

CATAWBA-WATEREE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

News Release

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CW DMAG Advises Basin's Drought Conditions are Essentially Normal

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) today announced the steady improvement of groundwater and streamflow conditions have moved the basin's drought conditions to normal. In accordance with Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) guidelines, the CW-DMAG has advised its members that all water use restrictions can be lifted including those on landscape watering and car and power washing. Local water suppliers will provide guidance on water use specific to their jurisdictions.

"Conditions across the basin have essentially returned to normal," said Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator. "The Group reviewed the existing data and determined that the basin can support normal water use. Whether the basin continues in normal conditions or falls back into a drought as we move into summer is highly dependent upon future rainfall patterns."

Recent rains have pushed streamflow to normal conditions and meteorologists are predicting an above average chance for normal rainfall in mid-June.

The basin's groundwater indicators continue to improve, and the US Drought Monitor (representing a consensus of scientists' views from a complement of drought indicators across the nation) shows almost all the basin in a normal condition.

"It's taken a while, but basin conditions can finally support normal water use," said Mike Bailes of the Catawba River Water Treatment Plant. "Our customers have been terrific in responding to our water use restrictions and, because of that, we were able keep water flowing for the basin's most essential needs."

The 2007-2009 drought was the worst ever recorded in the basin. The CW-DMAG Members will continue to monitor conditions via regular updates and reconvene as conditions and the LIP process warrants.

Drought and Weather Indicators

The CW-DMAG reviews the area's major drought indicators along with the National Weather Service's predictions of future weather trends.

The U.S. Drought Monitor map shows only a very small section of the basin in abnormally dry conditions.

The long-term trends for groundwater levels continue to show improvement.

The six-month average of area streamflows is above 85 percent of the historical six-month average and is in a normal level.

The reservoir storage index holds steady at above-target storage levels and remains in normal conditions.

Rainfall: Through May 2009, rainfall over the basin continues to be 0.28 inches below long-term averages. The National Weather Service is predicting normal precipitation for mid-June with an equal chance of above or below normal rainfall for July and August.

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) was formed to regularly review the drought status and to recommend and coordinate needed actions for the CW-DMAG members. It also reviews the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) and recommends possible improvements to Duke Energy. Normally scheduled to meet once a year, the CW-DMAG has received weekly drought status reports since late summer 2007 and has met as a group at least monthly. CW-DMAG members include the area's public water suppliers and several large industrial users that withdraw water from the Basin, NC and SC agencies, the US Geological Survey, and Duke Energy. The CW-DMAG and the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) are outcomes of Duke Energy's relicensing process for the Catawba-Wateree Hydro Project. The LIP will become part of Duke Energy's New License for the Project to be issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

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