

7-2008

# The Future of Water in North Carolina and the South: Lessons Learned and Not Learned in the 2007-2008 Drought

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## Recommended Citation

Holman, Bill and Kleczek, Leslie, "The Future of Water in North Carolina and the South: Lessons Learned and Not Learned in the 2007-2008 Drought" (2008). 2008. Paper 38.

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The Future of Water in North Carolina and the South:  
Lessons Learned and Not Learned in the 2007-2008 Drought

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Rapidly growing population and one of the worst droughts in modern history have strained water resources in the Research Triangle Region, in North Carolina and across the Southeastern United States. Water resources are viewed throughout the region as a plentiful and unlimited resource – the limitations imposed by drought sent citizens, water suppliers, and regulators scrambling to readjust. As we move out of the drought, many across the region have pushed water conservation to the back burner, considering the severity of the drought a one time event. Yet scientists predict that climate change will result in more frequent and extreme drought and storm events in the Southeast.

During this presentation we will discuss local and state government response to the 2007-2008. What are the gaps in water management? What are the opportunities to incentivize planning to address future droughts? Are municipalities and states addressing drought management in conjunction with growth? Are municipalities implementing long term strategies for water conservation?

Many people across the Southeast spent long hours throughout the summer, fall, and winter ensuring that there was and would be enough water to meet fundamental needs. The work does not end with the increase in rain fall. In North Carolina, the Office of the Governor and the Department of Natural Resources assembled a package of legislative options for improving drought response. Elements of the package emphasize more inclusive and easily accessible data identifying who is using water and where, and more streamlined emergency response plans. The plan will be addressed by the General Assembly this summer.

Citizens of North Carolina and the Southeast have begun to value water more highly and the services water provides. In response, some municipalities are employing incentives to increase water use efficiency, such as rate structures that discourage customers from using more water than they need. During this presentation, we will explore the numerous incentive and policy opportunities to promote efficiency and enable local and state governments to say goodbye to the era of cheap and abundant water resources.

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