



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Rain deficit, hot weather brings back drought to North Carolina

RALEIGH – Drought has returned to North Carolina for the first time in more than two years.

Lack of adequate rainfall and hot temperatures have thrust 20 North Carolina counties in portions of central and western North Carolina into a moderate drought, according to the state's drought map, which is updated every Thursday. Fifty-one other counties in a swath from eastern to western North Carolina are abnormally dry, which means they are not experiencing drought but could be if dry conditions persist. Today's drought map can be found at www.ncdrought.org.

“Although we still haven't had any reports of public water supplies being affected, we are seeing impacts to streams, groundwater levels and inflows to reservoirs,” said Bob Stea, chairman of the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council. “People should follow the water restrictions put in place by their local water systems.”

For each system's water conservation status, go to:

www.ncwater.org/Drought_Monitoring/reporting/displaystate.php. For tips and ways to save water, go to www.savewaternc.org.

As dry, windy conditions persist, the N.C. Forest Service is encouraging people to use caution when burning leaves, sticks and other yard vegetation.

Today's drought map shows moderate drought – the least severe of the four drought categories – stretching from the Charlotte area to the Winston-Salem area and just beyond Morganton. This is the first time North Carolina has experienced any drought conditions since April 23, 2013.

“For many locations across the state, this is the warmest week on record ending June 23,” said Rebecca Cumbie, extension climatologist at the N.C. State Climate Office and a member of the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council. “The latest outlook from the Climate Prediction Center indicates increased chances of below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures for much of the state for July through September. If high temperatures continue, paired with lack of rainfall, conditions could worsen quickly.”

Drought categories are based on streamflow, groundwater levels, the amount of water stored in reservoirs, soil moisture, the time of year and other relevant factors for assessing the extent and severity of dry conditions.

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