



NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Outdoor water use allowed two days per week

CHARLOTTE – This morning the Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (DMAG) met to review regional water/drought conditions and discuss whether to recommend changes to Stage 3 water use restrictions along the Catawba River Basin.

While most of the drought monitoring criteria remains at Stage 3, DMAG members from North Carolina and South Carolina acknowledged we've gotten significant relief from the recent rains, and our surface water supply is healthy as we enter a wetter, cooler time of year. Given that the fall planting season has arrived (when more frequent irrigation is necessary to sustain new turf, flowers, trees and shrubs), the DMAG agreed it would be acceptable if cities chose to *temporarily* amend their local restrictions to allow twice-per-week outdoor water use through November 2008.

Based on today's recommendations from DMAG and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Director Doug Bean, Charlotte **City Manager Curt Walton has authorized a temporary amendment to water use restrictions for customers of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities**. Effective at 12:01 AM on Thursday, September 25, 2008, the new rules are as follows:

- **Lawn watering, residential car-washing and pool/fountain filling are permitted no more than two days per week, according to the following schedule:**
- Customers with odd-numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays & Saturdays.
- Customers with even-numbered addresses may water on Thursdays & Sundays.

The amended restrictions will expire at midnight on November 30, 2008. The temporary change comes following the latest rainfall and water conditions update:

- Catawba lake levels are normal for this time of year, and the Charlotte region received about 15 inches of rain during the past 60 days (about one-third of our normal average annual precipitation). We are ahead in rainfall for calendar 2008.
- The U.S. Geological Survey Drought Monitor status has improved across most of our river basin. While Mecklenburg County's rating improved from 'severe' to 'moderate' drought last week, a small area of the basin remains in 'severe' (or Stage 3) status.
- Stream flow & groundwater levels, while slightly improved, still show Stage 3 drought conditions – a reminder that even with all the rainfall we've seen in

recent weeks, the Catawba region continues making up for a historic 17-inch rainfall deficit from 2007.

Despite the lingering drought conditions, Duke Energy's data shows one extra day of water use at this time of year could help sustain new plant growth without significantly impacting current lake levels or downstream flows. During its meeting the DMAG emphasized any amendment to restrictions must be temporary, because our regional drought response plan requires all four criteria (lake levels, drought monitor, stream flows and groundwater) to meet Stage 2 conditions before the DMAG may formally recommend easing restrictions at the local level.

Charlotte utility officials emphasized that restrictions enforcement will continue, and we will quickly revert back to one-day-per-week water use if drought or water supply conditions worsen at any point.

"This drought has reminded us to use only the water that we need, and to waste nothing," said Maeneen Klein, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Water Conservation Manager. "We're encouraging citizens to conserve all the time – regardless of the weather. And as long as the drought remains with us, we need folks to keep following the water restrictions that we have in place."

CUSTOMER REMINDERS: Your watering day ends at midnight. Additional details about restrictions and water conservation tips are available at www.cmutilities.com. Customers may also dial 311 or 704-336-7600 for more information.