

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**January 13, 2012**

### **Catawba-Wateree Basin Improves to Drought Watch**

Lancaster County Water & Sewer District (LCWSD) today announced the Catawba-Wateree Basin is starting the new year with an improved drought condition. The 4,750 square-mile Basin has improved to Stage 0 Watch drought level of the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) compared to Stage 1 during the fall of 2011.

The LIP is the regional drought management plan major water users in the Basin use to share responsibility and set priorities to conserve the limited water supply during periods of low inflow. Stage 0 is the first of five drought stages outlined in the LIP and is a drought watch stage alerting water providers to monitor conditions closely and, if conditions worsen, review possible coordinated actions.

“Overall, the Basin has improved during the last quarter of 2011 with the much needed rainfall events we’ve received. We’ll continue to monitor the weather and the trigger levels closely. Customers continue to do a good job using water wisely and not wasting our precious resource,” said Mark Knight, LCWSD Manager.

Although lake levels have dropped some recently due to normal winter draw downs, stream flows feeding the lakes have been improving steadily through the fall. The Basin has not experienced even lower lake levels primarily due to the management of water resources through the LIP and the improving supply from the Basin’s streams.

“These improving conditions during the winter months are especially helpful,” said Mike Bailes, Catawba River Water Treatment Plant Director. “If rainfall continues or improves in the coming months, the ability to manage the water supply through next summer’s heat and evaporation will be greatly improved from how we entered 2011. Continued prudent water use in homes, yards, schools and businesses will help too.”

Most recently, LCWSD has been monitoring conditions since the Basin entered a Stage 0 drought watch in August 2010 and Stage 1 in October of 2010. To learn more about the Catawba-Wateree Basin, local restrictions, and water saving tips, go to [www.saveyourwater.org](http://www.saveyourwater.org) and [www.lcwasd.org](http://www.lcwasd.org).