

C-W DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY

Tuesday, September 6, 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 Lincoln

City of Morganton

City of Mount Holly

City of Rock Hill

City of Statesville

Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC

International Paper

Lincoln County

Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority

NC DENR Division of Water Quality

NC DENR Division of Water Resources

NC Wildlife Resource Commission

SC DNR

SC DHEC

Town of Fort Mill

Town of Granite Falls

Town of Mooresville

USGS

City of Newton

Other Organizations Present:

HDR

City of Concord

Kearns & West, Inc.

McKim & Creed

Western Piedmont COG

Union County

York County

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. The Storage Index (SI) is at its lowest levels measured since 2007, and the recent rainfall is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the SI. The SI could move into LIP Stage 2 in the next few weeks without significant short-term rainfall. After September 30th, the Target Storage Index (TSI) begins to decline heading into the late fall, which could preclude a change in LIP stage. Bruce suggested that the U.S. Drought Monitor, which indicates the Basin is in Stage 0, seems to lag behind actual conditions in the Basin. The four-month average streamflow is 52.6 percent of the historical average, worse than the six-month average, which is 70.3 percent of the historical average. This may be because the six-month average includes March, which experienced above-average rainfall. The groundwater wells are all trending downward.

Duke Operations and Meteorological Update

3. George Galleher gave an update on Duke's system hydrological information. Data from the Charlotte airport indicate near normal rainfall so far this year while the overall system average is at 84 percent of normal. This creates perception issues. Duke's contractor predicts a dry September, whereas the NOAA forecast for the rest of the month is for above average precipitation, changing to an equal chance of above, below, or average precipitation in October. Galleher noted that the Basin is currently (during the call) under a tornado watch, and the tropical storm forecast is for an active season. The seasonal drought outlook suggests no significant change from the current conditions. Duke is maintaining its Stage 1 minimum flow releases as of Monday afternoon (September 5).

Consideration of a Press Release

4. Bruce explained that, prior to expecting several inches of rainfall over the weekend, Duke had been prepared to propose a press release announcing that the Basin had moved from LIP Stage 0 to Stage 1 (triggered by the SI and streamflows). The rainfall was not enough to affect the LIP stage, so the press release still seems necessary. However, Duke recommended that the CW-DMAG wait a few days after the rainfall event before distributing the release, with the goal of better media coverage and public perception. The CW-DMAG confirmed that the press release should be distributed on Thursday (September 8). In addition, the group suggested several modifications to the messages: descriptions of the voluntary requirements of Stage 1 *and* the mandatory requirements of Stage 2; acknowledgement of the recent rainfall *and* the absence of significant effects from it; and a note that the higher levels of precipitation in the Charlotte area are an exception in the Basin. The release could also mention that the Basin might move close to or into Stage 2, (although this is less of a concern in September than it would be in June or July when there are several months ahead of high water demand). The CW-DMAG wanted water users to know that the fall planting season might be subject to Stage 2 mandatory water restrictions. Duke also suggested that the water suppliers consider how to communicate the press release messages to their customers through additional avenues.

5. Bruce suggested that CW-DMAG hold a call later in September to assess and discuss Basin conditions. If the Basin were to enter Stage 2 prior to the formal October 1 compilation, water suppliers would have had a little more advance notice to begin communicating this change to their customers. Bruce will send out confirmation of a date for this call. He will also send a mid-September trigger update (which he clarified will not be an official update on LIP conditions, which occurs at the first of the month, but rather a snapshot of the current situation).