morganton
City of Mount Holly
City of Rock Hill
City of Statesville
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
Invista
International Paper
Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority
NC DENR Division of Water Resources
NC Wildlife Resources Commission
SC DNR
SC DHEC
Town of Granite Falls
Town of Longview
Town of Mooresville
USGS

Other Organizations Present:

HDR
Kearns & West, Inc.
Lancaster County WSD
NC DENR Division of Public Water Supply
Town of Fort Mill

Introductions, Agenda Review, and Announcements

1. Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator, opened the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and called the roll.

Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) Triggers

2. Bruce provided an LIP trigger update. Although the Storage Index Trigger is still “Normal”, the Basin is beginning a three-month period in which rain is critical to increasing lake levels to their summer targets. Recent rainfall has helped keep lake levels slightly above target at the end of February. Both the four-month and six-month ratios of actual-to-historical streamflows are less than 50 percent, indicating Stage 3 for that trigger. On March 1, the Langtree groundwater gage was “Normal;” however the Glen Alpine gage was in Stage 4. The groundwater level continues to decline at a time when they typically recharge.

Duke Operations and Meteorological Update

3. George Galleher gave an update on Duke’s system hydrological information. In January and February the system’s average precipitation was 4.33 inches, 57 percent of the historical average (dating back to 1971). The Charlotte airport’s rainfall gage is also at about 51 percent of its historical average. One to one-and-a-half inches rain is predicted in the next few days. NOAA forecasts a below-average probability of precipitation in most of the Basin in March, although between March and May the upper Basin may have an equal chance of below, normal, or above average precipitation. Duke’s meteorological contractor forecasts 20–40 percent chance of below-average precipitation in March. The La Nina effects are predicted to continue into the spring. Galleher pointed out that a dry February often seems to correlate with a dry summer, although this is strictly based on observation. If lake levels do not increase above their current levels, the Storage Trigger will drop to Stage 1 at the beginning of April. Galleher noted that the construction work at Bridgewater was at the point that Duke expects to begin bringing the Lake James levels back up to target beginning in late March. This will be an additional water demand on the system.

Residential Use Responses

4. Ken Kearns thanked water suppliers for providing their residential water use data and walked through charts comparing residential water use (per meter) for 2007-2010 to unrestricted use prior to 2007. He reminded the group that the data received from water suppliers are shifted back one month in the graphs to reflect when the water was actually used (thus, accounting data provided for January is recorded as December water use).

Media Communications

5. The group does not want the public to be surprised if the Basin enters LIP Stage 2 in the next few months and agreed to issue a press release reminding the public of the drought conditions and that the basin is still in Stage 1. Erin Culbert reported that Duke has already received calls regarding the drought, primarily from meteorologists at local TV stations. The press release has already been drafted and initially reviewed by the review group, and it will be finalized after the call. It will be distributed the following morning (March 4). It was suggested that a background piece on the LIP stages be created. Kearns responded that several drafts have been developed and these would be combined and edited for review in the next several weeks.

Annual In-Person CW-DMAG Meeting

The annual CW-DMAG in-person meeting will be held on May 10th at Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities Water Treatment Plant in Huntersville, NC.