



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Agricultural Drought Conditions Surface in Western and Northeastern North Carolina

RALEIGH – Moderate drought conditions have resurfaced in parts of North Carolina for the first time since last summer, according to Thursday’s map issued by the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The drought map indicates that 18 counties in the western and northeastern portions of the state have reached moderate drought status, the least severe of the four drought categories. This is the first time since August that any part of North Carolina has experienced drought. Officials say the worsening conditions are driven by a lack of rainfall that has hurt crops and impacted farmers in parts of North Carolina.

“Agricultural reports indicate a lack of rainfall and higher sustained temperatures are beginning to impact croplands in North Carolina,” said Candice Craig, statistician for National Agricultural Statistics Service. “Pastures and hayfields have been depleted of soil moisture. Corn conditions are deteriorating and some corn crops are showing drought stress.”

In addition, a lack of rain has thrust 11 more counties into abnormally dry conditions this week. Last week, 51 counties were abnormally dry, a category that means drought is not present but could return without sufficient rainfall.

North Carolinians know something about drought conditions and water conservation. In 2007-08, the state experienced its worst drought since recordkeeping began on the subject in 1895. As drought has reemerged, state officials are encouraging residents, businesses, towns and others to conserve water whenever possible.

The following are some water conservation tips:

- Install low-flow shower heads, turn off water when brushing teeth, do only full loads of laundry, wash dishes by hand and repair leaking toilets.
- 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.

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