

C-W DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

CONFERENCE CALL

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

DRAFT CALL SUMMARY

Member Organizations Present:

Abitibi-Bowater
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities
Chester Metropolitan District
City of Belmont
City of Camden
City of Gastonia
City of Hickory
City of Lenoir
City of Morganton
City of Mt. Holly
City of Rock Hill
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
INVISTA
Lincoln County
Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority
NCDENR-DWR
NCWRC
SCDNR
SCDHEC
Town of Granite Falls
Town of Mooresville
Town of Valdese
Union-Lancaster Catawba River Water Treatment Plant
USGS

Other Organizations Present:

Kearns & West, Inc.
Town of Fort Mill
NCDENR Public Water Supply Section
York County

Introductions, Agenda Review, and Announcements

1. Ed Bruce opened the meeting with introductions and reviewed the agenda.

Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) Triggers, Duke Operations, and Meteorological Update

2. Bruce reviewed the LIP triggers, including an update of the Catawba-Wateree Storage Index (SI), streamflow, and groundwater gages. The SI is continuing to build above the target elevation, after passing the seasonal low point for the TSI. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor the basin is in a severe-to-moderate drought, thus continuing in a Stage 2 designation. Streamflows remain in Stage 1, and groundwater levels have nearly recovered to their levels a year ago, though they are still below normal. It was pointed out that the LIP anticipates that groundwater triggers can be updated with data for each new water year. The last water year ended on September 30, 2008, and the revised trigger numbers show that only one of the three groundwater gages changed to Stage 1 from Stage 2. These new groundwater triggers will be used effective March 1, 2009.
3. George Galleher provided an update on area meteorology conditions and on Duke's hydro operations. This year to date, the basin has received about half the precipitation normally expected, and there was a record low on one of streamflow gages on February 24. Every area of the basin has received below-average rainfall (through the date of this summary), and both NOAA and Duke's weather contractor are predicting that March through May will be drier than normal. Work is continuing on the Catawba spillway at Bridgewater; so lake levels will be closely monitored. On March 10 Duke will begin dewatering the Bridgewater penstock to begin work on the new powerhouse.

Residential Use Responses

4. Ken Kearns reviewed the trends for per-meter residential use and Duke's water releases through January 2009. Water use has remained below average, and hydro generation at Wateree continues to be below normal long-term averages.

LIP Evaluation Committee Report

5. Kearns reviewed the activities of the LIP Evaluation Committee. At its last meeting on February 11, the Committee evaluated trigger data and considered alternative triggers for streamflow, groundwater gages, and the drought monitor. The Committee has concluded that the LIP is functioning well, and it will in fact take more than an adjustment to one trigger to change the LIP response. To create a different LIP response will require a modification of all the triggers and/or redefining how each contributes to the determination of the LIP Stage. Kearns suggested that the Committee would likely recommend modifications to several of the triggers, but this will not result in major changes to the LIP response. At the last LIP Evaluation Committee meeting, the Committee also clarified that the streamflow, groundwater, and drought monitor triggers are indicators of the seriousness the drought, whereas the storage index is an indicator of Duke's and the water suppliers' ability to manage the drought. At times under certain conditions, it can be difficult to see the distinction.

Consideration of Temporary Stage 2 Recommendations

6. Kearns noted that the water suppliers are permitting two-day-a-week outdoor water use, and the system remains in Stage 2. He proposed that the DMAG maintain these recommended use restrictions. After a brief discussion the DMAG agreed to the proposal and indicated that there is no need for a press release since nothing has changed.

Discussion of 2008 Water Use Reporting

7. Bruce reminded members who have not yet done so to send their annual withdrawals to him and Kevin Mosteller. This data was due on January 31, 2009.

Water Management Group Update

8. Barry Gullet reported that the Water Management Group (WGM) met on February 10. They discussed the mapping and groundwater well projects, which are making progress. They also approved a contract with NC State University to analyze the use of smart irrigation approaches and benchmarks for irrigating directly from the lakes. The Group is also in the process developing a Web site and a WGM logo.

Conclusion

9. Kearns suggested that the next meeting be held in person to plan for increasing evaporation and outdoor irrigation needs, and to hear a more detailed report from the LIP Evaluation Committee. The next CW-DMAG meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at 10 AM.
10. Bruce adjourned the meeting.