



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

Municipal Role in Managing the Drought Emergency in New Hampshire

2016

A drought is a very slow-moving natural disaster. Over the past year, streamflow and groundwater levels reached historic low levels. Some New Hampshire residents on private wells, as well as some community water systems continue to experience water supply shortages. More widespread shortages are imminent if an above average amount of rain is not received before the ground freezes. Also, a good snowpack is needed in order for snowmelt to again replenish supplies in the spring.

The NH Drought Management Team, NHDES, and the governor have requested that municipalities assist with mitigating drought impacts as follows:

- Implement lawn watering bans within political boundaries and report bans to NHDES for posting on the web.
- Contact NHDES with the location of emergency water supplies established for private well owners impacted by the drought for posting on the web. If the water supply is not a public water system, contact NHDES to request sampling assistance.
- Provide the public with actions that can be taken to conserve water.
- Provide residents on private wells with information on how to address drought impacts.
- Request residents and businesses relying on their own water supplies to report economic impacts as a result to water shortages to NHDES using online surveys on the Drought Management Program homepage.

Below is guidance for completing the above, including a link to a model ordinance for banning lawn watering, outreach materials for the public and private well owners, a list of contacts, and a water ban press release template.

Drought Conditions



To stay informed on the latest drought conditions and current drought related information, including all references below, click on the NH Drought Information icon at www.des.nh.gov or go to the NHDES Drought Management Program webpage directly at:

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/drought/index.htm>.

Authority to Restrict Lawn Watering

Average indoor water use per capita in New Hampshire is approximately 63 gallons per day. In the summer, total water use increases to 93 gallons per capita per day due to outdoor water use, mostly attributed to lawn watering. Since July of this year, NHDES has encouraged New Hampshire residents to stop lawn watering immediately in response to the drought. Public water systems in New Hampshire have authority to restrict or ban residential lawn watering by their customers. Municipalities have broader authority under RSA 41.11-d to adopt regulations to restrict or ban outdoor lawn watering for

DES Web Site: www.des.nh.gov

households that obtain water from either a private well or public water system. Those restrictions can take effect when the state or federal government agency has declared a state of drought. The state of drought in your municipality may be determined by looking at the U.S. Drought Monitor map, as described above.

More information about lawn watering restrictions and a model regulation can be found at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/water_conservation/documents/mo-lawn-watering-rstrctn.pdf.

To add your water system to the water ban and restriction list posted at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/water_conservation/documents/waterban.pdf, e-mail Stacey Herbold, NHDES Water Conservation Program, at stacey.herbold@des.nh.gov with the following information:

PWSID (if applicable):
Name of water system (if applicable):
Town:
Is the ban voluntary or mandatory?:
Details of the restriction/ban:

Providing Emergency Water Supplies to the Public

A number of municipalities have designated a location in town where people whose wells have failed can access water. Where possible, municipalities should designate a local source of water that is already associated with a state regulated public water system to ensure the water is safe. If a source of drinking water is made available to the public that is not associated with a public water system, please contact NHDES at (603) 271-0660 to request testing of the water to ensure its safety.

Fire departments have also delivered drinking water to area farms to provide water for livestock or to irrigate crops. These efforts are critical to area farmers who are struggling to grow food for their livestock and provide them drinking water. Fire departments should not use their tanks to deliver water to households by refilling wells, nor should water from fire department tanks be used for human drinking and cooking. This activity could result in contamination of groundwater and cause people consuming the water to become sick.

Please provide the location of emergency supplies to Stacey Herbold, NHDES Water Conservation Program, at stacey.herbold@des.nh.gov. A list will be maintained on the NHDES Drought Management Program page.

Message to Provide to the Public

See "2016 Emergency Drought Guidance for the Public":
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/drought/documents/publicemergency.pdf>

See “2016 Drought Guidance for Homeowners on Private Wells”:

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/drought/documents/droughtguidehome.pdf>

Drought Economic Impact Survey for Households on Private Wells:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/drought2>

Drought Economic Impact Survey for Industrial, Commercial, Institutional, Public Water System and Agricultural Water Users: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/drought1>

State of NH Drought Contacts:

Emergency Water Supply Testing/ Drought Management Team:

Brandon Kernen brandon.kernen@des.nh.gov (603) 271-0660

Fire Danger: Brian Thibeault (603) 223-4289

Homeowner Private Wells: Rick Schofield richard.schofield@des.nh.gov (603) 271-1974

(If well has failed, homeowners should also contact the local health officer.)

Large Public Water System Water Shortages: Rick Skarinka richard.skarinka@des.nh.gov (603) 271-2948

Lake Levels: Jim Gallagher james.gallagher@des.nh.gov (603) 271-1961

Press Inquiries: Jim Martin james.martin@des.nh.gov (603) 271-3710

Small Public Water Systems Water Shortages: Shelley Frost shelley.frost@des.nh.gov (603) 271-2949

Stream Flows: Ted Diers ted.diers@des.nh.gov (603) 271-3289

Surface Water Withdrawal Inquiries/Complaints: Stacey Herbold stacey.herbold@des.nh.gov (603) 271-6685

Water Restrictions, Lawn Watering and Water Restriction Ordinances, Water Efficiency: Stacey Herbold stacey.herbold@des.nh.gov (603) 271-6685

Model Press Release

MUNICIPALITY NAME Implements Outdoor Water Ban and asks Residents to Conserve amid Persistent Drought Conditions

MUNICIPALITY NAME has adopted a lawn watering restriction ordinance and is requiring all residents, including those on private wells to stop watering lawns and is requesting the entire community take steps to conserve water. This drought is historic, southern New Hampshire has not experienced such a drought in nearly 50 years and all sections of the state are experiencing low stream flows and groundwater levels. Some New Hampshire residents on private wells, as well as some community water systems are experiencing water supply shortages. An above average amount of mild rainstorms

that allow water to soak in are needed to fully recharge lakes, rivers and groundwater sources before the winter. It is unlikely that the amount and type of rain needed will be received to fully recharge water sources. Widespread shortages are imminent if the recharge from rain the state does receive is not used wisely. MUNICIPALITY NAME needs the cooperation of customers to help protect water supplies now and through the winter.

Outdoor water use, primarily for lawn watering, is one of the largest consumptive uses in the summer months. Lawn watering is straining water supplies and needs to be ended. There are also many opportunities indoors to use water more efficiently with little effort that will save not only water, but energy, and money. Indoor use can be cut by 20% or more by turning off faucets while washing dishes and hands, only washing full loads of laundry, and taking shorter showers, as well as by replacing old showerheads, toilets, sink aerators, and washing machines with EPA WaterSense and Energy Star® certified products. Also, repairing running toilets can save hundreds of gallons a day. For current drought information and water efficiency fact sheets including efficiency tips, go to www.des.nh.gov, click on the "A-Z" list, and scroll down to the Drought Management Program.