

NHDES Sends Alert Regarding Drought Conditions

The Town is forwarding the following message along from NH Department of Environmental Services. Please help and do your part to conserve water usage:

Amidst Abnormally Dry Conditions, NHDES is Encouraging Residential Well Users to Conserve and the Public to follow Water Use Restrictions

Concord, NH – According to the weekly U.S. Drought Monitor released today, the entire state of New Hampshire has been categorized as abnormally dry. Over the last 60 days, the state has received significantly less than normal precipitation. The majority of the northern half of the state including Belknap, Grafton, Carrol, and Coos counties have received 25 to 50% less precipitation than normal. To the south, the majority of Sullivan, Merrimack, Strafford, Rockingham, Hillsborough, and Cheshire counties have received 50 to 75% less precipitation than normal. The U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook for June indicates drought development is likely in these southern counties, as well as in southern Belknap County.

Director of the NHDES Water Division, Thomas O'Donovan notes that "New Hampshire is approaching a stage of drought because rainfall over the last two months is about 60% of normal, and New Hampshire had a significantly less-than-average snowpack this past winter. Consequently, stream flows throughout the state are very low and if these weather trends continue, groundwater levels and water supply wells throughout the state will soon begin to be adversely impacted. Two rivers, the Lamprey and Souhegan have had to implement low water actions from their watershed management plans, and other rivers may be impacted soon. Additionally, the NHDES Dam Bureau is closely monitoring and managing reservoirs across the State, as the weather is forecast to remain dry."

NHDES encourages those relying on private residential wells to begin conserving now. Due to COVID-19, people are at home more often, which means a higher than usual demand on residential well supplies. To protect your well supply, it is recommended that outdoor water use be limited and water use be staggered, allowing the well time to recharge between demands. As drought conditions develop, more municipalities and water utilities will impose outdoor water use restrictions. NHDES urges the public to be conservation-minded and abide by restrictions. Also, finances for well improvements or to drill a new well may be very limited; therefore, during a drought, it is important to curb water use early.

To view the latest drought conditions and to find information related to saving water and managing residential wells during drought, go to www.des.nh.gov and use the "A-Z list" and scroll down to Drought Management.

For more information, contact Jim Martin, NHDES Public Information Officer, at james.martin@des.nh.gov or (603) 569-9777.