

Water Supply Conditions Summary – March 21, 2016

Drinking Water Supply Indicators Continue to Improve

The return of above-average precipitation over the past several months has produced a slow but steady recovery in the water supply indicators monitored by the New Jersey DEP. Measured precipitation in all of the State's six drinking-water-supply (Drought) regions now exceeds the long-term average for the period.

In nearly all cases, reservoir levels have been replenished to above-average levels for this time of year. Meanwhile, the recovery of streamflow and unconfined (shallow) groundwater levels is progressing more slowly, particularly in the southern half of the State. Despite the mixed recovery, conditions do not adversely affect drinking water supply sources at this time.

The improved conditions prompted lifting of the Drought Watch designation, which had been in place for the Northeast, Central, and Coastal North regions since last September, earlier this month.

As we transition into spring, evapotranspiration can be expected to increase as the days grow longer, temperatures moderate, and trees and plants begin to flower and "leaf out". Water demands, in turn, will also begin to increase due to outdoor water use associated with lawn care, gardening and other maintenance/recreation activities around the home. Accordingly, NJDEP water professionals will continue to closely monitor indicators.

As is always the case, wise water use should be practiced by all to avoid unnecessary water waste. For tips on using water effectively around the home or office, go to <http://njdrought.org/ideas.html>. If the next few months are dry, steps again may need to be taken to protect our limited drinking water supplies.