

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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CITING HISTORIC DROUGHT, GEORGIA EPD BANS MOST OUTDOOR WATER USE IN NORTH GEORGIA

The director of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has declared a level four drought response across the northern third of Georgia, which prohibits most types of outdoor residential water use effective immediately.

“The drought of 2007 has reached historic proportions, so it’s critical that we take immediate action to ensure that Georgians have a sufficient supply of safe drinking water,” said EPD Director Carol A. Couch. “All of the counties included in the level four declaration are located in areas of either exceptional or extreme drought.”

The drought declaration was made following a meeting today of the State Drought Response Committee. The Committee includes representatives from several state, federal and local agencies, as well as universities and non-government organizations. The EPD Director, working with State Climatologist David Stooksbury, consults with the Committee members and then determines the appropriate drought response.

“During a year of average rainfall, water levels in Georgia’s large reservoirs such as Lanier and Allatoona tend to drop in late summer and then recover as the winter rains arrive,” said State Climatologist Stooksbury. “But the forecast calls for a dry, mild winter and that could result in serious water supply problems by next spring.”

The level four drought response was declared for all counties in north Georgia from Muscogee County on the Alabama line northeastward to Spalding County, and eastward to Lincoln County on the South Carolina line. The level four drought response includes all of metropolitan Atlanta, Rome, Athens and Columbus, but does not include the cities of Macon and Augusta. (A complete list of counties included in the level four drought response is attached to this news release.)

Counties not on the list will remain subject to the current level two drought response. A level two drought response declaration limits outdoor watering to the following schedule:

- Odd-numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays-12 midnight to 10 a.m.
- Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays-12 midnight to 10 a.m.

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A level four drought response prohibits most types of outdoor water use, although the state does offer some exemptions for commercial uses. However, local governments and water utilities may impose more stringent watering schedules, so citizens should contact their local water providers for more specific guidance.

EPD Director Couch said drought conditions will continue to be monitored and revised drought response declarations will be issued as necessary.

More information about the outdoor water use schedules can be found on the EPD web site at www.georgiaepd.com. To learn more about water conservation, please go to the EPD Water Conservation web site at www.conservewatergeorgia.net. Detailed information on the drought can be found at www.georgiadrought.org.

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