

**RRSC Advice on Drought Management and Communications
October 2007**

1. How can TVA's communications strategy and implementation for extraordinary events like extended droughts be improved?

- a) There has only been one press release about the drought and the complications. There ought to be more information to the public. Need updated news releases explaining to the main stem residents, the impacts being felt in the tributary reservoirs.
- b) Complimenting the website. Broad, keep up the good work. Add links to partnering agency websites with messages that are as consistent as possible. Update information as appropriate. Keeps people informed. Best conduit for informing stakeholders (i.e., keeping Norris full).
- c) There are years of experience between federal agencies. Wise for TVA to create a Drought Management Programmatic agreement detailing communication steps between cooperating agencies. Include points of contact, research, monitoring team data. Information can be shared with public. Could be handled on a 5-6 page programmatic agreement. Focus on communications rather than direct actions.
- d) Would like to see periodic updates via e-mail to distributors so they can prepare for potential rate increases. Need a mechanism to stay in communication with the decision makers for water systems.
- e) Use a Drought Management Committee and come to an agreement on public statements and releases of information to the public. Reduces conflicting reports. Likes Drought Management Committee that acts as a clearing house for information. Would focus on communication and information with joint press releases.
- f) Communication is the key to success. Use a variety of methods to communicate. Look for existing internal contacts to pass along information.
- g) TVA could utilize existing resources in the community. Bring them (grass roots people such as power distributors, water plant managers, and other stakeholders) together to discuss impacts and how we can meet needs. Create ombudsmen that can share information with the public. Take a proactive role.
- h) Communicate positively and realistically.
- i) Encourage a conservation message to customers whenever possible.
- j) Should have Public Service Announcements in place to talk about water conservation for the end users. Some distributors are offering cable and could possibly provide free airtime for sharing information with the public.
- k) TVA needs to be careful when putting out information during a drought or other water emergency. Be careful when putting out information on pricing.
- l) Water conservation and energy conservation need to be rolled out together.

**RRSC Advice on Drought Management and Communications
October 2007**

- m) Opportunity to educate the public and change their behavior (i.e. icon like Smokey Bear, Billy Bass, Charlie Catfish). Marketing opportunity.
- n) Broaden beyond drought, look at water and energy and the relationship between the two. Conservation and drought become components of the whole.
- o) TVA should consider an internal coordination process so as drought conditions are occurring there is a central theme being shared between the water management and energy components and others. Consistent internal and external message.
- p) There are other stakeholders (i.e. Navigation industry) besides TVA that may have information to share. There needs to be two-way communication. Also consider marina operators, other business associated with the water system.

2. Now that you have seen the Draft Drought Management Plan, is there anything else TVA should consider for inclusion in the plan?

- a) Decision tree and priorities. How will decisions be made? Who will make them? What priorities will they be based on? Define appropriate actions in the plan. Consider the '88 plan be added to the appendix. Include more constrained definitions of terms.
- b) The Drought Management Committee should consider appropriate opportunities that would allow TVA to deviate from the red flood guide to conserve water.
- c) There need to be general action items in the plan. When a condition is met, an action will go into place.
- d) Plan needs to recognize that there are strategic preparations that are longer term in nature. There are some benefits to preparing for droughts. These are not necessarily only TVA responsibilities.
- e) Plan would benefit from addressing critical stages of drought. Outline critical actions needed and responsible parties during Level 4. Prepare for worst case scenario.

3. Are there other partnership opportunities that TVA could use for support during extreme conditions like droughts?

- a) TVA could help negotiate with a national firm regarding lower consulting rates for emergency planning. May want to have plans filed here. Could look for opportunities to provide lower cost contract services. TVA would not be responsible for payment, but rather offer bargaining power.
- b) TVA water management functions communicate more frequently with the power distributors.

**RRSC Advice on Drought Management and Communications
October 2007**

- c) Partner with States via newsletter, communications package that the States could include on their websites or distribute to interested parties.
- d) Could use Drought Committee to coordinate communications package with all the partners who would further distribute it.
- e) TVA could use model for power emergency load curtailment program (ELCP). Could be expanded for water emergency (drought) conditions.
- f) Financial incentive. Consider using time of use metering to the end user to encourage energy conservation.
- g) Partnerships are developed over time. Partnering with states and other federal agencies is key. Consider other agencies (such as NRCS, USFS) that could not only help collect information but also disseminate to their constituents. TVA should be lead in the partnerships with agencies such as the states, USDA and NRCS. Be creative in identifying agencies to partner with.
- h) Bring the public in as partners. Give them information in a very simple way. Need to be focused on how it applies to them.
- i) TVA should consider being the clearing house for grant program information. Drought proofing water supply intakes. Grants for Xeriscaping, water system repairs. What can TVA do as the leader to promote conservation and then reduce consumption during critical times? Caution against having rate payers pay for improvements.