
From: Doug Young <dgyoung@bellsouth.net>
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THE JOURNAL STAFF

COLUMBIA — South Carolina learned a lot of lessons from the historic flood of 2015, lessons tested as Hurricane Matthew slammed the state's coast and caused flooding to the north that is now gushing through its rivers en route to the coast, according to state officials.

"The first lesson is: When the National Weather Service and other forecasters say 12 inches of rain is coming to your state, listen. Be prepared," Jill Stewart of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control told attendees of the S.C. Water Resources Conference on Wednesday.

Lesson No. 2: Communicate early and often, according to Stewart. As the weather forecast worsened, DHEC contacted dam owners across the state with tips and steps for dam monitoring, said Stewart, the agency's director of dam safety and stormwater permitting. As of Tuesday, 15 dams had breached. After the flood a year ago, 51 regulated and unregulated dams had breached.

Stewart was among the state and federal officials, scientists and other speakers at the conference to share insights from the historic of flood of 2015



Destructive volumes of water blasted through cities and suburbs in South Carolina.

registered for the conference, which includes four plenary sessions, 36 breakout sessions and 108 oral presentations and examine an array of poster presentations.

The conference is organized into seven tracks, including: Water Policy and Planning; Surface Water and Groundwater Systems; Stormwater; Hydrologic Monitoring and Modeling; Climate, Floods and Drought; Infrastructure; and Coastal and Estuarine Systems.

Stewart's No. 3 lesson: Collect, evaluate and share data to help agencies and communities prepare.

"We thought we would have a little more time to learn from our lessons, but unfortunately we

pacts. This science-based information would be crucial to developing sustainable strategies for protecting and providing water resources for South Carolina's growing economy and population," Allen said. "We're working hard in this state to make sure we don't have an albatross of water problems tied around our neck."

While flood response has been tested, drought remains a concern. Before the 2015 flood hit, 35 South Carolina counties were declared primary natural disaster areas by the federal government due to drought.

The potential for future droughts coupled with increased water demand as populations rise under-

future to create resources said. ' will be that w period plan a