

CATAWBA-WATEREE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

News Release

April 7, 2009

Media Contacts: Ed Bruce
704-382-5239

Amy Steinmetz
704-577-4737

CW DMAG Recommends Voluntary Continuation of Wise Outdoor Water Use as Basin's Drought Conditions Improve to LIP Stage 1

The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) today announced that the steady improvement of groundwater and streamflow conditions have lessened the basin's drought to a Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) Stage 1. In accordance with LIP guidelines, the CW-DMAG recommends that its Members encourage customers to voluntarily continue using water wisely and convey to them that outdoor water use for lawn and landscape irrigation as well as residential vehicle washing is rarely needed more than two days a week. Local water suppliers will provide guidance on outdoor water use specific to their jurisdictions.

"The recent rains have significantly improved conditions from the severe drought of the past two years, but spring's increasing evaporation and a period of below average precipitation in combination with increasing downstream flow releases could quickly stress the basin just as it did two years ago," said Ed Bruce, CW-DMAG coordinator. "Future rainfall patterns will dictate whether conditions continue to improve or the basin falls back into a moderate or severe drought.

Recently streamflow measurements improved to above 65 percent of historical six-month averages, and the basin's groundwater indicators are all at Stage 1 levels or better. The US Drought Monitor, representing a consensus of scientists' views from a complement of indicators about drought status across the nation, shows most of the basin in a D1 moderate drought with the eastern portion of the basin in D0 abnormally dry condition. Meteorologists are predicting above average rainfall for April and below average rainfall for May.

"We're thankful for the improved conditions," said Kevin Greer, City of Hickory Assistant Public Services Director - Public Utilities. "At the same time we're still watchful because the drought indicators today are not as good as they were at the beginning of this drought in 2007. This drought is the worst ever recorded in this basin and has caused huge inconveniences and hardships. Without the LIP, it could have been far worse."

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

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 most of the basin in moderate drought and the eastern side of the basin in abnormally dry conditions.

The long-term trends for groundwater levels continue to show gradual improvement for this time of year.

The six-month average of area streamflows is at 66 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: Through March 31, 2009's rainfall over the basin has been about 2 inches below long-term averages. The National Weather Service is predicting above normal precipitation for April. May rainfall predictions are for below normal rainfall.

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.

###

Contacts for Local Water Jurisdictions

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

Granite Falls, NC

Shuford Wise
828-396-7111
mshufordwise@embarqmail.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

Barry McKinnon, Acting Public Works
Director
704-736-8497
bmckinnon@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