



## N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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### Severe drought returns to southwestern North Carolina

**RALEIGH** – Severe drought has returned to North Carolina for the first time since February and prompted state officials to encourage people to pay attention in case local communities enact water saving measures.

“At this point, public water supplies are fine in North Carolina,” said Tom Reeder, director of the N.C. Division of Water Resources. “But if dry conditions continue to occur, widespread impacts could quickly surface in 2013 when temperatures begin to increase and the growing season begins.”

State officials say people should always follow the water restrictions enacted by their local water systems. For each system’s water conservation status, go to [www.ncwater.org/Drought\\_Monitoring/reporting/displaystate.php](http://www.ncwater.org/Drought_Monitoring/reporting/displaystate.php). For tips and ways to save water, go to [www.savewaternc.org](http://www.savewaternc.org).

Thursday’s federal drought map moved eight counties in southwestern North Carolina into a severe drought, the second worst ranking in the system used to measure drought. Thursday marks the first time since February of this year that any part of the Tar Heel State has experienced a severe drought. Another 57 North Carolina counties are experiencing moderate drought. In addition, 16 counties are abnormally dry, which means drought in those areas could reemerge without adequate rainfall. The drought map can be seen at [www.ncdrought.org](http://www.ncdrought.org).

The introduction of severe drought in southwest North Carolina came about because of below normal rainfall and impacts to stream flows in those areas. A lack of significant rainfall in recent months has resulted in below normal ground water levels and stream flows and less water than needed to replenish reservoirs in parts of North Carolina.

“To extend available water supplies and maintain lake levels, many reservoir managers in North Carolina are allowing only minimum releases of water,” said George Galleher, an engineer with Duke Energy and a member of the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council. “This conservative approach to help maintain lake storage is important as we wait for rainfall to recharge North Carolina’s reservoirs, rivers and ground water.”

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