

January through March are historically the most likely times to see floods or rainfall events with the greatest potential for producing large amounts of runoff in the Savannah Basin. In 2008, precipitation was near or slightly below normal for this period. This rainfall was not sufficient for a full recovery from the ongoing 2&1/2 year drought. Summer typically includes smaller scale convective thunderstorms, higher evaporation rates from the reservoirs, and lower streamflow when compared to winters. The best chance of drought busting rains in the Fall usually involves tropical systems moving over the basin, otherwise Fall is a drier season in our region.

Extreme to exceptional drought conditions persist across much of north Georgia and the upstate of South Carolina including the upper portion of the Savannah River Basin. Over the past 30 days, precipitation has been below normal for most of the basin and soil moisture conditions are still in the low percentile ranges. When soil moisture is depleted, there is less runoff into tributaries after rain events because more precipitation infiltrates into the ground. Streamflows in the basin are in the range that is observed 10 percent of the time or less. Current long term forecasts from the National Weather Service indicate equal chances of above or below normal precipitation for the early fall.

Drought Level 1 was triggered at the end of June 2007 resulting in a flow reduction to a maximum weekly average release of 4200cfs at Thurmond Dam. Drought Level 2 was triggered in mid-August 2007 resulting in a flow reduction to a maximum weekly average release of 4000cfs at Thurmond Dam. **As an additional conservation measure, the District was able to gain agreement from other federal and state resource agencies to reduce the minimum daily discharge from Lake Thurmond temporarily from 3800 back to 3600 cubic feet per second on Tuesday, October 23, 2007.** These release reductions at Thurmond cause flow reductions at Hartwell too that are necessary to keep the pools near balance for the top 15 feet of the conservation pool. The Southeastern Power Administration (SEPA) is purchasing replacement energy from other sources to cover the reduced hydropower generation from the DCP implementation. **Due to continued drought conditions and record low inflow, the reservoir system entered Drought Level 3 in mid August 2008.**

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE BELOW**

All three reservoirs provide the water in storage to meet the downstream minimum daily release requirement from Thurmond of 3600 cfs for water quality and water supply. Because severe drought conditions have persisted, Hartwell and Thurmond reached 15 feet down in late September 2008. At this level, there is only 3 feet of remaining conservation storage at Thurmond and 20 feet remaining at Hartwell. Hartwell has a majority of the system storage remaining and therefore provides a majority of the storage to meet the 3600 cfs release for the system. Below 15 feet down,, Hartwell will decline at a faster rate than seen earlier in the drought. At the District's request, a proposal was developed by the States of Georgia and South Carolina to explore going to releases below 3600 cfs as a temporary measure. The objective is to slow the rate of decline in the pools and reduce the chance of running out of conservation storage while balancing potential downstream impacts. **The release reduction plan went through an Environmental Assessment process and was approved as a temporary deviation on November 24, 2008. The minimum daily average discharge target from Thurmond Dam targeted 3100 cfs from 1Dec2008-31Jan2009. Consultation with NOAA fisheries service revealed that maintaining the reduced river depth could adversely impact shortnose sturgeon spawning habitat. Based on this information, we returned the discharges from J. Strom Thurmond Dam to 3,600 cfs on 1 February 09. February 2009.** Collaboration is continuing between the Corps and other natural resource agencies to take additional action.

For an indication of where the reservoir pools are going, click here: [7 Day Declaration and 10 Week Projection.](#)

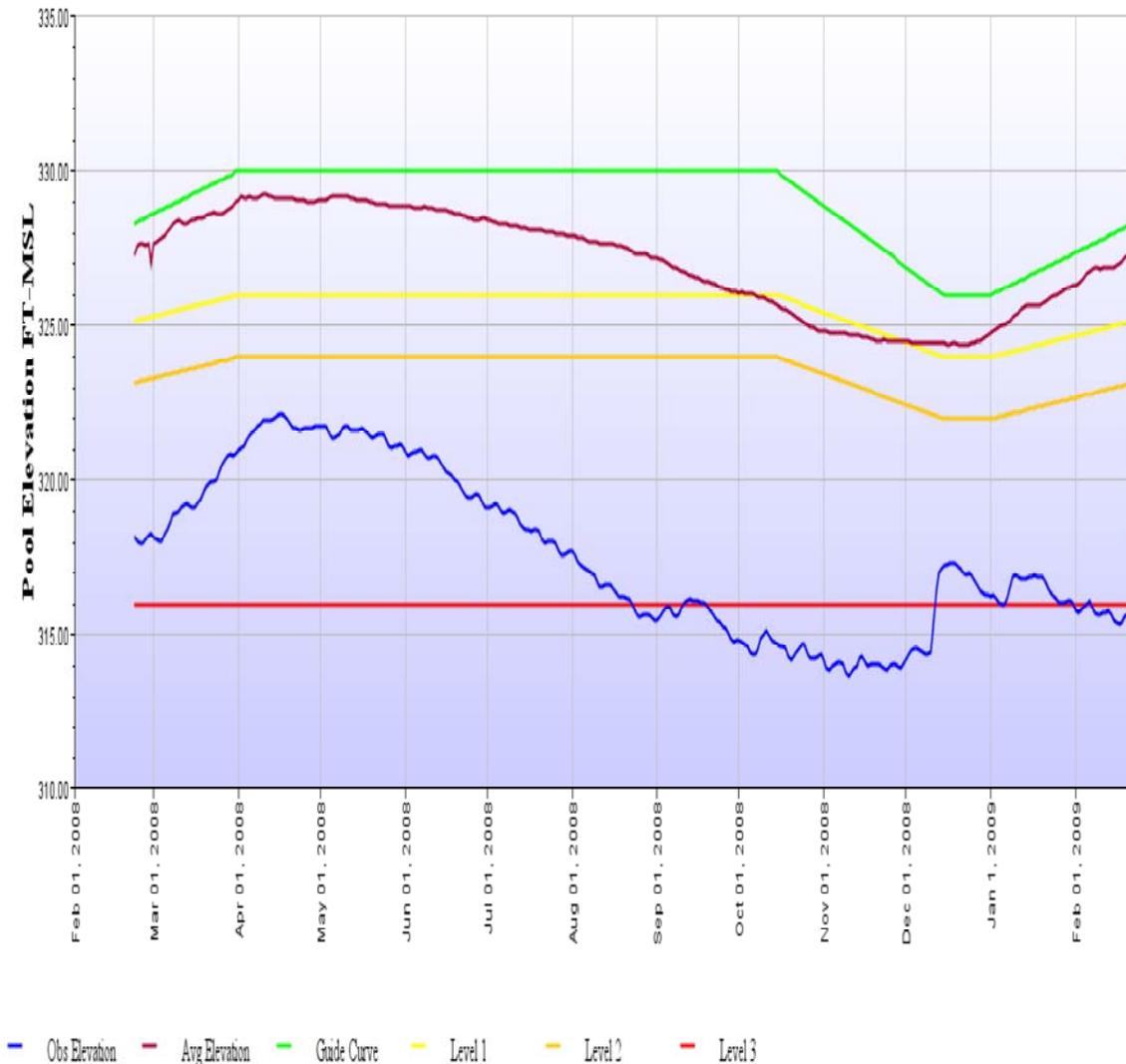
See the following links for more information:

- [Recent rainfall conditions](#)
- [US Drought Monitor for the Southeast](#)
- [GA State Climatologist drought status](#)
- [SC State Climatologist drought status](#)

The public should continue to use caution to avoid exposed objects in the reservoirs due to lower than normal levels. There are no navigation windows currently scheduled.

*[Email your questions or comments](#)*

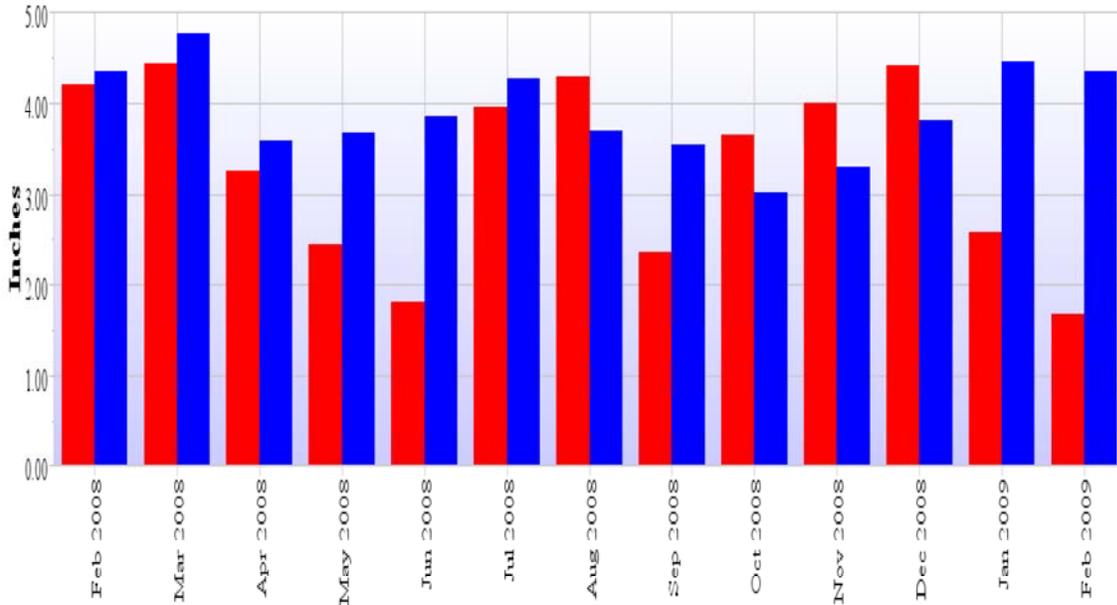
### Thurmond Pool Elevation FT-MSL Project



[Make PNG Image File](#)

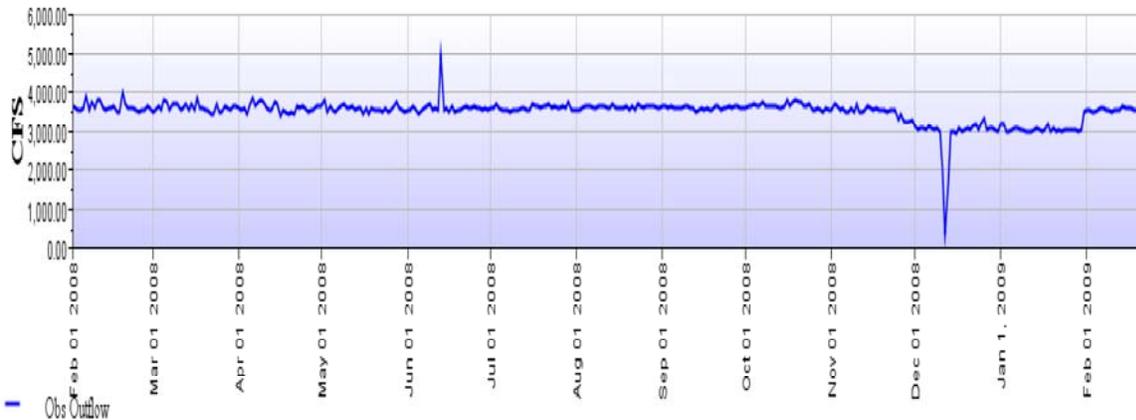
TABULATE

### Thurmond Basin Obs Rainfall



Sum Observed Rainfall= 43.1 "    Sum Avg Monthly Rainfall= 50.7 "    7.7 inch Rainfall Deficit

### Thurmond Project Daily Average Outflow



Obs Elevation - Midnight elevation

Average Elevation - Average elevation for each day of the year (1954-present).

Guide Curve - Bottom of flood storage pool, or the top of the conservation pool.

Typically this is the desired elevation if sufficient inflows are available.

Drought Plan Actions

Trigger Level 1 - 4200 cfs max weekly average release at Thurmond.

Trigger Level 2 - 4000 cfs max weekly average release at Thurmond.

Trigger Level 3 - 3800 cfs max daily average release at Thurmond. (Temporary

Trigger Level 4 - Continue Level 3 release as long as possible then transition to Level 2)

Data are provisional and subject to revision