

Southern Water Wars: 'Whisky is for drinkin', water is for fightin'



Will Pridmore, PhD candidate
Second Seminar
March 26th, 2008
12:20 - 1:10 pm
Room 125 PSB



Points of Discussion

- Current State of Affairs
- Is Atlanta to Blame ?
- Failure of Current Government Institutions and Localities
- The "New" Environmental Conflict



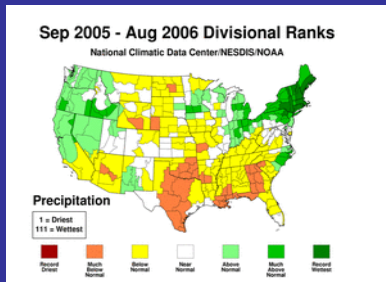
Water Wars - Georgia, Florida and Alabama

- **ACF:** Apalachicola-Chattoahoochee-Flint
- **ACT:** Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa

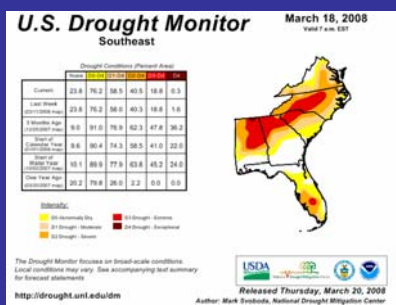


Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

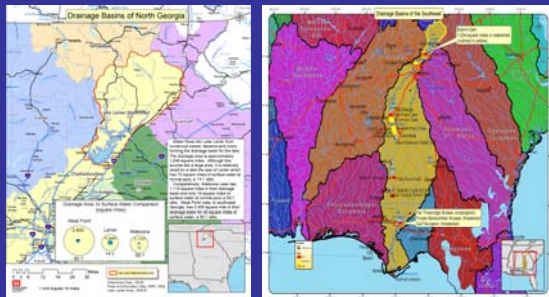
Precipitation Rates



SE Drought Monitor



Impacted Reservoirs: Allatoona and Lanier



Current State of Affairs



What We Know

- Georgia is in the midst of an historic drought starting in the spring of 2006
- Water levels at Lake Allatoona are well below normal
- Lake Lanier in mid-November dropped to its lowest point since the reservoir was constructed in the 1950s
- The lake hit 1,052.64 feet above sea level, about 11 feet below average
- The Chattahoochee River cannot sustain Atlanta's water needs
- The ESA is being violated by impounding water in Lanier (ACF)

Actions in 2007

- **Nov. 1:** U.S. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne meets in Washington with governors of Georgia, Florida and Alabama to start water sharing talks.
- **Dec. 17:** Meeting of the governors of Florida, Georgia and Alabama in Tallahassee, Florida to discuss water sharing.

Actions in 2008

- **Jan. 8:** Georgia Water Policy Council deadline for sending the Legislature a proposed statewide water plan.
- **Jan. 14:** Georgia General Assembly convenes and issues include state's first water use plan.
- **Mid-Jan:** Staff from Georgia, Florida and Alabama to meet in Washington to hammer-out details of a water sharing agreement.
- **Feb. 15:** Governors of Alabama, Florida and Georgia announce whether they have reached a negotiated settlement to their 17-year water war. They missed this deadline. Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue said he thinks the three states may be able to broker a deal by March 1

Actions in 2008 (cont'd.)

- **Feb. 25:** Northwest Georgia water officials to meet at the Forum with state Environmental Protection Division on water use restriction policies.
- **March 1:** Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne says the talks have failed. Feds will develop their own solution for the three states to share water. Corps of Engineers begins rewriting interim agreement. The new Corps agreement for water sharing among the three states would replace the existing temporary agreement that is set to expire June 1.
- **June 1:** Interim agreement on flow levels set to expire if no settlement reached before then.

Is Atlanta to Blame ?



Atlanta Metro Area Population

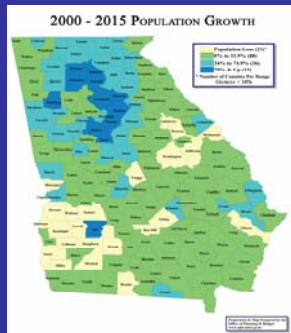
- **4,917,717** in the 28-county Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area, designated by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
- **3,813,700** in the 10-county Atlanta region
- **429,500** in the City of Atlanta
- Atlanta, Georgia population of the metropolitan area is predicted to be more than 5.5 million people in 2009

Source: Census Bureau, 2006; Atlanta Regional Commission, 2006

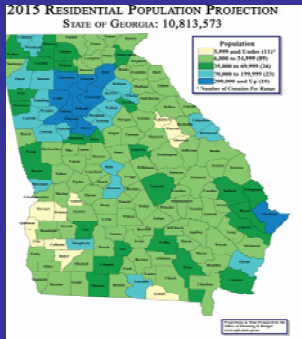
Surrounding Counties Population Increase, 2000-2006

- Bartow – 76,019 to 91,266 **+20.1%**
- Cherokee - 141,903 to 195,327 **+37.6%**
- Cobb - 607,751 to 679,325 **+11.8%**
- DeKalb - 665,865 to 723,602 **+8.6%**
- Forsyth - 98,407 to 150,968 **+53.4%**
- Gwinnett - 588,448 to 757,104 **+28.7%**

Georgia's Projected Population Growth



Georgia's Population Density



Failure of Current Government Institutions and Localities



Federal Level

- The key output of an agency, regulation, is framed in a political environment that makes it more important to withstand legal attack than scientific scrutiny (Wilson, 1989)
- Governmental institutions are working within a framework of a rules-and-deterrence model (Fiorino, 2006)

State Level

- Policy is being guided by “what is best for my state,” not by what is best for the people and ecology of the water basins
- The states view water as a captured resource; therefore, policy decisions are made in accordance to this view
- This dispute has been going on for 17 YEARS !!!

Local / County Level

- Local groups are do not trust federal or state ability or capacity to solve these issues
- Sense of ownership
- They are not deserving

The “New” Environmental Conflict

Characteristics of the “New” Conflict

- Occurs across economic and political boundaries
- There are no set rules
- Lack of effective institutions to deal with the adaptive challenges

How Do We Begin to Address these “New” Challenges

- Political leaders must move away from positions of “POWER”
- Civic and Business leaders must develop networks that are willing to engage in solutions
- Natural resource leaders must integrate science with collaborative problem-solving skills

Questions ?
