KEOWEE-TOXAWAY DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP
CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY

Wednesday, January 25, 2017

Organizations Present
Augusta Utilities (GA)
Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority, SC
Duke Energy
Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA-EPD)
Greenville Water, SC
HDR
National Weather Service (Greenville-Spartanburg)
Powdersville Water District
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC)
SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)
Seneca Light and Water, SC
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Attendance Roll and Agenda Review
1. Ed Bruce of Duke Energy took attendance and reviewed the agenda.

Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) Status
2. As of January 25, 2017 the Keowee-Toxaway (KT) Project remained in Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) Stage 2 conditions due to a continued dry conditions and as a result of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) currently being in Level 2 of their Drought Plan.

3. Mr. Bruce provided an update on lake and basin conditions. Duke Energy usable reservoir water storage operates in tandem with the USACE usable reservoir water storage, per the New Operating Agreement. The USACE drought conditions for both Hartwell Lake and Thurmond Lake are at USACE Drought Plan Level 2 and are projected to remain there during early 2017. USACE expects reservoir elevation levels to remain around 650’ for Hartwell and 320’ for Thurmond for the next few weeks with the potential for a slight increase in March, under the assumption of continued below average inflows. As of January 25, 2017 Hartwell Lake elevation is 650.47. Note, the updated Hartwell graphic was unavailable, therefore the previous week’s status was provided. Four month rolling average streamflows continue to be well below the long term average, though recent rains have resulted in some improvement. The U.S. Drought Monitor map shows continued drought conditions despite improvement in the southeastern U.S. over the past month, including the Upper Savannah River Basin. However, this chart does not depict recent rainfall activity throughout the basin. A chart showing the intensity of historical drought since 2000, as based on the U.S. Drought Monitor, indicates the basin is now in what appears to be a very steep and significant drought after having experienced normal to wet conditions the previous three years. Both the Oconee County and McCormick County groundwater gages are well below their long term averages. The Oconee County gage fell below the long term average in the fall, while the McCormick County gage experienced a significant drop since the summer, despite its previous recovery at that time.
4. Mr. Bruce reviewed the Keowee Development’s water releases to Hartwell during the previous four weeks. Average weekly total releases, including leakage and seepage, for the month were 1,577 acre-feet per week (114 cubic feet per second or 74 MGD). There are some anticipated required releases during the next week that are not shown in current table, but will be shown during the next KT-DMAG meeting.

Update on Meteorology and Keowee-Toxaway Project Operations

5. Lynne Dunn (Duke Energy) summarized recent precipitation patterns and meteorological predictions.

6. Ms. Dunn reviewed the discharge for the USGS Chattooga River near Clayton, GA gage. The gage showed an increase due to the recent rainfall event; however, it is anticipated to quickly return to the lower baseflow levels prior to the recent rainfall.

7. Ms. Dunn reviewed the U.S. Drought Monitor results as of January 17th. Across the region and throughout South Carolina, little improvement is reflected since the last KT-DMAG meeting, and the area remains in Severe to Extreme Drought conditions. However, updated results which will include recent rainfall events will be available on 1/26/2017. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook indicates persistent drought conditions are likely for the Upper Savannah River Basin through at least March, 2017. According to the regional and South Carolina drought monitor, the basin is experiencing Severe and Extreme drought levels.

8. The NOAA short and medium term forecasts predict +/- 0.1 inches of rainfall for the next 7 days, a 33% to 50% chance of below normal precipitation for the 8 to 14 day outlook and an equal chance of precipitation for the 3 to 4 week outlook. The 3 to 4 week outlook projects above normal temperatures.