

C-W DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY

Tuesday, January 11, 2011

Member Organizations Present:

Catawba River Water Supply Project
City of Belmont
City of Camden
City of Lenoir
City of Morganton
City of Rock Hill
City of Statesville
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
Lincoln County
Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority
North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission
Town of Granite Falls
USGS

Other Organizations Present:

HDR
Kearns & West, Inc.

Note: Due to inclement weather, there were some technical issues with the conference call system and some CW-DMAG members were not able to call in. This will be noted for CW-WMG members (see below).

Introductions, Agenda Review, and Announcements

1. Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator, opened the meeting with a roll call and reviewed the agenda. Bruce noted that some people were not able to call in, possibly due to the bad weather, and therefore the call would not be part of the attendance standard for Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group members.

Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) Triggers

2. Bruce provided an LIP trigger update. The storage index is above 100% of the target. He noted that the January 2011 storage index is significantly higher than in January 2008 when the basin was emerging from the drought. However, Bruce also noted that the US Drought Monitor shows the southeast United States currently has the most severe drought conditions of anywhere in the country. The three-month basin average of the Drought Monitor Index is at LIP Stage 1. The four-month streamflow average is 53.2% of the historical average (LIP Stage 3 for that indicator), and the six-month average is 57.9% of the historical, which is LIP Stage 2. Storage thus continues to buffer the effects of the drought and is keeping the basin from entering a higher overall stage.

Duke Operations and Meteorological Update

3. George Galleher gave an update on Duke's system rainfall data, which strongly reflects the status of Catawba-Wataree basin. The system's monthly average rainfall for 2010 was about 89% of the long-term average, or about five inches below average. Aside from 2003 and 2009, the system has had below-average precipitation for the last twelve years. In the next 6-14 days, there is an above-average probability for precipitation. Duke's meteorological consultant expects 20-60% below normal precipitation for January, 10-40% below average for February, and an equal chance of being above or below normal for March in North Carolina and 20-40% below average for March in South Carolina. NOAA is calling for an equal chance of below or above average precipitation for North Carolina, below average for South Carolina in January, and below average for both states from January through March. The forecast shows La Niña effects continuing, indicating a warmer and drier winter. Streamflows are trending significantly below normal. Bruce also noted that the most critical time for the basin is the spring when significant evapotranspiration return. The amount of precipitation in the spring tends to determine the severity of summer drought conditions.

USGS Overview of Stream Gage Calculation

4. USGS explained that they are constantly calibrating stream gages; they make actual discharge measurements over the entire range of the streamflow. They take frequent measurements over a six-to-eight week cycle, and make adjustments to the rating curves as necessary. They make additional measurements after floods or droughts. All of the stream gages used with the LIP have long periods of record.

Media Communications

5. It was noted that it may be difficult to convey to the public that the drought is ongoing because there has been fairly frequent precipitation and the lakes levels are up. Bruce suggested and the CW-DMAG concluded to wait until a little later in the winter or early spring (perhaps early March) to make announcements about the drought, as the public may be more receptive then. He proposed reviewing a draft press release on the February CW-DMAG call and discussing when to distribute it then.

Next Call

The next CWD MAG call will be held in February 2011.