Drought Update 18 - Some drought improvement

Over the past 7-days, the state has received widespread rain, ranging from 1-3 inches. Two to three inches of rain were received in the White Mountains, further north, and in portions of Cheshire and Hillsborough County. The rain has improved drought conditions in some areas. Approximately 75% of the state was in "severe drought" (D2) and "extreme drought" (D3) last week, but now that percentage has decreased to 33%. The majority of the state (66%) is now in "moderate drought" (D1). Despite these improvements, 17% of the state in the southeastern corner is still experiencing "extreme drought" (D3), an intensity of drought where widespread water shortages are common and residential well shortages continue to be reported from across the state. More rain is in the forecast with some rain passing through on Monday and from Tuesday night into Wednesday.

Conserving water will continue to be imperative, even as the state experiences drought improvement. While generally dug wells will recover more quickly when precipitation is received, bedrock wells have a delayed response. Also, as longer term precipitation exist across the state, a period of dry weather could quickly tip the scales back toward drought development. As the outdoor water use season winds down, it is recommended that messaging related to indoor conservation begin, especially in areas of "extreme drought". Municipalities may also assess the need to set up locations for emergency access to water. See Drought Guidance for Municipalities for further guidance on emergency sources and indoor savings tips.

Community water systems should continue to track supplies carefully and enforce water restrictions as necessary. It is recommended that messaging related to conserving indoors begin. See Drought Guidance for Community Water Systems

Please report all outdoor water use restrictions and changes to those restrictions using the NHDES Reporting Form for posting on the NHDES website.

To date, 167 community water systems serving 345,000 people and seven municipalities with a total population of 60,700 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.

Drought Update:

Drought Category	Last Week Area in Drought (%)	Current Area In Drought (%)	Current Estimated Population In Drought Area
Abnormally Dry	0.34%	0.34%	2,469
Moderate Drought (D1)	24.56%	66.44%	434,699
Severe Drought (D2)	53.11%	16.5%	403,573
Extreme Drought (D3)	21.99%	16.73%	475,730
Exceptional Drought (D4)	0	0	0

Source:U.S. Drought Monitor

Month to date and 30-day precipitation departures are above normal for all counties except for Rockingham. All counties are still experiencing 90-day, 180-day, and 365-day precipitation departures from normal (https://w1.weather.gov/data/TAR/ESPTAR).

The groundwater levels in each of the monitoring wells in the New Hampshire Geological Survey's monitoring network are lower compared to last month and all but one well are below their monthly average. For more information, see the New Hampshire Groundwater Level Monitoring Report for September 2020. Reports are released monthly.

Forecast and Outlooks:
The short term forecast calls for a dry weekend and some rain on Monday, Tuesday night, and Wednesday. High daily temperatures will drop tomorrow to the low 60s, rise again to the upper 60s and low 70s on Saturday, fall to the low 50s on Sunday, and then rise to the upper 50s and lower 60s early in the week (NOAA National Weather Service).

The 6-10 day outlook and 8-14 day outlook tilt toward above normal precipitation. The 6-10 day temperature outlook leans toward below normal temperatures and the 8-14 day temperature outlook more strongly favors below normal temperatures.
(National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center).

According to the US Monthly and Seasonal Drought Outlook, over the next three months, drought conditions are likely to improve, but persist across the majority of the state.