

Water Supply Conditions – November 27, 2012

Special Note

A non-drought-related State of Water Emergency was declared in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, and mandatory water use restrictions have been imposed statewide. The purpose of the emergency restrictions is to minimize unnecessary water use, extend available water supplies, and reduce additional strains on water supply, wastewater, and energy infrastructure, and otherwise promote a quick and comprehensive recovery. For more information on the restrictions, please see: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/special/hurricane-sandy/>.

Background

From a precipitation standpoint, 2012 can probably best be characterized as cyclical and unpredictable, with fairly extensive durations of dry weather replaced by relatively wetter ones and back again.

Following an extremely mild, dry start to the New Year, late Spring rains moderately improved depleted ground water levels and stream flows and allowed substantial pump-storage of excess flows into key reservoirs in the northern half of the State. As a result, New Jersey's reservoirs began the high-demand season (June 1) at nearly full capacity. Other water reserves – namely, stream flows and shallow ground water levels – have fluctuated below long-term averages (but not extraordinarily so) for most of the year.

While much of the nation continues to suffer from extreme drought, the renewal of above-average heat and dry weather here in mid-summer – while worthy of the attention of water managers – never seriously threatened water supplies.

A somewhat wetter than average late summer and early Autumn allowed a gradual improvement in the water supply indicators tracked by the Department. A coincident decline in water demands also helped both natural and engineered water reserves remain in fairly good shape. Then, just as a new rainy trend began to emerge, a near-term dry spell seems to be setting up across much of the State.

DEP staff and water system managers will keep a close eye on conditions as we transition into winter and spring, when reservoirs and natural water reserves typically are replenished. The latest summary of Drought Indicators, which can be viewed in detail at <http://njdrought.org/status.html>, appears below.

All New Jerseyans must abide by the mandatory water use restrictions imposed under Administrative Order No. 2012-12. Moreover, we all can do our part by being mindful of water use in and outside the home generally. Our collective efforts to avoid wasting water go a long way toward extending available supplies and avoiding the need for more restrictive water use measures later. For tips on how you can limit water waste, see <http://njdrought.org/ideas.html>.

NEW JERSEY
Regional Hydrologic Indicators &
Declared Water-Supply Drought Status

November 18, 2012

Region		Hydrologic Indicator						Water-Supply Drought Status	
		Status	90-day precipitation	90-day stream-flow	N.J. reservoirs	Del. R. reservoirs	Unconf. ground water		
North-west		Near or above normal	4	4	Not a significant region-wide water resource.	4	4	Normal	0
		Moderately dry	0	0				Watch	0
		Severely dry	0	0				Warning	0
		Extremely dry	0	0				Emergency	3
Central		Near or above normal	0	0	4	4	0	Normal	0
		Moderately dry	27	6				Watch	0
		Severely dry	0	0			6	Warning	0
		Extremely dry	0	0				Emergency	3
North-east		Near or above normal	0	0	4	Not a significant region-wide water resource.	0	Normal	0
		Moderately dry	26	6			11	Watch	0
		Severely dry	0	0				Warning	0
		Extremely dry	0	0				Emergency	3
South-west		Near or above normal	4	0	Not a significant region-wide water resource.	4	0	Normal	0
		Moderately dry	0	0			4	Watch	0
		Severely dry	0	0				Warning	0
		Extremely dry	0	0				Emergency	3
Coastal North		Near or above normal	5	0	4	Not a significant region-wide water resource.	0	Normal	0
		Moderately dry	0	0			11	Watch	0
		Severely dry	0	0				Warning	0
		Extremely dry	0	0				Emergency	3
Coastal South		Near or above normal	5	4	Not a significant region-wide water resource.	Not a significant region-wide water resource.	0	Normal	0
		Moderately dry	0	0			11	Watch	0
		Severely dry	0	0				Warning	0
		Extremely dry	0	0				Emergency	3

The number in each colored dot is the number of weeks the specific indicator in that region has been in that status. For indicators which changed status this evaluation cycle the arrow indicates the direction of change; it points from the previous status to the current. A water drop (□) means the indicator has been green for more than a year.

Subject to revision and update. This summary shows regional drought indicators for New Jersey. Local water-supply conditions may vary. Drought status is based on DEP professional judgment of water-supply characteristics and indicators in each region. Indicators are shown only for those water resources significant for each region. The indicators are described at <http://tiny.cc/xhsot>.

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For more information:
www.njdrought.org