

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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Conditions For Lower Flint River Basin Drought Declaration Not Present, Says Georgia EPD

A severe drought declaration in southwest Georgia's lower Flint River Basin will not be made this year in accordance with the Flint River Drought Protection Act, according to Carol A. Couch, Director of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

By March 1 of each year, the EPD Director, in consultation with the state climatologist and the state geologist, determines if a severe drought declaration should be issued for the lower Flint River Basin as required by the Flint River Drought Protection Act. The Act established a fund to compensate farmers in the Flint River Basin who voluntarily stop irrigating their crops when a severe drought is declared. The purpose of the Act is to protect stream flow in the lower Flint River and its tributaries during a severe drought.

Stream flow, groundwater levels, winter precipitation and the 90-day precipitation outlooks within the lower Flint River Basin are the factors that determine whether a severe drought is declared.

The 90-day precipitation forecast, current stream flows and groundwater levels do not support the declaration in the lower Flint River Basin of a severe drought, said Director Couch. The area has received good winter season rains, which brought up groundwater levels and caused record daily high flows in some streams. Conditions in the lower Flint River Basin are more favorable at the start of this year's growing season compared with last year.

According to the federal government U.S. Drought Monitor, drought conditions in lower Flint River Basin areas most likely affected by the potential declaration have improved and are now labeled as abnormally dry. Exceptional and extreme drought conditions continue in the upper Chattahoochee, Coosa and Tallapoosa River basins of north Georgia.

This is the sixth year in a row that a severe drought declaration has not been necessary in the lower Flint River Basin.

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