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Corps officials to hold public workshops on drought management, lake levels

SAVANNAH, Ga. – The commander of the [Savannah District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers](#), [Col. Jeffrey Hall](#), will host two public workshops in the upper Savannah River basin to discuss water management at lakes [Thurmond](#), [Russell](#) and [Hartwell](#) during the current drought. The Corps' Savannah District manages the three reservoirs and the dams that form them.

The meetings will be held at McCormick Middle School, 6977 Highway 28 South, McCormick, S.C., on Oct. 24, from 4:30 to 8 p.m. and at Westside High School, 806 Pearman Dairy Road, Anderson, S.C., on Oct. 25 from 4:30 to 8 p.m. Hall is scheduled to make formal presentations at 5 and 6:30 p.m. at McCormick. Due to Hall's other commitments, his deputy, [Lt. Col. Tom Woodie](#), will represent him at the Anderson meeting. Hall is slated to address the Lake Hartwell Association annual meeting Oct. 27.

Representatives with various agencies including the National Weather Service (NWS) will staff information booths to provide information and discuss public concerns. This "drop in" format allows information to be presented throughout the meeting so the public may come-and-go at their convenience. Hall and other experts will also answer questions.

Topics will include lake level predictions, water conservation management, hydropower production, and water management operation of the three lakes in the Savannah River system.

The three reservoirs entered Drought Contingency Level 2 Aug. 28, 2011, resulting in limiting outflow from Thurmond Dam to a weekly average of 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). By October 2011, the Corps water managers further reduced Thurmond's release to 3,800 cfs to conserve more water in the lakes. Reducing outflow decreases the amount of electricity generated by the dams' power plants, but conserves more water in the reservoirs.

On Oct. 16 [Lake Hartwell was at 647.88 feet above mean sea level](#) (ft-msl), Lake Russell was at 473.55 ft-msl, and Lake Thurmond was at 316.49 ft-msl. Currently, Hartwell inflow averages approximately 75 percent of normal inflow while Thurmond's inflow is about 10 percent of normal.

Both lakes Hartwell and Thurmond are approximately 13 feet below guide curve and approximately 8 feet down from the average (normal) pool elevation for this time of year.

"Because the drought continues, we expect the reservoirs to decline further," said Stan Simpson, a water control manager with the Corps. "A weak El Niño weather pattern in the South Pacific, however, may send rain to the upper basin during our normal rainy season of January through March."

Under the current conditions and trends, Drought Level 3 would be reached in early November, requiring a further reduction from Thurmond Dam to a specified daily average release target of 3,100 cfs.

For more information on current lake levels and projections, contact the Savannah District Public Affairs Office at 912-652-5014/5279, or visit the District's website at <http://water.sas.usace.army.mil> featuring updated links to drought management information.

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' [Savannah District](#) manages [three lakes and hydroelectric dams](#) along the Savannah River. It also oversees a multi-billion dollar [military construction](#) program at 11 Army and Air Force installations in Georgia and North Carolina. Corps' projects range from barracks, hospitals and clinics to maintenance facilities, headquarters buildings and aircraft hangars. The Savannah District also has oversight and maintains additional civil works projects – from the Savannah and Brunswick harbors to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.