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**Date:** 11/28/2007 4:43:16 PM  
**Subject:** Savannah River Basin drought status

FYI see attached notice from the Savannah Corps

**Hearing Identifier:** Vogtle\_Non\_Public  
**Email Number:** 8097

**Mail Envelope Properties** (4768FA40.HQGWDO01.TWGWPO04.200.2000007.1.E139C.1)

**Subject:** Savannah River Basin drought status  
**Creation Date:** 11/28/2007 4:43:16 PM  
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**Post Office**  
TWGWPO04.HQGWDO01

**Route**  
nrc.gov

<b>Files</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>
MESSAGE	51	11/28/2007 4:43:16 PM
NR 07-51.pdf	20930	12/19/2007 11:02:24 AM
Mime.822	31015	12/19/2007 11:02:24 AM

**Options**

**Priority:** Standard  
**Reply Requested:** No  
**Return Notification:** None  
None

**Concealed Subject:** No  
**Security:** Standard



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Savannah District

## NEWS RELEASE

# Corps Officials to Hold Public Meeting on Drought Management, Lake Levels

Release No: 07-51

Date: November 26, 2007

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SAVANNAH, GA. --** The commander of the Savannah District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Col. Edward J. Kertis, will host a public meeting in the lower Savannah River basin to discuss water management at Lakes Thurmond, Russell and Hartwell during the current drought conditions. The Corps' Savannah District manages the three reservoirs and the dams that form them. Public meetings were held in mid-November in the upper Savannah River Basin in Augusta and Anderson, SC.

The meeting will be held on Dec. 6 from 4 pm to 8 pm at the Coastal Georgia Center located at 305 Fahm Street, downtown Savannah. The Coastal Georgia Center is located behind the Visitors Center on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. On-site parking is available at no charge.

Formal presentations that include an updated status of operations will be at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. John Feldt, hydrologist with the National Weather Service, will provide long and short-range weather forecasts. Representatives with various agencies will staff information booths to provide information and discuss public concerns. This "drop in" format will allow information to be presented throughout the meeting so the public may come-and-go at their convenience.

Topics include lake level predictions, water conservation management, hydropower production, water safety, and water management operation of the three lakes in the Savannah River system.

The lakes entered Drought Contingency Level 2 on Aug. 15 resulting in limiting outflow from Thurmond Dam to a weekly average of 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). In recent weeks, the Corps water managers have reduced that amount to 3,600 to conserve more water in the lakes. Reducing outflow decreased the amount of electricity generated by the dams' power plants, but conserved more water in the reservoirs.

On Nov. 26, Lake Hartwell was at 647.8 ft. above mean sea level (ft-msl), Lake Russell was at 473.5 ft-msl, and Lake Thurmond was at 317.7 ft-msl. Hartwell has 65%

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## Corps Officials to Hold Public Meeting on Drought Management, Lake Levels

of its conservation storage remaining and Thurmond has 35% of its conservation storage remaining. Currently Hartwell inflow averages approximately four percent of normal inflow while Thurmond's inflow is about 17 percent of normal. Both Lakes Hartwell and Thurmond are 12 feet below guide curve and six feet down from the average (normal) pool elevation for this time of year. "Unfortunately, we expect the reservoirs to continue to fall until precipitation patterns change," said Jason Ward, a hydrologist with the Corps. "Most streams in the Savannah River Basin with long term records are below five percentile flow levels and some gages are setting new all time lows." As a result of low inflow, he predicts the reservoirs' levels to drop approximately one-half foot per week unless significant storms pass through the watershed. Under the current conditions and trends, Drought Level 3 would be reached in mid-December, calling for a further restriction from Thurmond Dam to a specified daily average release target of 3,800 cubic feet per second (cfs). According to the current drought plan, Level 3 involves reducing the outflow from the dam at Lake Thurmond to 3,800 cfs, but as a proactive conservation measure the Corps has already reduced the amount of outflow to 3,600 cfs, therefore residents will see no operational changes once Level 3 elevations are reached.

Although the Corps has never seen a Level 4 condition, if that were to occur, it would mean the amount of outflow from the reservoirs would be lowered to match the amount of water that comes in from the creeks and streams. This management strategy would have the lakes functioning like rivers, which could have a negative effect on bodies of water downstream. Corps officials are meeting with state agencies in Georgia and South Carolina to determine if a further reduction is possible and to assess the resulting impacts.

For more information on current lake levels and projections, contact the Savannah District Public Affairs Office at 912-652-5014/5279, or visit the District's website at <http://water.sas.usace.army.mil/home/indexDU.htm> featuring updated links to drought management information.

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## **Links to Maps and Directions to the Coastal Georgia Center**

Directions: <http://cgc.georgiasouthern.edu/> Click on Click Here for Directions

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### **Directions**

Here is a list of directions to the Coastal Georgia Center. It provides information from all major highways and areas.

For mapquest please click [here](#)

#### **FROM I-16 East**

- Exit on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd (Exit #167A). - LEFT off exit
- Continue straight past Visitors Center
- Turn LEFT @ 5th traffic light onto West Oglethorpe Avenue
- Turn LEFT @ 1st traffic light onto Fahm Street
- Straight 2 blocks - end at Coastal Georgia Center (parking to the right)

#### **FROM SOUTH CAROLINA (U.S. 17)**

- Take US 17 South Over the Eugene Talmadge Memorial Bridge toward Savannah
- Take 1st exit off the bridge onto West Oglethorpe Avenue
- Turn RIGHT @ 1st traffic light onto Fahm Street
- Straight 2 blocks - end at Coastal Georgia Center (parking to the right)

#### **FROM DESOTO HILTON (downtown Savannah)**

- West on Liberty to Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
- Turn RIGHT onto Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
- Turn LEFT @ traffic light -onto West Oglethorpe Ave.
- Turn LEFT @ 1st traffic light - Fahm Street
- Straight 2 blocks - end at Coastal Georgia Center (parking to the right)

#### **FROM SAVANNAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

- From airport, take I-95 South to I-16 East
- Exit on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd (Exit #167A). - LEFT off exit
- Continue straight past Visitors Center
- Turn LEFT @ 5th traffic light onto West Oglethorpe Avenue
- Turn LEFT @ 1st traffic light onto Fahm Street
- Straight 2 blocks - end at Coastal Georgia Center (parking to the right)

Billy Birdwell at (912) 652-5014/5279 or 24-hr cell (912) 677-6039  
Jeanne Hodge at (912) 652-5770  
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