

Hydrology - SCWRC Report 138

Water Use in South Carolina, 1980

By

Gerald E. Lonan, Christopher B. Burnette, and Harriet J. Morris

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SUMMARY

Approximately 5.8 billion gallons of water were withdrawn daily in South Carolina in 1980 by public suppliers, rural users (domestic, livestock, and irrigation), industry, and thermoelectric power plants. Of this amount, 96 percent was taken from surface-water sources and four percent from ground-water sources. Approximately 94 percent was returned without being consumed. Thermoelectric plants used 76 percent of the total withdrawn; industry, 17 percent; public supplies, five percent; and rural users, two percent. Of the total withdrawal, 64 percent was used at four locations.

Nonwithdrawal use of water for hydroelectric power production was eleven times greater than all withdrawal uses, averaging 63.9 billion gallons per day. Other nonwithdrawal uses – recreation, navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, and waste disposal – are difficult to quantify and are not addressed in this report.

Withdrawals by thermoelectric plants grew by almost 800 percent since 1955, the greatest increase of all uses. Rural use increased by 85 percent, while industrial use increased by 240 percent. Total withdrawals increased by 70 percent during the past decade, and by more than 500 percent since 1955.

Copies of this report are available in the SCDNR's Columbia office.