

When the tap runs dry ...

Cities, Duke forge plan for lake draws during droughts

THE JOURNAL STAFF

DROUGHT STAGES

SENECA — Duke Energy, Greenville Water, and Seneca Light & Water have agreed on an interim plan to manage the use of water in Lakes Keowee and Jocassee and the Bad Creek reservoir during drought conditions.

Duke Energy manages the lakes for electricity production. Seneca Light & Water and Greenville Water withdraw water from Lake Keowee for drinking water and other public water system uses.

"This is an interim plan. It gives us a starting point for developing a longer term low inflow protocol as part of renewing the license for the Keowee-Toxaway Hydroelectric Project," said Jeff Lineberger, director of hydro strategy and licensing for Duke Energy.

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Stage 0: Requires increased communication and data flow

Stage 1: Duke to adjust minimum elevations; cities urge voluntary restrictions; goal is 3 to 5% reduction

Stage 2: Duke to adjust minimum elevations; cities implement mandatory restrictions that may include twice weekly irrigation, car washing and public building washing bans; goal is 5 to 10% reduction

Stage 3: Duke to adjust minimum elevations; cities implement increased mandatory restrictions that may include once weekly irrigation, car washing and public building washing bans, ban on new pool filling and limited hydrant flushing; goal is 10 to 20% reduction

Stage 4: Emergency provisions take over; all outdoor water use is restricted; city restrictions are required; water outages are possible; goal is 20 to 30% reduction.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2012

DROUGHT: Stage 4 has

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The plan establishes five stages, or levels, of drought as well as responses by Duke and the cities at each level. Those responses range from phone calls and data sharing to mandatory water restrictions.

Triggers for determining the drought stages are based on lake levels, precipitation, stream flows and the U.S. Drought Monitor designations in the water basin.

In announcing the plan, it was also noted that the Keowee-Toxaway basin is currently in a Stage 2 drought.

Actions at Stage 2 call for increased sharing of information and operating data, notifying water customers about the drought level and emphasizing the need to conserve water, with a goal to reduce water withdrawals from Lake Keowee by 5 to 10 percent or more.

For its part, Duke said it would

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never been reached in the Upstate

limit Keowee and Jocassee property owners to no more than two days of water irrigation per week. Beginning Feb. 1, watering will only be allowed on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

While the cities are required to implement restrictions beginning in Stage 2, the protocol says those restrictions may include various limits. The cities are not required to actually limit usage until Stage 4.

Stage 4 has never been reached

in the Upstate.

"We've experienced drought conditions in four of the last five years. During these drought periods, our customers have been very responsive in conserving their water resources," said Seneca Light & Water Director Bob Faires.

"The low inflow protocol basically mirrors what our customers have been, and are, doing — conserving their water usage."

"We are constantly monitoring

the lake levels and making adjustments to ensure an adequate water supply," he added.

"We have reduced our use of Lake Keowee (water) by 25 percent through effective management of our reservoirs," said Greenville Water CEO David Bereskin.

The 18-page interim drought management plan can be viewed on the Duke Energy website at www.duke-energy.com/lakes/catawba-lakes.asp.