Duke asks Keowee, Jocassee residents to conserve water

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(Photo: Heidi Heilbrunn , Staff)

Duke Energy says drought conditions have made it necessary to ask residents of Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee to cut back on irrigating their properties.

"Despite recent rainfall and cooler temperatures, the region is experiencing drier conditions," said Joe Hall, the company's lake services director.

The company has asked residents to voluntarily cut irrigation to two days: Tuesdays and Saturdays.

The declaration of drought conditions is part of a group public and private interests the company partners with to evaluate how water is drawn from the lakes during what it calls the Keowee-Toxaway "low inflow protocol."

Other, larger water users will also curb their water use, the company says.

The advisory declared the basin of the lakes to be in the first stage of a drought, which is evaluated in part on drought declarations and lake levels.

The declaration is different than the statewide drought response group, which last month declared nine counties in drought.

None included the Upstate, though lake levels here are among the lowest.

Record amounts of rain have fallen in the Upstate since the last drought was declared two springs ago, but some areas – such as Aiken, which saw its third-driest summer ever – were a different story.

The drought response committee declared early stages of drought — known as "incipient" — for Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Lexington and Orangeburg counties.

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