

Update from NH Department of Environmental Services - September 17, 2020

Subject: Drought Update: Drought worsens across a significant portion of the state and residential wells are being impacted

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, drought has worsened across a significant portion of the state. Currently 72% of the state is experiencing “severe drought” (D2), up from 28% last week, while 28% of the state is experiencing moderate drought (D1). There are no indications of the situation improving in the next 10 days. The weather forecast through Wednesday indicates unlikely chances of receiving any significant amount of rain and the Weather Service’s 6-10 day and 8-14 day precipitation outlooks favor below normal precipitation.

Impacts to residential wells are being experienced across the state. Well drillers are reporting long waits for their services, due to increased demand by residential well owners seeking to remedy water shortage issues and water quality issues related to drought and more people at home putting higher demand on the wells. Water conservation is key, as residents may not be able to get timely service to remedy shortage issues or have the monetary means to improve their wells.

NHDES is urging municipalities to implement municipal-wide lawn watering restrictions as authorized by RSA 41:11-d, which allows municipalities, including village districts, to restrict lawn watering activities on private well owners and community water systems within municipal boundaries. Curbing lawn water usage is imperative to sustaining supplies. NHDES is also working with public water suppliers to implement restrictions.

To date, 159 community water systems serving 320,000 people and six municipalities with a total population of 47,000 have water use restrictions in place. See the [Restriction List and Map](#) for names of systems and municipalities implementing restrictions and a map of drought conditions by municipality.

See [Drought Guidance for Municipalities](#) for guidance on adopting a lawn water restriction, public messaging, and providing emergency water supplies to the public.

Please report restrictions to NHDES for posting on the NHDES website using the [Restriction Reporting Form](#). Please also inform residents to report residential well shortages using the [Residential Well Impact Survey form](#). NHDES will track well impacts so as to provide current information on drought impacts in your region.

Drought Update:

According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) released this morning, 72% of the state is categorized as “severe drought” (D2) and 28% of the state is categorized as “moderate drought” (D1).

Tip* The [restriction map](#) includes town boundaries and drought categories, making it easy to identify if your municipality is experiencing drought.

All counties are experiencing a 90-day precipitation departures. Departures range from -1.58” in Coos County to -4.25” in Grafton (<https://w1.weather.gov/data/TAR/ESPTAR>).

The majority of the state is experiencing below normal to low groundwater levels. For more information, see the [New Hampshire Groundwater Level Monitoring Report](#) for August 2020. Reports are released monthly.

Forecast and Outlooks:

Dry weather is expected through Wednesday, with the exception of the potential for a few scattered thunderstorms in central and northern NH within the next 24-hrs. Temperatures will be cooler through the weekend and are expected to be below normal early in the week. Frost and freeze is expected in the northern part of the state with potential for spreading to the southern interior early next week. ([NOAA National Weather Service](#)).

The 6-10 day outlook favors below normal precipitation and below normal temperatures. The 8-14 day outlook favors below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures ([National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center](#)).

The [U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook](#) favors drought conditions to remain, but improve in the portion of the state of experiencing “severe drought” (D2). (Note*Since the Monthly Drought Outlook was released on August 31st, precipitation predictions have changed. It is unlikely the outlook is accurate.)

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