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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corps, Southeast Power Administration cooperate to lower water releases from Kerr Lake

During this week, water releases from John H. Kerr Dam will be adjusted downward from the normal July release levels. Terry Brown, Water Control Manager for the Wilmington District, explained current operations. "During July, we normally step releases to a higher level for two reasons. First, we go to 3,000 cfs to maintain adequate water quality downstream. As temperatures rise, dissolved oxygen begins to decrease, which stresses aquatic species and can cause fish kills. We also make additional releases in July and August to meet the power generation needs of summer peak demand."

In normal years, that would be no problem. But this year, John H. Kerr Lake is suffering from the prolonged drought that has affected much of North Carolina and Virginia since 1998.

"The drought is creating a tough situation for everyone," Brown said. "As the summer progresses, we expect to be consulting with our stakeholders on an almost daily basis to determine the best flow levels. That's why we can't be precise about the exact number of cubic feet per second on any given day. The best we can say is, we'll certainly be releasing less than normal for this time of the year, and our releases will be closer to the levels they were at in June."

"We at the Southeast Power Administration have been watching the situation at Kerr very closely," said xxx xxxx, of SEPA. "We are very sympathetic with the stresses on the lake and the problems drought is causing for folks. Our management has agreed to reduce our power generation requirement at Kerr, as long as we can go on the open market and buy power for our preferred customers at reasonable rates."

To date, SEPA has purchased about \$800,000 power on the open market supporting reduced releases from Kerr during other low-water periods in this lengthy four-year dry period.

"We have been working with SEPA and our other stakeholders since last winter," Brown said. "We hold a conference call every week with communities, state and federal agencies, SEPA and industries along the Roanoke River Basin. We all have gained a better understanding of one another's needs and problems. We are all very appreciative that SEPA has participated all along, and has taken this proactive step to help maintain water levels in Kerr Lake for as long as possible."

For more information on the drought, visit the Wilmington District web site at <http://epec.saw.usace.army.mil>