

## Water Supply Conditions — November 6, 2007

One only needs to look at the severe drought affecting the southeastern U.S. to appreciate the value of our vital water resources and the importance of using water efficiently and preserving adequate supplies. The severe drought extending across much of the southeastern U.S. has gradually expanded northward and unusually dry conditions have begun to affect southern New Jersey.

While recorded precipitation over the past 6 months has averaged nearly 1" above normal in the northern half of the State, the three southernmost drought regions have been relatively dry with a rainfall deficit approaching 5 inches. The rainfall shortfall in the Southwest, Coastal South, and Coastal North drought regions is reflected in the water supply indicators for stream flow and unconfined ground water levels, which currently are in the Severely Dry category.

Equally significant is the unseasonably dry, warm weather pattern that New Jersey experienced from September through most of October. September figured as the 4<sup>th</sup> driest and 7<sup>th</sup> warmest in 113 years of record-keeping in the Garden State, while October eclipsed all records at roughly 8.2°F above normal. This warm, dry weather led to high water demands and a fairly steep drop in surface and unconfined ground water levels. The trend also contributed to rapidly declining storage in some principal water supply reservoirs through October.

But the combination of above-average rainfall, more seasonable temperatures, and substantially reduced evapo-transpiration rates toward the end October brought some relief and has halted, at least temporarily, the decline of most drought indicators. Nevertheless, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center forecast for New Jersey calls for above-normal temperatures and below-average precipitation through November.

While no formal administrative drought actions are in place at this time, the Department is keeping a close watch on the State's water supply conditions. Despite recent rains, the public should be mindful of using water efficiently throughout the year, in and outside of the home. Saving water now goes a long way to stretching supplies in times of need. For tips on how you can limit water waste, see <http://njdrought.org/ideas.html>.