

# Drought in Your Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and How You Can Find All the Information You Need to Include It

## Why Drought Has A Place In Hazard Mitigation Plans

Drought affects may be in any (or all) of three areas.

1. Agricultural drought occurs when rain does not come at the right time in the right amounts during the growing season. Agricultural drought can often be mitigated through irrigation. Under certain circumstances, funds are available from the US Department of Agriculture to compensate drought victims.
2. Wildfire Danger occurs when there is insufficient moisture to the extent that combustion in fields and forests is perilously easy. Wildfire Danger can be mitigated through increased vigilance. FEMA fire suppression grants might be available for this.
3. Water Supply drought occurs when there is insufficient rainfall to refill reservoirs, keep stream flow at acceptable levels, or to recharge ground water supplies. This type of drought can only be mitigated by conservation efforts. And those efforts, to be effective, must be made in the early stages of drought. There are no federal funds available for water supply drought situations.

Drought is insidious. Unless one pays close attention to the situation, the affects of drought can seem suddenly to become severe. Often, when the affects of drought are first noticed, they are too severe to be effectively mitigated. Any action taken is likely to be too little too late.

Conservation efforts during Water Supply drought must be overwhelmingly local. State government can and does draw media attention to drought, but only local public water suppliers can implement necessary conservation measures.

Local officials with emergency management planning duties should be involved.

1. Know the source for your jurisdiction's water—reservoir, stream flow, or groundwater.
2. Be familiar with your system's vulnerability to drought.
3. Be familiar with water conservation ordinances. Water conservation ordinances make sense in that all the arguing, crafting, as well as political give and take are done in advance—

before the onset of drought. Measures can be implemented without debate and delay when certain shortage thresholds are met.

4. Know if your water supply is covered by a water conservation ordinance.
  - a. If there is a water conservation ordinance in effect, make sure your hazard mitigation plan is consistent with the ordinance.
  - b. If there is no water conservation ordinance, work with the local public water supplier to build a conservation (hazard mitigation) plan. Try to get your plan codified into an ordinance.

### Drought Information for Your Hazard Mitigation Plan

There is no shortage of information and help available should you decide to include drought in your hazard mitigation plan.

1. The National Drought Mitigation Center.  
<http://enso.unl.edu/ndmc/>
2. North Carolina Drought Monitoring Council.  
[http://www.ncwater.org/Water\\_Supply\\_Planning/Drought\\_Monitoring\\_Council/](http://www.ncwater.org/Water_Supply_Planning/Drought_Monitoring_Council/)
3. North Carolina Division of Water Resources.  
Woody Yonts—919-715-5453  
<http://www.ncwater.org/>
4. State Climate Office of North Carolina (for drought climatology information) Ryan Boyles—919-515-3056  
<http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/>
5. North Carolina Division of Emergency Management (for planning assistance)  
Ron Wall—919-733-3427  
Gary Faltinowski—919-715-9204  
<http://www.ncem.org/>
6. North Carolina Emergency Operations Plan (Annex B, Appendix 3—Drought Assessment and Response Plan)  
Available for review at <http://www.ncem.org/>