



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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DROUGHT CONDITIONS EXPANDING IN EASTERN AND WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

RALEIGH – North Carolina’s drought conditions worsened for the second straight week, as drought has now expanded to more than half of North Carolina’s counties for the first time since mid-November, according to Thursday’s map issued by the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The map shows that a large swath of the coastal plain is now experiencing moderate drought. Last week, the same area was abnormally dry, which indicates that drought, while not present, could return without adequate rainfall. This week, 37 counties are abnormally dry.

“Water table levels continue to be below normal in this area together with minimum precipitation,” said Woody Yonts, chairman of the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council. “Meanwhile, severe drought conditions have expanded across the southern Appalachians, and moderate or severe drought conditions continue to blanket parts of the Charlotte, Asheville and Hendersonville metropolitan areas.”

In all, 63 counties are experiencing moderate or severe drought statewide. That’s a significant increase over last week’s 39 counties. The last time more than half the state was experiencing some form of drought was Nov. 11.

While the map indicates expanding drought conditions, Thursday’s map does not take into account the impact Wednesday’s rainfall had on streamflows, reservoirs, lakes and groundwater. That information will be reflected in next week’s drought map.

Water conservation can help stretch the state’s limited water resources. The following are some water conservation tips:

- For indoor water conservation, install a low-flow shower head; turn off water when brushing teeth; do only full loads of laundry; wash dishes by hand and repair leaking toilets.
- For outdoor water conservation, water plants early in the day; plant only native grasses and shrubs; fix leaks in hose connections; use mulch to keep soil moist and collect and recycle rainwater.

For other tips, go to www.savewaternc.org. To see the drought map, go to www.ncdrought.org. For additional information, please contact Joe Smith, public information officer with the Division of Water Resources, at (919) 715-5433.

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