

Drought Alert !!

High Rock Lake is subject to drought related stress again this year. According to some projections climatic conditions may be very similar to what we experienced in 2002. These conditions, coupled with the delay in issuing a new license to Alcoa, have the potential to drain High Rock Lake again in 2008.

Last year, although it was dry, the lake remained in good shape because Alcoa operated under terms of a Low Inflow Protocol that will be a part of new license terms negotiated with Alcoa by parties including the High Rock Lake Association and governmental agencies. Efforts by Stanly County and the City of Salisbury to delay the license have succeeded, and as a result FERC has directed Alcoa to operate this year under terms of the old 1958 license.

During a conference call of the Drought Management Team (DMT) on June 5, 2008 Alcoa representative Alan Jones noted that conditions in the Basin had certainly regressed in the four weeks since the last DMT call. He said that inflows into High Rock Reservoir were about 900 cfs and could be expected to taper to about 800 cfs by the end of the following week. Alan reported that APGI began passing minimum flows (1,610 cfs weekly average) the week before. As of June 5, 2008 High Rock Reservoir was about 2-ft below its full pool reservoir elevation. Alan anticipates that High Rock may fall to 3-ft below full pool in June. At the time of the call, Narrows was also about 2-ft below full pool.

An action by the City of Winston Salem is compounding High Rock's problems. Winston Salem officials have requested a major reduction in discharge from Kerr Scott Reservoir to conserve water supplies. This reduction of about 300 cubic feet per second is equal to about 30% of the current Yadkin River flow into High Rock Lake.

During that call the HRLA pointed out that a discharge of 1,610 cfs weekly average is a real concern. We asked Alcoa to implement the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) to avoid a repeat of 2002.

The issues will be addressed again in the next DMT conference call on June 19, 2008. The HRLA will be a strong advocate of immediate reduction in discharge from High Rock Lake, in hopes of preventing a replay of 2002. *The HRLA also urges everyone to let FERC and your elected officials know the new license, as negotiated between all stakeholders, should be issued immediately.*