IndependentMail.com
ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
Read more at independentmail.com

Outlook not good for rain, Hartwell Lake

By Jennifer Crossley Howard

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

ANDERSON — If drought and a mounting rainfall deficit persist, Hartwell Lake could drop to 646 feet by mid-January, 14 feet below full pool level.

The lake has fallen almost half a foot in the last six days, and forecasts hold little hope for a change.

Anderson is expected to receive an inch of rainfall at most this week.

On Nov. 9, Hartwell Lake stood at 650.66 feet. It measured 650.25 feet on Tuesday, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. There is a 60 percent chance of rain Wednesday and a 90 percent chance at night. The chance drops to 20 percent Thursday night.

In mid-October seven docks around the lake were unusable because of low lake levels, and five have since closed, said George Bramlette, operator of Hartwell Dam.

"If the lake continues to go down, we'll have another five to 10 more close in the very near future," he said.

Smaller bodies of water are suffering, too.

Lake Jocassee stood 15 below full pool level, while Lake Keowee stood 5 below full pool.

While November is usually slightly wetter than October, only 0.87 of an inch of rain had fallen by Tuesday, said Jeffrey Taylor, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service. November typically receives 4 inches. October rainfall was almost 2 inches below normal.

Temperatures for the rest of the week will fallbetween 37 degrees and 71 degrees. mostly within the normal range, Taylor said. While Monday and Tuesday highs hit the mild 70s, Anderson daily average temperatures have actually fallen below normal for most of the month. Taylor said cold nights drop the overall average. Gusty winds will set in by Wednesday night and last through Thursday morning.

© 2011 Scripps Newspaper Group — Online