

# CATAWBA-WATEREE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

## News Release

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Media Contacts: Ed Bruce  
704-382-5239

Amy Steinmetz  
704-577-4737

### **C-W DMAG Announces Basin Drought Conditions Improve to LIP Stage 2**

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) today advised its members that drought indicators across the basin are showing improvement and, overall, the basin is now in Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) Stage 2 drought.

“The good news is that gradual improvement of stream flows and groundwater recharge is occurring,” said Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator. “However, if long-term forecasts prove true, the basin will continue to experience dryer than normal conditions until at least mid 2009.”

Recent widespread rains are reenergizing stream and groundwater levels. This combined with continued water conservation by customers is holding the region’s water supply at a steady level.

Current basin conditions continue to accommodate up to two days a week of outdoor water use without significant negative impacts on water supplies. Local water suppliers will provide guidance regarding any temporary restrictions specific to their jurisdictions.

“Although most drought indicators are moving toward normal levels, the situation requires our ongoing vigilance as we get closer to spring’s annual increase in water demand,” said Ed Cross, Division Manager, Water Supply and Treatment, City of Gastonia.

The CW-DMAG will continue to review drought conditions regularly and re-evaluate recommendations as needed throughout the winter months.

### **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 a small area in the upper basin in abnormally dry to moderate drought conditions.

The long-term trends for groundwater levels continue to show gradual improvement, even though they remain below normal for this time of year.

The six-month average of area stream flows improves to slightly above 65 percent of the historical six-month average and is in a Stage 1 LIP drought level.

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

Rainfall: The year 2008 ended with rainfall in the basin at about 8.2 inches below long-term averages although some areas, like Charlotte, saw more, and some, like the upper parts of the basin, saw less. The National Weather Service is predicting below average probabilities for precipitation through May. To date in January, the basin has received an average of 2.1 inches of precipitation.

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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## Contacts for Local Water Jurisdictions

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### Belmont, NC

Chuck Flowers (Utility Director)  
704-825-0512  
cflowers@cityofbelmont.org

### Camden, SC

Tom Couch  
803-425-6045  
tcouch@camdensc.org

### Catawba River Water Treatment Plant (SC)

Mike Bailes  
803-286-5949 Ext. 24  
mbailes@comporium.net

### Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities

Vic Simpson  
704-391-5065  
vsimpson@ci.charlotte.nc.us

### Chester Metropolitan District (SC)

William M. Medlin, Executive Director/CEO  
803-385-5123  
mmedlin@truvista.net

### Gastonia, NC

Rachel Bagley, Director of Communications  
and Marketing  
704-866-6749  
RachelB@cityofgastonia.com

### Hickory, NC

Mandy Pitts  
828-261-2222  
mpitts@ci.hickory.nc.us

### Lancaster County Water & Sewer District

Mark Knight  
803-416-5255  
mknight@lcwasd.org

### Lincoln County

Stephen A. Gilbert, Public Works Director  
704-736-8495  
sgilbert@lincolncounty.org

### Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority (SC)

Michael (Mike) Hancock  
803-438-2991  
lugoffh20@aol.com

### Morganton, NC

Joshua Harris  
828-432-2516  
jharris@ci.morganton.nc.us

### Mt Holly, NC

Leslie Shiel  
704-907-8663  
ishie@hartandshiel.com

### Aletha Hart

704-992-5937  
hart808@bellsouth.net

### Rock Hill, SC

Lyn Garris, Public Affairs Officer  
803-329-7009  
803-417-1081 Cell  
lgarris@ci.rock-hill.sc.us

### Union County, NC

Scott Huneycutt  
704-296-5255  
ScottHuneycutt@co.union.nc.us

### Valdese, NC

Jeff Morse  
828-879-2116  
JMorse@ci.valdese.nc.us

### York County, SC

David Harmon, Public Works Director  
803-628-3200  
david.harmon@yorkcountygov.com

David Hughes, Water and Sewer Supervisor  
803-628-3210  
david.hughes@yorkcountygov.com