⨪**Water War History**

**1957**  –  US Army Corps of Engineers completes Buford Dam creating 38,500-acre Lake Lanier, the largest and northern-most reservoir in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River basin. The primary purposes of this and other dams on the Chattahoochee River are flood control, power generation and navigation. Water supply and recreation are additional benefits. As Lake Lanier fills the region is hit by drought – a sign of things to come.

**1981, 1986 and 1988**  –  Drought years in the Southeast.

**1989**   –  Corps of Engineers announces plan to reallocate 20 percent of the water normally reserved for power generation in Lake Lanier to drinking water. The plan is designed to ensure an adequate water supply for metro Atlanta through 2010.  
           –  Georgia applies for permission to build a series of regional reservoirs that would circle metro Atlanta and "drought-proof" North Georgia. The first of these is on the Alabama state line and will impound water from a second major watershed Georgia shares with Alabama, the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) River basin.

**War Begins**

**1990**  –  Alabama, later joined by Florida, files suit to block the proposed reallocation of water from Lanier and raises concerns about water withdrawals from Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa river basin as well as Georgia's plans to build regional reservoirs. The 'water war' begins.

**1992** –  States agree to call a truce in the lawsuits. They also agree to conduct a $20 million comprehensive study to analyze how much water is available in each basin, how much each state needs based on growth projections, and the possible economic and environmental consequences of meeting those needs.

**1998**  –  In another year of drought, Congress enacts water compacts between Georgia, Florida and Alabama to provide a framework for negotiations over water sharing in ACF and ACF basins. With the comprehensive study as a guide, negotiations between the states continue on and off for 5 years. Eventually the compacts expire without any agreement being reached.

**2003**  –  Georgia strikes a separate agreement with the Corps of Engineers that gives metro Atlanta 23 percent of the water in Lake Lanier, a 65 percent increase. By now more than 3 million metro Atlanta residents depend on Lake Lanier for their water supply. But the agreement never comes into force because Alabama and Florida challenge it in court.

**New Offensive**

**2006** –  Drought returns to the Southeast

**2007**  –  As the drought intensifies and water levels in Lake Lanier plunge toward historic lows, Georgia sues the Corps of Engineer to reduce flows from the reservoir.  
           –  Water restrictions are declared across the region, including a total ban on outdoor water use in 61 North Georgia counties. Georgia Governor, Sonny Perdue, mandates a 10 percent reduction in overall water use.  
           –  The crisis causes the Federal Government to intervene. Alabama, Florida and Georgia agree to a temporary reduction in the flow of the Chattahoochee River and to work out a long-term agreement for water sharing.  
           –  In December, Lake Lanier reaches an all-time low, 21 feet below full pool.

**2008**  –  Georgia Assembly approves funding for a statewide water management plan including a 3-year data gathering effort to determine how much water is available in the state. At the same it passes a resolution to correct a long-standing boundary error with Tennessee that would effectively give Georgia access to the Tennessee River with 15 times the flow of Chattahoochee.  
           –  US Court of Appeals in Washington overturns the 2003 agreement between Georgia and the Corps of Engineers increasing the water supply from Lake Lanier for metro Atlanta. The ruling states that such a reallocation requires Congressional authorization.  
           –  Negotiations between the states continue behind closed doors under federal supervision but once again fail to produce an agreement on water sharing.

**2009**  –  The drought that sparked the latest round of the Water War finally comes to an end. Rains that cause record-breaking floods return Lake Lanier to full pool.  
          –  A Federal District Court judge rules that that water supply 'is not an authorized purpose for Lake Lanier.' He gives the states three years to reach a new agreement over water sharing. Without such an agreement, water supply will revert to 1970s levels in 2012 and Metro Atlanta could lose up to a half of its water supply from Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River

**2010**  –  As the terms of the governors in all three states expire the water issue remains unresolved.

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