

FILE PHOTO

Although lake levels haven't decreased as dramatically as they did several years ago, recent concerns by the South Carolina Climatology Group have led the city of Clemson to consider possible passage of a resolution asking residents to voluntarily cut back on water usage.

Clemson nears water restrictions

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — It's been three years since Clemson imposed drought-driven water restrictions, but the city is close to taking action again.

"The South Carolina Climatology Group is looking at Clemson as far as the drought," City Administrator Rick Cotton told council this week. "Clemson is at the trigger point with 652 feet above mean sea level on Lake Hartwell, and that means it is only six inches from meeting the drought declaration level.

"If we don't get any rain in the next two weeks, you can expect to see a resolution on your desk asking that residents take voluntary measures."

Cotton plans to keep an eye on the extended forecast leading up to the next council meeting on Oct. 17.

"Hopefully, we'll get some rain in the near future," he said.

But Central Town Administrator Phillip Mishoe, whose council in 2008 passed a voluntary water restriction resolution asking residents to cut back consumption by 25 percent, said nothing is planned at this time.

"We've been praying for rain like everyone else," Mishoe said. "We don't want to have to go around and impose any water restrictions and hope that Mother Nature will take care of that for us."

In 2008, Clemson approved a resolution implementing odd-even water usage, based on street addresses. Also, watering was prohibited between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spokesman Billy Birdwell said water restrictions are controlled by state and local agencies, not the Corps of Engineers. He said the Corps owns and controls the storage facilities for state water resources and that the state has agreed with the Corps on the minimum flow to the Savannah River.

greg@dailyjm.com | (864) 973-6687