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# News Release

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## ***CORPS TO INCREASE FLOWS FROM ALLATOONA LAKE; DECREASE MINIMUM FLOW REQUIREMENTS FOR ALABAMA POWER PROJECTS***

Mobile, Ala. – The Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, announced today they will increase water releases from Allatoona Lake at the headwaters of the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) river system by approximately 200 cubic feet per second and grant a 10 percent reduction in the required minimum flow from Alabama Power projects above Montgomery, Ala.

“In June the Corps initiated bi-weekly drought summit conference calls with stakeholders in the ACT basin and other Federal agencies in accordance with the drought provisions of our water control manuals,” said E. Patrick Robbins, Chief, Public Affairs, Mobile District. “Based on new information we received during last week’s conference call and rainfall that has occurred over the last week, we have extensively modeled the current extreme drought conditions over the long term. We can provide this additional water without jeopardizing water supply from Allatoona Lake or depleting the limited reserve capability the lake supplies to the system.”

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## **INCREASED RELEASES**

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The Corps is currently generating the equivalent of 1-hour of hydropower generation from Allatoona Lake each weekday and will increase to the equivalent of 2 hours. The increase will provide a combined release from Allatoona Lake and Carters Lake, also in northwest Georgia, of 1,080 cubic feet per second into the Coosa River system.

“These increased releases will be monitored closely to ensure we maintain Allatoona Lake within its upper operating zone until the drought abates,” said Robbins. “These two lakes, Allatoona and Carters, are at the headwaters of the system and can only be refilled from rainfall. The other lakes downstream can be refilled from rainfall and upstream releases.

“It is extremely important in a drought situation that we maintain reserves in these upper lakes or the whole system could be in jeopardy over the long term,” he said.

The Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa basin has been experiencing extreme drought conditions throughout 2007. The drought is characterized as “Exceptional” in north-central Alabama, the most severe category of drought reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor. Much of the northern portion of the basin is experiencing “Extreme” drought, the second most severe category. Stream flows in some areas have dipped to new record low levels.

“As a result of these conditions, especially in the Tallapoosa River basin, Alabama Power requested up to a 40 percent reduction in their minimum flow requirements in the Alabama River at Montgomery,” Robbins said. “After receiving input from the public, communities, businesses, state and Federal agencies as part of our Environmental Assessment, we determined there would be no

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## **INCREASED FLOWS**

### **3-3-3**

significant impact to allow up to a 20 percent reduction. This reduction in flow will begin at 10 percent to allow monitoring of the water quality in the Alabama River and the flow will be adjusted up or down as necessary.”

This reduction in flow will allow Alabama Power to conserve storage in its reservoirs while maintaining sufficient water flow for downstream users to continue water withdrawals and discharge of wastewater while meeting State water quality standards in the river. It will also insure that hydroelectric power can be generated when needed by Alabama Power to stabilize their power grid. This issue is not one of energy production, but one of system stabilization during high loads to prevent brown outs and black outs.

“The increased generation from Allatoona Lake and the reduced flows in the Alabama River, will be closely monitored and adjusted as necessary,” said Robbins. “We will continue the bi-weekly drought summit conference call to ensure all stakeholders and issues are heard and to look at appropriate future actions in the basin to collaboratively get through the current drought situation.”