Appendix E

Drought Description

1 DROUGHT DESCRIPTIONS

Five major, long-term (3 or more years) drought episodes have been identified during the period of record for the ACF and ACT River Basins in Alabama and Georgia. Each of these drought episodes displays differing spatial and temporal characteristics.

1.1 2006-2008

The 2006-08 drought was by far the most devastating drought recorded in Alabama and western Georgia. Precipitation declines began in December, 2005. These shortfalls continued through Winter 2006-07 and Spring 2007, exhibiting the driest winter and spring in the period of record. The drought reached peak intensity in 2007, resulting in a D-4 Exceptional Drought Intensity (the worst measured) throughout the Summer, 2007. Lakes and reservoirs dropped to the lowest levels ever recorded. Rainfall at Gainesville, Georgia (Lake Lanier) was only 20 inches for the entire year.

1.2 1998-2003

This period initiated the most recent multi-year drought "cycle". The drought reached peak severity in Summer, 2000, accompanied by all-time record high temperatures in many areas.

1.3 1984-1989

In the extreme northern portions of the ACF and ACT Basins, the 1984-89 drought was the worst drought known until that time. Precipitation from December 1985 through July 1986 was less than 40 percent of normal. Birmingham, Alabama and Chattanooga, Tennessee received only 17 inches of precipitation. The drought climaxed in July 1986, exacerbated by extremely high temperatures.

1.4 1954-1958

1954-58 was the most widespread, extreme and prolonged drought across the southern United States since the Dust Bowl of the 1930`s. The drought peaked in calendar year 1954; it was the driest of record statewide for Alabama since records began in 1895. Rainfall for 1954 was only 40 percent of normal across southeast Alabama.

1.5 1939-1943

Northwest Georgia experienced one of the driest springs of record in 1941. It was followed by drier than normal conditions across north Alabama during 1942-43.