

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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For Immediate Release

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Level Four Drought Response Continues For Most of North Georgia

With extreme drought conditions stretching across the northern third of Georgia and a forecast for a dry summer, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has announced that level four outdoor watering restrictions will remain in place for EPD permitted utilities and local governments in 55 counties. However, the level four restrictions will be lifted in six counties where drought conditions have improved and replaced with level two watering restrictions.

“Winter rain and rising lake levels bring us hope, but citizens should not be fooled into thinking the drought is over,” said EPD Director Carol A. Couch. “We are in better shape than last fall, but we need to continue to manage our water supply to get us through the long hot summer.”

The announcement was made today following a meeting of the State Drought Response Committee. A Level Four Drought Response prohibits most types of outdoor water use. However Director Couch said that utilities and local governments in the level four counties that do not rely on Lake Lanier and water releases directly from Buford Dam will be allowed to petition for a modified drought response.

“Many local governments have been proactive in making improvements in their water systems,” said Director Couch. “As a result, they are better prepared for drought and the petition process offers some flexibility in how water is managed at the local level.”

Director Couch said a reduction in water releases from lakes Allatoona and Lanier helped raise water levels and she also credited effective water conservation. Under Governor Perdue’s directive, most north Georgians reduced their water use by at least 10 percent from November 2007 through March 2008. The directive expired on March 30.

An EPD analysis of summer water use shows that enforcement of the level four water restrictions combined with voluntary water conservation should achieve a water savings of at least ten percent, so the state directive is no longer in effect, said Director Couch.

The six counties removed from the level four drought response and placed under a level two drought response are Muscogee, Harris, Spalding, Butts, Jasper and Greene counties.

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Changes in the state's drought response in south Georgia also were announced following the committee meeting. Drought conditions have improved in 44 counties that were under a level two drought response and as a result, the drought response will be upgraded to a level one.

The level one drought response area includes Appling, Bacon, Baker, Brantley, Brooks, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Colquitt, Cook, Decatur, Early, Echols, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Grady, Jeff Davis, Jenkins, Johnson, Lanier, Laurens, Liberty, Long, Lowndes, McIntosh, Miller, Montgomery, Mitchell, Pierce, Screven, Seminole, Tattnall, Thomas, Toombs, Treutlen, Ware, Wayne and Wheeler counties.

Under a declared **Drought Response Level One**, outdoor water use may occur on scheduled days within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight.

- Scheduled days for odd-numbered addresses are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Scheduled days for even-numbered or unnumbered addresses and golf course fairways are Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- Use of hydrants for any purpose other than firefighting, public health, safety or flushing is prohibited.

The level two drought response area includes Atkinson, Baldwin, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Bleckley, Burke, Butts, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Coffee, Columbia, Crawford, Crisp, Dodge, Dooly, Dougherty, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Harris, Houston, Irwin, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, Lee, Macon, Marion, Mc Duffie, Monroe, Muscogee, Peach, Pike, Pulaski, Putnam, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Schley, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Tift, Turner, Twiggs, Upson, Warren, Washington, Webster, Wilcox, Wilkinson, and Worth counties.

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Under a declared **Drought Response Level Two**, outdoor water use may occur on scheduled days within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m.

- Scheduled days for odd-numbered addresses are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Scheduled days for even-numbered or unnumbered addresses and golf course fairways are Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The following uses are prohibited under Level Two:

- Using hydrants for any purpose other than firefighting, public health, safety or flushing.
- Washing hard surfaces, such as streets, gutters, sidewalks and driveways except when necessary for public health and safety.

The level four drought response area includes Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Elbert, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Heard, Henry, Jackson, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Morgan, Murray, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Rockdale, Stephens, Towns, Troup, Union, Walker, Walton, White, Whitfield, and Wilkes counties.

Under a declared **Drought Response Level Four**, most types of outdoor water use is prohibited with some commercial exemptions. In addition, the EPD Director has ordered exemptions to allow the filling of swimming pools and some limited landscape watering.

- Hand watering will be allowed for 25 minutes per day on an odd-even schedule between midnight and 10 a.m. Odd numbered addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Even numbered addresses can water Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Hand watering is defined as one person with one garden hose.
- New landscape can be watered up to three days a week from midnight to 10 a.m. for a period of 10 weeks based on the odd/even schedule.

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- Anyone wishing to water new landscape must register with the Outdoor Water Use Registration Program. The program is hosted on the Urban Agricultural Council web site at www.urbanagcouncil.com. Georgians may also contact their county extension agents for assistance in getting registered.

More information about the drought and water conservation can be found at www.conservewatergeorgia.net and www.georgiadrought.org.

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