

CATAWBA-WATEREE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

News Release

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Dry Weather puts Catawba-Wateree Basin in Drought Watch

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) today announced that this summer's hot, dry weather has placed the Catawba-Wateree River Basin in Stage 0 of the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP). Stage 0 is a drought watch stage that alerts the CW-DMAG members to monitor conditions more closely and review possible coordinated actions should conditions worsen.

Below normal rainfall has dropped two of the three LIP drought indicators (triggers) to Stage 0: water storage in the Basin's reservoirs has declined and stream flows that feed the reservoirs are below normal. Although not yet at Stage 0, the U.S. Drought Monitor trigger is indicating some parts of the Basin are "abnormally dry."

"Reservoir storage and inflow conditions across the Basin are slightly below normal and showing some signs of stress," said Ed Bruce, Duke Energy, CW-DMAG coordinator. "Whether the Basin sees additional impacts or improves to normal conditions as we move into fall is dependent upon future rainfall patterns."

The CW-DMAG will monitor these early warning signs and work together to protect the water supply and other uses of the Catawba-Wateree Project. No specific actions are recommended for Basin residents at this time but the CW-DMAG notes that wise water use and voluntary water conservation are always beneficial.

Current conditions do not match those of late summer and fall 2007 when the Basin rapidly descended into a severe drought. By example, the Basin is still able to support planned Recreational Releases from impoundments at this time. The 2007-2008 drought was the worst ever recorded in the Basin.

"The CW-DMAG is committed to taking what we learned from the 2007 drought and applying it to today's conditions to mitigate the impacts adverse weather conditions could have on residents and businesses of the Basin," said Kevin Greer, City of Hickory Assistant Public Services Director - Public Utilities.

The CW-DMAG members will monitor conditions, receive regular updates and meet at least monthly until conditions return to normal according to the process established by the LIP.

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 small section of the basin in abnormally dry conditions.

The four-month average of area streamflows is above 80 percent of the historical four-month average and is in a Stage 0 Condition.

The reservoir storage index is below Target Storage levels and is in Stage 0 conditions.

Rainfall: Year-to-date rainfall through July is about 91.5 percent of long-term average with a majority of the rainfall occurring earlier in the year. The National Weather Service is predicting average precipitation in the Basin for August with an equal chance of above or below normal rainfall for September and October.

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 meets at least monthly when LIP triggers indicate Stage 0 or greater. 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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