

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

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Drought Emergency Continues and Conservation Is Imperative

State Drought Management Team Convened To Discuss Current Conditions and Impacts

Concord, NH – With the entire state still experiencing drought, and warm, dry days in the forecast, the New Hampshire Drought Management Team (DMT) met on Thursday, November 5 to discuss current drought conditions and the ongoing impacts to residents and the environment. The DMT would like to remind the public that the drought is still an emergency situation despite recent precipitation. The public should continue to abide by outdoor water use restrictions imposed by water utilities or municipalities and those on residential wells should conserve to sustain essential water supplies for yourself and your neighbors. Also, as temperatures drop, conserving indoors becomes the single best way to sustain supplies. Public guidance on fixing leaks to updating water wasting fixtures may be found on the [NHDES Drought Management webpage](#).

State Climatologist Mary Stampone provided an overview on the latest drought conditions and forecasts, which indicated that drought will likely persist through the fall. According to Stampone, the near average precipitation received in October caused drought conditions to improve across much of the state. However, she stressed that recent rainfall was not enough to make up for the substantial precipitation deficit for the year across southern New Hampshire where extreme drought conditions persist.

With the help of the precipitation from the last several weeks, as well as releases from dams as their impoundments are drawn down for the winter, stream and river flow conditions have improved and are now at normal levels in many of NH's rivers and streams; although rivers and streams in the southeastern part of the state, where extreme drought conditions persist, remain well below normal.

For the state's groundwater monitoring wells, between September and October, improvement in groundwater levels occurred in northern and far southern New Hampshire, while levels in many wells in central New Hampshire experienced further declines. In that area, declines ranged from 0.16 to 0.97 feet below their September measurements. This means many Town and residential wells remain at risk of going dry and owners should work to prevent this from happening.

The well drilling and pump industry is busy keeping up with "no water" calls, wells going dry, due to drought impacts. It is estimated that over 1000 residential wells have been impacted based on a phone survey conducted by NHDES. Many companies are reporting several weeks of backlogged requests. The State of New Hampshire has established an emergency drought assistance initiative for income eligible homeowners who have a residential well that has been impacted by drought. Visit

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/drought/index.htm> for more information. To date, over 100 households have completed preliminary applications for assistance.

Now that the growing season has ended, conservation efforts can focus more on indoor water use. Ensuring toilets are not running, dripping faucets are fixed and replacing older toilets, washing machines and showerheads with newer efficient devices can reduce household water use by 50%. Water lines should be winterized instead of continuously running water to avoid pipes freezing.

The DMT is led by NHDES and is comprised of key representatives across state government, academia, industry and other organizations. For a recording of the 5 November, and previous sessions, see <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/drought/index.htm>. For more information, contact Jim Martin, NHDES Public Information Officer, at james.martin@des.nh.gov or (603) 568-9777.

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