DROUGHT OVER



Army Corps of Engineers spokesman: Lake levels up

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — As far as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is concerned, the drought is officially over.

"The Army Corps of Engineers is calling the recovery from the drought complete," Corps of Engineers spokesman Billy Birdwell told The Journal Thursday morning. "The Hartwell Reservoir rose more than two feet above the drought one trigger at 3 (a.m.) yesterday ... and that prompted a switch to normal operations. The flow restriction at the Thurmond Dam is now removed as well."

Birdwell said the Lake Russell Dam is not built to fluctuate. Therefore, he said it "doesn't go up and down (in lake levels) like the other two."

The Army Corps of Engineers spokesman said the Savannah River Basin entered into mild drought conditions Sept. 22 when Lake Thurmond's levels dropped four feet below full summer pool. Even when Thurmond's levels eventually rose out of drought level, Hartwell didn't receive as much rain, so the drought level remained in place until its levels rose.

Birdwell pointed out the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' definition of drought doesn't match the state's.

"We have what we call drought levels and measure it by reser-

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State official: No threat of drought

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COLUMBIA — South Carolina hasn't had a drought of epic proportions in several years. However, several months ago, the state was under what South Carolina state climatologist Hope Mizzell called an incipient drought.

"Nine counties went into drought Sept. 16, though not the Upstate, but on Nov. 20, the entire state went into incipi-

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Increased lake levels at Lake Hartwell, pictured above near Clemson, led the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to declare this week that drought conditions for its reservoirs have ended. JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL