

Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group Meeting Summary
June 25, 2008

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities
Environmental Services Building

Member Organizations Present:

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 Newton
City of Rock Hill
Duke Energy
International Paper
Lincoln County
Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority
NCDENR-PWSS
NCDWR
SCDHEC
SCDNR
Town of Granite Falls
Town of Mooresville
USGS

Other Organizations Present:

Community of Lake James, Inc.
HDR Engineering
Kearns & West
University of South Carolina

Introductions, Agenda Review, and Announcements

1. Ken Kearns opened the meeting with introductions and reviewed the agenda.
2. Mack Edmisten distributed information he'd received from the North Carolina Car Wash Association. He asked that members read the information and share their feedback as appropriate.

LIP Trigger Update

3. Ed Bruce showed a presentation of the LIP triggers including the Catawba-Wateree Storage Index (SI) and stream flow gauges. The SI returned to normal over the winter. The other triggers showed recovery trends although none got out of their Stage 3 designation. However, the trends for all the triggers seem to have peaked in the last few weeks and are beginning to decline.

Duke Operations and Meteorological Update

4. George Galleher provided an update on area meteorology conditions and Duke's hydro operations. The National Weather Service is predicting average rainfall in the next six to 14 days, but Duke's meteorologist believes there will be below-average precipitation. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows the basin in an extreme drought, but, based on his observations of the trends at the Pleasant Garden stream-flow indicator, Galleher predicts the area will soon see an exceptional drought designation. Several stream flow indicators are at record lows for the date. Duke continues to release only critical flows.

Consideration of Temporary Stage 3 Recommendations

5. Ken reviewed the CW-DMAG's April 2008 decision to recommend allowing outdoor watering one day a week based on improving drought indicators at that time. The improvement in storage was attributed to Duke's resumption of making critical flow releases, low natural evaporation in the winter and spring, and water customer conservation. However, the indicators have stopped improving and are taking a downturn. He asked the Group to consider the recommendations about water-use restrictions. The Group decided to maintain the current restrictions, but meet by phone again in two weeks to revisit the topic. In that time, public water suppliers should be talking with their colleagues about the potential for more severe restrictions.

Water Consumption Committee Reports

6. Bill Yetman reported on the Water Consumption Committee findings on filling and refilling swimming pools. They estimated that about 3 million gallons a day in the summer months go to filling and refilling swimming pools in the basin with a yearly average of less than 1 mgd.

Water Management Group (WMG) Update

7. Barry Gullet provided an update on the WMG's last meeting. He noted that they are working to get director's and officer's insurance. The WMG is moving forward with finding locations for seven new groundwater wells, and also a study on improving safe yield and usable storage. Maeneen Klein was named WMG's liaison with the North Carolina Green Industry Council, and the Group is working on building that partnership for some shared programs. A one-pager that discusses the WMG and its projects was distributed.

DMAG Membership E-Mail

8. Bruce noted that the CW-DMAG Membership list has been updated with changes that various organizations provided.

Letter to Rock Hill

9. Bruce noted that he drafted a response to Rock Hill's letter to the CW-DMAG, which suggested that allowing outdoor water uses was inconsistent with the LIP. Bruce's response noted that the recommendations in the LIP are recommendations to meet the water-use reduction targets in the LIP.

Drought Status Communications Update

10. Kearns will call a meeting with the Drought Status Communications Committee due to the worsening drought conditions.

Press Release on Water Use Restriction Results

11. Kearns noted that a press release on water use restriction results has been drafted and may be distributed around the July 4 weekend.

Update on Water Use Restrictions Guidelines

12. Kearns noted that reviewing the water user restriction guidelines has been on hold, but will resume by focusing on making the guidelines read more like guidelines and less like an ordinance.

Community of Lake James, Inc. Presentation

13. As introduction, Mark Oakley provided background on Duke's recent meeting with the Community of Lake James, Inc. (CLJ) on behalf of the Comprehensive Relicensing Agreements' Final Agreement Committee to discuss a CLJ letter written to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) about the effectiveness of the LIP. As a follow-up to his meeting, CLJ was invited to present their concerns to the CW-DMAG.
14. Suzy Johnson and George Johnson presented CLJ's interests. They called for changes to:
 - Drought restrictions and targets
 - Critical elevation calculations
 - Target Storage Index
 - CW-DMAG Membership

15. Bruce noted that their recommendations and others will be addressed when the LIP is reviewed – when the current drought indicators have returned to normal. Bruce also noted that all Critical Elevations have been reviewed and are up to date.

Round Table

16. Kearns asked members to provide their names local public information officers to be included in future press releases.
17. Don Rayno explained that a Drought Management Bill is likely to be introduced in the legislature soon, designated as: Senate Bill 1879 and House Bill 2499.

Conclusion

18. The next CW-DMAG meeting will be a conference call on Thursday, July 10 at 10 a.m. The CW-DMAG will meet in-person on Thursday, July 31 at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities' Lee S. Dukes Water Treatment Plant.
19. Kearns adjourned the meeting.