

Water Supply Conditions – September 23, 2015

Extremely dry, warmer-than-average weather over the past six months—including the third driest May on record—continues to drive up water demands and the consumption of water supplies at a faster than normal pace. This protracted dry spell has been interrupted only by one month of above-average rainfall, June, which was the fourth wettest on record. DEP's drinking water supply indicators increasingly show signs of strain in specific areas as the very wet June conditions fall out of the 90-day calculation of the effect that conditions have on water supply sources.

For this reason, DEP has designated a Drought Watch for the three most impacted areas of the State: the Northeast, Central, and Coastal North water supply regions. The affected regions encompass all or parts of twelve New Jersey counties, including Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset and Union. Reservoir storage in the Northeast and Coastal North regions are considered Moderately Dry. Stream flows in the three Drought Watch regions are Severely Dry, while shallow ground water levels vary among the regions: Moderately Dry in the Northeast, Severely Dry in Central, and Extremely Dry in Coastal North.

The rest of the State has also been dry over the past 60 days; however, adverse impacts to water supply conditions are not as pronounced as in the regions where the Drought Watch designation was made. A continuation of this summer's dry weather pattern threatens to impair the replenishment of reservoirs, stream flows, and ground water as the growing season comes to a close. Accordingly, the Drought Watch announcement calls for voluntary efforts by the public to curtail unnecessary water use, especially outdoors for activities such as lawn and landscape watering and other water-dependent activities around the home.

Some suggested water conservation tips:

- Do not over-water lawns. Two times per week for 30 minutes in morning or late evening typically is sufficient. Use a hose with a hand-held nozzle to water landscaping plants such as flowers and shrubs.
- To save water at home, fix leaky faucets and pipes.
- Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and shaving.
- Run washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
- Install high efficiency, water saving toilets, faucets and showerheads.
- Use a broom to sweep the sidewalk, rather than a hose.

More information on water conservation and water supply status can be found at www.njdrought.org/ideas.html and www.njdrought.org/status.html.