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Mobile District

News Release

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Corps of Engineers Prepared for ongoing Drought Conditions in the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) and Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River (ACF) Basins

Mobile, Ala. - As drought conditions continue to dominate the weather in the northern areas of Alabama and Georgia, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water managers and their partners are anticipating continued below normal rainfall for the foreseeable future.

The southeastern United States has benefitted from numerous hurricanes and tropical events. The lower portions of the ACT and ACF basins have benefitted the most from these occurrences. “Unfortunately, the northern most reservoirs of the ACT and ACF basins did not receive the same benefits from these storms and conditions haven’t improved at Lake Lanier on the ACF and Carters Lake on the ACT,” said E. Patrick Robbins, Public Affairs Officer Mobile District. “Flow gauges and other measurements show that we are experiencing low flows in rivers and streams throughout the region.

“Reservoir inflows are running below normal for this time of year and the Corps is expecting to begin dropping the lower reservoirs if conditions remain the same. We are currently releasing only the minimum required to meet downstream needs. The Corps is working with all of our water resources partners in the region to implement sensitive and balanced management measures to deal with this tough situation,” Robbins said.

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2-2-2-2 Corps of Engineers Prepared for ongoing Drought Conditions

In Alabama, Florida and Georgia there are 10 major Corps projects (Lanier, West Point, Walter F. George, George Andrews, Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam, Carters Lake, Lake Allatoona, Robert F. Henry, Millers Ferry, and Claiborne) which are authorized to provide hydroelectric power, recreation, water supply, fish and wildlife enhancement, water quality, flood control and navigation to the people of the region. Management of these lakes is governed by drought plans aimed both at individual lakes and basin operations.

“These lakes must meet a lot of needs,” Robbins said, “and, under the current conditions it will not be possible to meet all of them completely. It becomes a balancing act of trying to meet as many needs as possible with the available water if inflows continue to decline.”

An area that feels the immediate effects of lower lake levels is recreation. Several lakes have issued warnings about low water levels in swimming areas and the need for boaters to be especially watchful for stumps and other objects in the lakes that wouldn't be an issue with higher levels. Private boat dock owners at Corps lakes should monitor water levels and take appropriate action to protect them as the water recedes.

“The southeast region is facing what may be three consecutive years of drought conditions unprecedented in their scope and severity,” Robbins emphasized. “The effects are widespread and take a variety of forms. Water managers with the Corps and the States have done extensive drought planning as a result of similar conditions which have occurred periodically since the 1980s. But managing water will not be enough by itself; weathering this drought will require discipline in water consumption, in the form of conservation measures that have already been implemented by several of the states.”