

## **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

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### **No Drought Declaration This Year For Flint River Basin, 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 with surface water when a severe drought is declared.

The 90-day precipitation forecast, current stream flows and groundwater levels in the lower Flint River Basin do not support a severe drought declaration, said Director Couch.

While the lower Flint River Basin continues to experience dry conditions, it is in better shape than many other parts of the state where abnormally dry conditions are prevalent, said State Climatologist David Stooksbury.

EPD and the Office of the State Climatologist monitor data from the U.S. Geological Survey <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/>, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration <http://www.noaa.gov/> and the University of Georgia <http://www.georgiaweather.net/>.

Stream flow, groundwater levels, winter precipitation and three-month precipitation outlooks are used for drought monitoring and to determine its severity.

Climate models are not able to consistently predict several months in advance the timing or occurrence of short-term droughts. Agricultural droughts can develop over a two to three-week period. Short-term agricultural droughts can be devastating for farmers; however, the hydrological impacts of short-term agricultural droughts are minimal.

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

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