

Water Supply Conditions Summary – April 15, 2016

Recent Dry Spell Affecting the Recovery of Drinking Water Supply Indicators

The slow recovery of drinking water supply indicators experienced throughout the winter is beginning to be affected by the recent dry weather spell. For now, there is no direct impact on drinking water supplies, but continued dry conditions over the next two months could adversely impact the much-needed replenishment of water sources leading into the peak water use season beginning June 1st.

Slightly above-average precipitation over several recent months had been producing a slow but steady recovery in the drought indicators monitored by the New Jersey DEP. However, measured rainfall over the past 30 days has been below average, and this has been enough to interrupt the tenuous recovery experienced to date.

In nearly all cases, reservoir storage has been restored to expected average levels for this time of year. Meanwhile, the recovery of streamflow and unconfined (shallow) groundwater levels, which had been progressing very slowly, has now begun to erode. Despite the mixed recovery and recent short-term trend, conditions do not adversely affect drinking water supply supplies at this time.

As temperatures warm, evapotranspiration can be expected to increase as the days grow longer, and trees and plants continue 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 efficiently around the home or office, go to <http://njdrought.org/ideas.html>. If the next few months are dry, steps by the DEP and others may be needed to protect our limited drinking water supplies.