



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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DROUGHT CONDITIONS WORSEN IN PORTION OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA, EASE IN EAST

RALEIGH – Severe drought conditions are being seen in a portion of western North Carolina, though dry conditions seem to be easing in the east, according to the latest drought advisory from the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council.

The latest drought depiction by the DMAC shows that 13 counties in western North Carolina have moved from moderate to severe drought. Those counties are Alexander, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Henderson, Iredell, Lincoln, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford and Wilkes. Moderate drought conditions continue to hold steady in 46 counties stretching from Raleigh to near the Tennessee state line. Drought conditions in counties located east of I-95 have eased for now, following the recent rainfalls.

While reservoirs in North Carolina are near normal levels, streamflows are low in the areas with drought conditions and some streams are approaching near record lows for this time of year in the western Piedmont. Wildfire conditions are typical for late spring in North Carolina. Recent rainfall has helped speed the growth of vegetation on trees and added much-needed moisture to leaves. That added moisture and the addition of a canopy in the forest make it more difficult for fuels to dry and wildfires to spread. As a result, North Carolina has seen a significant decrease in the number of wildfires in May.

The DMAC encourages water users in areas experiencing drought or dry conditions to adhere to all local water use restrictions. As a result of ongoing drought, 19 out of 583 public water supply systems surveyed in the state are following voluntary water conservation restrictions and four systems are currently under mandatory water restrictions.

The DMAC was formed by the General Assembly following the drought of 2002. The DMAC issues official drought advisories, based on technical data and adjusted for varying conditions in different parts of the state, to provide local governments with a reliable basis for managing drought response in their region. Membership in the DMAC is comprised of officials from the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service; the State Climate Office at N.C. State University; public staff from the Utilities Commission; the Wildlife Resources Commission; N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Department of Commerce; Department of Crime Control and Public Safety; National Weather Service; U.S. Geological Survey; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Federal Emergency Management Agency; and N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

For the latest information on drought conditions in North Carolina, including the latest drought advisory, a real-time listing of water systems under water restrictions and water conservation tips, visit the DMAC Web site at <http://www.ncdrought.org> or contact DMAC Chair Woody Yonts at (919) 715-5453.

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