

Water Supply Conditions – April 8, 2008

Overall, New Jersey's winter can best be characterized as somewhat milder and wetter than average. Abundant precipitation in February and early March in the northern half of the State recharged unconfined ground water reserves, restored stream flows, and replenished reservoirs. However, following a year-long trend, southern New Jersey received relatively less precipitation, resulting in a much slower recovery of ground and surface water supplies there.

February's statewide measured precipitation of 5.23" marks it as the 9th wettest on record, while the 3.79" that fell in March was just slightly below average. But the real story is the distinction between the extreme northern and southern ends of the State in terms of the amount of snow and rain that fell over the past 12 months. The precipitation surplus in Northern New Jersey ranges from 10"-12" while the southernmost counties have experienced a deficit of about 4". This distinction is clearly borne out in the Department's water supply indicators for the State's six drought regions.

The Northeast and Northwest drought regions are in the normal range for all categories. Conditions in the Central drought region are also relatively sound, except for unconfined ground water, which just recently slipped to "moderately dry". The somewhat drier weather in the coastal plain has resulted in "moderately dry" stream flows and shallow ground water levels in the Coastal North and Southwest drought regions, while those indicators are ranked as "severely dry" in the Coastal South region. Surface water reservoirs are either at or near full capacity, or slightly above average for this time of year.

As the growing season approaches, we remain hopeful for replenishing spring rains to balance conditions around the State. The public should be mindful of using water wisely and efficiently at this time of the year, particularly as outdoor water consumption increases in the coming months due to landscaping and other outdoor water use activities.

Useful Water Conservation Tips

1. To save water (and money!) in the home, fix leaky faucets and pipes.
2. Do not over-water lawns and landscaping – 2 times per week for 20 minutes is typically enough to keep grass and plants green and thriving.
3. Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and shaving.
4. Run washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
5. Install water conserving toilets, faucets and showerheads.

A complete list of water conservation tips at (www.njdrought.org/ideas.html).