

CATAWBA-WATEREE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

News Release

May 20, 2008

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Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group Adjusts Restrictions

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) today advised its members to continue strictly limiting outdoor water uses to no more than one day per week. The Group noted that drought conditions have not improved substantially over the last 30 days, and the Catawba-Wateree Basin remains in a Stage 3 drought. Local water suppliers will provide additional guidance on restrictions for their jurisdictions as appropriate.

“So far this year rainfall has been about five inches below normal, and we’re just getting to hot weather when the demand for water is the highest,” said Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator. “Until all the indicators show big improvements, we need to be cautious about our water use. We hope we won’t need to go back to more severe restrictions when we evaluate the drought status again at our next meeting.”

“The water users in the Catawba Basin have done a terrific job of conserving water,” said Steve Gilbert, Lincoln County’s public works director. “We need for them to continue these practices as we approach another potentially hot and dry summer.”

The DMAG will review the drought indicators and its recommendations by June 30.

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.

The long-term trends for groundwater levels have begun to decrease slightly and levels are still below normal for this time of year.

The six-month average of area stream flows has inched up to 45 percent of normal keeping it in Stage 3.

The reservoir storage index remains above normal for this time of year due to the lower winter evaporation, reduced hydro releases, and water conservation in the Basin. This better positions the region to withstand the high summer losses from increased natural evaporation and transpiration by the area’s vegetative cover.

Rainfall – To date 2008’s rainfall has been about five inches below normal.

National Weather Service Trends are predicting long-term climate trends for the period June – August even though it appears that La Nina is moving into a neutral phase. Some meteorologists are projecting below-average rainfall throughout the summer.

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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