



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Contact: Joe Smith
Phone: (919) 715-5433

ABNORMALLY DRY CONDITIONS EXPAND TO PIEDMONT AND COASTAL PLAIN

RALEIGH – For the first time since August, all 100 North Carolina counties are experiencing drought or abnormally dry conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor map released Thursday.

As of Thursday, abnormally dry conditions cover the entire eastern portion of North Carolina and parts of the Piedmont due to recent warm and dry weather. Last week, 43 counties in North Carolina were experiencing some type of abnormally dry weather or drought. This week, 61 counties are abnormally dry. Abnormally dry conditions indicate that drought is not present but could return without adequate rainfall.

Conditions in western North Carolina, the state's driest area, worsened as well. In fact, there are now 29 counties across the state in moderate drought – 11 more than last week. Ten counties in the Hendersonville metropolitan area that were in severe drought are facing those same conditions this week.

Rainfall amounts have been well-below average in recent weeks, according to many of the state's weather observation sites.

"We're seeing that in the streamflows," said Woody Yonts, chairman of the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council.

Average streamflow data show that flows are unseasonably low and getting lower. Average ground water levels are also dropping. There may not be any relief any time soon. Long-range outlooks from the National Climate Prediction Center show the possibility of unseasonably dry weather for several more months. Yonts says drought could start creeping eastward across the state if these long-term outlooks don't change.

"We're encouraging all citizens of North Carolina to conserve water," said Yonts.

Water conservation can help stretch the state's water resources for homeowners, businesses, agricultural users, and ecological interests. 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.

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

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