The average annual rainfall in the Hartwell, Russell, and Thurmond Basins is 60.5 inches, 47.4 inches, and 46.4 inches, respectively.

During the drought which started in May 1998, rainfall has significantly decreased. This has resulted in reduced inflows into the lakes and lower than normal lake levels.

From May 1998 through December 2001, the basins above Thurmond Dam have built up a 38 inch rainfall deficit. Deficits by basin are: Hartwell = 48 inches, Russell = 32 inches, and Thurmond = 33 inches.