

# CATAWBA-WATEREE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

News Release

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## **Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group Adjusts Restrictions**

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) yesterday advised its members that conditions may now allow outdoor water uses if strictly limited to no more than one day per week. Local water suppliers will provide additional guidance for their jurisdictions as appropriate. The DMAG will review the drought indicators and update its recommendations if needed by May 30.

Based on research on the water used by area swimming pools and car washing, the CW-DMAG concluded to permit these activities as a trial until the end of May. The CW-DMAG members will closely monitor the results of the adjusted restrictions during that time.

"We're still in a Stage 3 drought," said Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator, "but all the drought indicators have shown improvements for about a month. We hope we won't need to go back to more severe restrictions when we evaluate the drought status again at our next meeting."

"Our customers have adopted responsible water practices during this continuing drought, and that allows for additional uses within reason," said Maeneen Klein, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities' water conservation manager.

## **Drought and Weather Indicators**

In arriving at its recommendation, the CW-DMAG reviewed the area's major drought indicators along with the National Weather Service's predictions of six-month weather trends.

The U.S. Drought Monitor map continues to show part of the area in "Extreme" drought, one level better than its worst drought designation.

Groundwater levels have begun to increase.

The six-month average of area stream flows is now greater than 44 percent of normal putting it in Stage 3.

The reservoir storage index has recovered to above normal for this time of year better positioning the region to withstand the high summer losses from natural evaporation and transpiration of the area's vegetation cover.

Rainfall – 2008's first quarter rainfall was below normal, but higher than last summer and fall.

National Weather Service Trends are predicting lower-than-average rainfall throughout the summer due to the continuing influence of La Niña.

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 Groups' 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 since late summer 2007 has received weekly drought status reports 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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