

## **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Farm Use of Water and Wise Conservation Are Critical to South Georgia, says EPD Director**

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) wants to assure South Georgia farmers that it does not intend to curtail agricultural irrigation due to the ongoing drought.

“Crops are in the ground and a state-imposed reduction in irrigation at this time would be devastating to the region’s farm-based economy,” said EPD Director Carol A. Couch.

A lack of rain has caused abnormally dry conditions in parts of South Georgia and increased demand for groundwater. The increase in water pumping has caused groundwater levels to drop in some areas. According to data collected from three U.S. Geological Survey monitoring wells in Lowndes, Cook and Tift counties, groundwater levels this month in the deep Floridan aquifer range from two to 25 feet lower than they have been this time of year since 2000.

In recent weeks, residential wells, which draw water from the shallow aquifer that lies above the deeper Floridan, have experienced a lowering of water levels. No wells have run dry and the homeowners have successfully responded by lowering pumps.

Citizens with questions about their wells are encouraged to contact a qualified well drilling company or water pump installer. EPD will continue to monitor groundwater levels through the course of the summer, and urges all users of water to wisely conserve.

Normal winter and spring rains will be needed to replenish the aquifers in order to support next year’s crops. EPD will be evaluating regional groundwater conditions and will consider any necessary water management actions in advance of the 2008 growing season.

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