



Southeast U.S. Water Resources – Where Do We Stand?

Wylie Quillian – Senior Hydrologist
John Feldt – Hydrologist-in-Charge

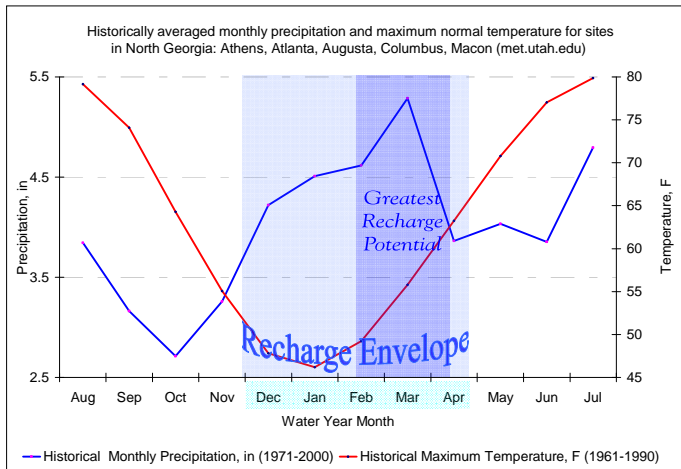
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Summary: Normal rainfall from late winter into early spring helped improve water resources across most of the Southeast U.S. Most notable improvement has been to water resources that typically respond quickly to increased rainfall. This includes smaller tributaries, smaller lakes and ponds, and certain reservoirs.

A number of major reservoirs have seen significant recharge over the past few months, in some cases rising from well below normal to near normal levels.

However, a few locations remain lagging, especially Lake Lanier in Georgia, Lake Okeechobee in Florida, and much of the Savannah River basin.

While some improvement has been noted over the winter and early spring, it is important to note that the entire area remains at risk for continued drought as we move into summer.

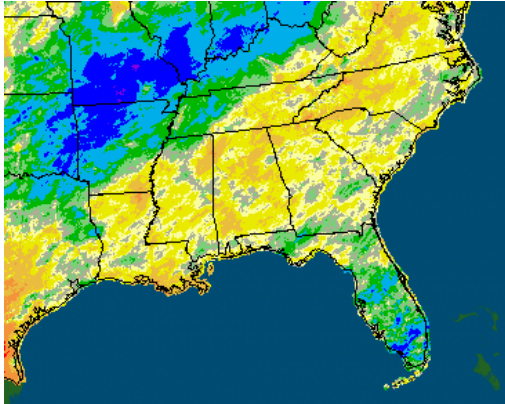


As we have been noting for quite some time, there is a seasonal period of peak recharge for much of the Southeast U.S. (with the exception of Florida) that extends through the winter and early spring months.

As we head towards May, most locations have now seen a “green up” of foliage which will reduce runoff due to increased evapotranspiration. In addition, rainfall becomes more convective and scattered in coverage. As temperatures warm, evaporation will increase.

So, have water resources improved during this recharge period? This study will look at three key factors: rainfall, reservoir levels, and stream flow.

Rainfall: Past 90 Days



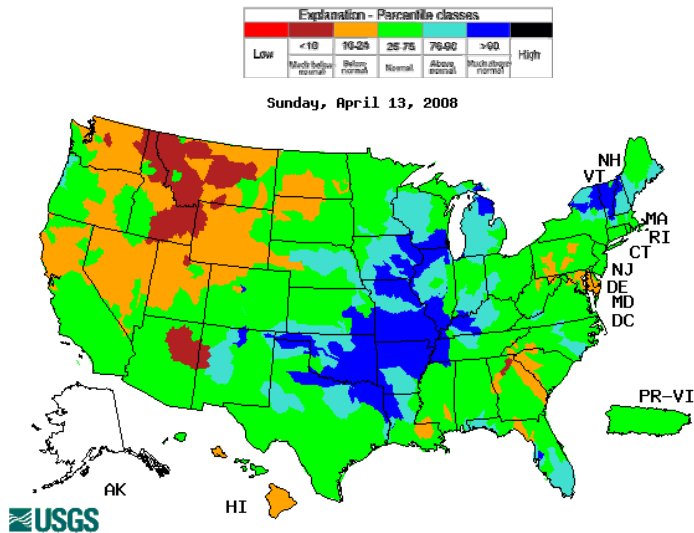
In this graph, areas of yellow indicate below-normal rainfall, while green and blue areas indicate above-normal rainfall (as of early April).

Rainfall over the winter was somewhat below-normal (75 to 90 percent of normal) over most of the region. An exception was eastern North and South Carolina, Southern Georgia, and much of Florida, where rainfall was above normal (100 to 150 percent of normal).

While still below normal, it was an improvement over last summer and fall. Accumulations generally increased over this 90-day period due to increased activity in February, March, and early April.

Stream Flow

Stream flow measurements are made by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).



The above chart represents a 7-day average stream flow. Note that much of the Southeast U.S. is reporting stream flows near normal for this time of year. Exceptions are river basins over far western North and South Carolina, the Upper Chattahoochee, and much of the Savannah River basins.

Note: some of these flows are low due to reduced outflows from reservoirs as much as from natural conditions.

Reservoirs

A review of larger reservoirs across the Southeast U.S. indicates an improvement in pool levels over the winter.

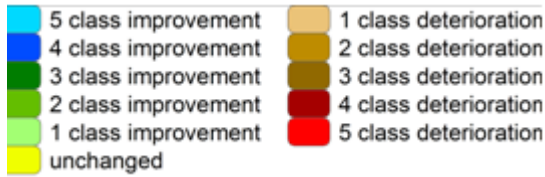
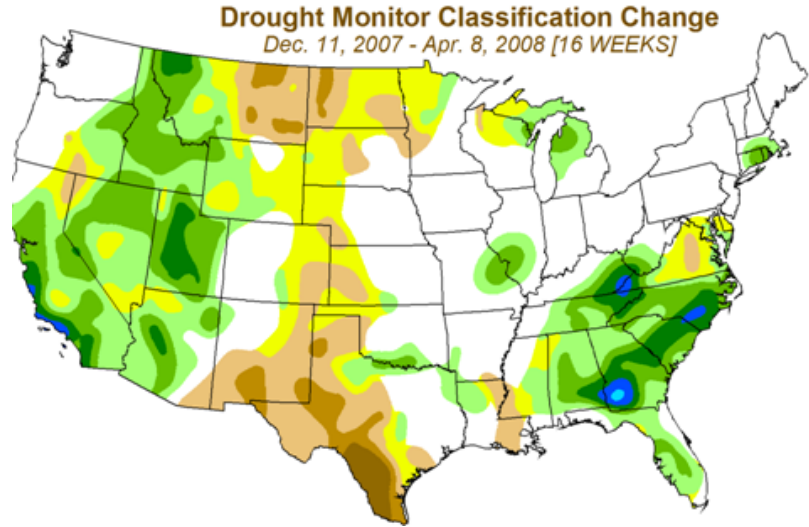
Actual Versus Normal Storage			
	Above Normal	Near Normal	Below Normal
VA	X		
NC	X		
SC			X
GA	South and West		Northeast
FL			X
AL		X	

Areas with the least improvement include South Carolina, Northeast Georgia, and much of Florida.

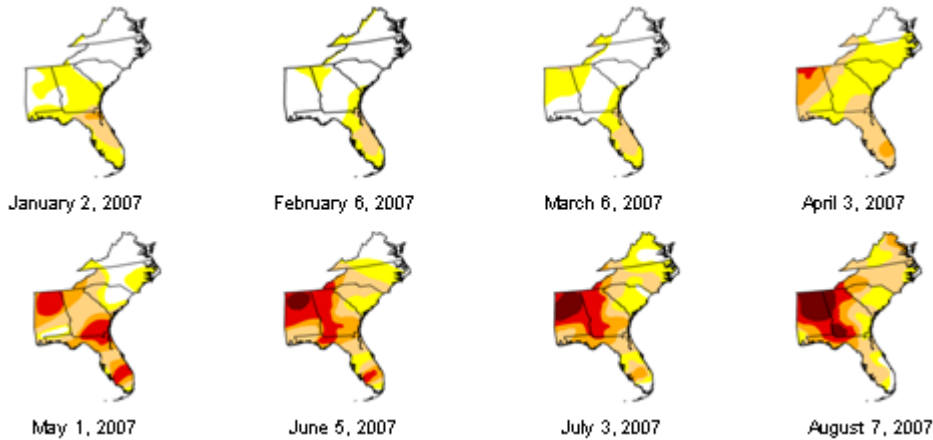
Reservoir	Date	Pool	Target Pool	Comment
John H. Kerr Lake	04/14/08	305.2	301.6	Target varies by date
Jordan Lake	04/14/08	219.7	216	Target is bottom of flood control pool
Falls Lake	04/14/08	252.4	251.5	Target is bottom of flood control pool
High Rock Lake	04/15/08	653.8	652	Target is historic mean pool elevation for April
Lake Marion	04/15/08	74.7	75.5	Target is normal for 04/20
Lake Hartwell	04/15/08	652	660	Target is rule curve per weekly declaration
Lake Thurmond	04/15/08	322.2	330	Target is rule curve per weekly declaration
Lake Lanier	04/15/08	1057.4	1070	Target is well below historic mean for 04/15
Lake Seminole	04/15/08	77.5	77	Target is normal target pool.
Lake Allatoona	04/15/08		840	Target is summer top of conservation pool
Lake Martin	04/15/08	489.2	490	Target is normal summer pool
Lewis Smith Lake	04/15/08	509.5	510	Target is normal summer pool
Lake Okeechobee	04/15/08	10.5	14	Target is historic mean for mid April

Drought Monitor

The following graphic shows the change in the U.S. Drought Monitor for a 16-week period from mid December into early April. Note that almost all of the Southeast U.S. has seen significant improvement in drought conditions. Fairly large areas have seen a 2- class improvement with isolated spots as much as 5- classes.



A Word of Caution Looking Ahead



It is important to remember last year around this time. It is to be expected that water resources will improve during the peak recharge period. Last year much of the area was in extensive drought heading into winter. By early spring there was a significant improvement observed. However, once we exited this recharge period, drought conditions again took hold and the drought significantly intensified over the summer.