



# *ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS*

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## ***CONDITIONS IN APPOMATTOX RIVER BASIN LEAD TO 'DROUGHT WARNING' STATUS***

'Drought watch' advisories issued for two other regions in Virginia

**RICHMOND, VA.** – In response to ongoing summertime precipitation deficits, the Department of Environmental Quality has issued a “drought warning” advisory for the Appomattox River basin in south-central Virginia.

In addition, DEQ has issued “drought watch” advisories for the northern Piedmont and Roanoke River regions of the state.

### **Drought warning for Appomattox basin**

The affected localities and public water suppliers for the Appomattox basin drought warning include Amelia, Appomattox, Buckingham, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward and Prince George counties; the cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell and Petersburg; and the towns of Appomattox, Blackstone, Burkeville, Crewe and Farmville.

Drought warning responses are required when the onset of a significant drought event is imminent. Water conservation and contingency plans that were prepared during the drought watch stage should be implemented. Water conservation activities at this stage generally are voluntary, but this does not preclude localities issuing mandatory restrictions if appropriate.

DEQ is sending notifications to all local governments, public water works, and private-sector water users in the affected area, and is requesting that they prepare for the onset of a drought event by developing or reviewing existing water conservation and drought response plans. Through the drought warning declaration, Virginia is encouraging localities, public water suppliers and self-supplied water users in the Appomattox basin to voluntarily take these steps to help protect current water supplies:

- Minimize nonessential water use.
- All public waterworks and self-supplied water users who withdraw more than 10,000 gallons per day will initiate voluntary water conservation requirements contained in drought water conservation and contingency plans.

- Include water conservation information on local websites and distribute water conservation information as broadly as possible.
- Continue monitoring the condition of public waterworks and self-supplied water systems in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health.
- Impose mandatory water use restrictions when consistent with local water supply conditions.

This advisory is being issued because drought indicators in the state's Drought Assessment and Response Plan have been met. According to the Virginia Drought Monitoring Task Force, a group representing state and federal agencies, the primary factors contributing to the declaration of the drought warning advisory are:

- Precipitation deficits are 8 to 12 inches since October 1, 2011, throughout much of the river basin, and there are deficits of 6 to 8 inches in the rest of the basin.
- Stream flow is lower than 95 percent of recorded flows in the area, indicating a severe hydrologic drought – a period of below-average water content in streams, reservoirs, ground water aquifers, lakes and soils.
- Ground water levels are lower than 75 percent to 90 percent of previously recorded levels.
- Levels at Lake Chesdin have continued to fall since a drought watch advisory was issued July 26. Public water supply impacts have been reported by Crewe, Farmville and the Appomattox River Water Authority.
- A total of eight public water supplies have announced voluntary water use restrictions, and one additional waterworks has imposed mandatory restrictions.

### **Drought watch for northern Piedmont and Roanoke River regions**

DEQ also has issued a “drought watch” advisory for the northern Piedmont region, which includes Greene, Madison, Rappahannock, Orange, Culpeper, Louisa, Spotsylvania and Stafford counties; the city of Fredericksburg; and the towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Louisa, Mineral, Madison, Orange, Stanardsville and Washington. Specific factors contributing to this recommendation are:

- Scattered summer rainfall patterns have produced less than 50 percent of normal rainfall over much of the region for more than 60 days.
- Stream flows have continually been 75 percent less than historic flows for nearly one month, and have periodically dropped to 95 percent less than historic flows during the same period.
- Ground water levels have been 90 percent below historic levels for most of the past 60 days.

In addition, DEQ has issued a drought watch advisory for the Roanoke River region that includes Patrick, Franklin, Roanoke, Henry, Bedford, Pittsylvania, Campbell, Halifax, Charlotte, and Mecklenburg counties; the cities of Bedford, Danville, Martinsville, Salem and Roanoke; and the towns of Altavista, Brookneal, Charlotte Court House, Drakes Branch, Keysville, Phenix, Boones Mill, Rocky Mount, Halifax, Scottsburg, South Boston, Virgilina, Ridgeway, Boydton, Broadnax, Chase City, Clarksville, La Crosse, South Hill, Stuart, Chatham, Gretna, Hurt and Vinton. Specific factors contributing to this recommendation are:

- Scattered summer rainfall patterns have produced less than 75 percent of normal rainfall over much of the region for more than 60 days.
- Stream flows have continually been 75 percent less than historic flows for nearly one month.
- Ground water levels have been 90 percent below historic levels for most of the past 60 days.

Through the drought watch advisory, Virginia is encouraging localities, public water suppliers and self-supplied water users in these regions to voluntarily take these steps to help protect current water supplies:

- Minimize nonessential water use.
- Review existing or develop new local water conservation and drought contingency plans and take conservation actions consistent with those plans.
- Include water conservation information on local websites and distribute water conservation information as broadly as possible.
- Continue monitoring the condition of public waterworks and self-supplied water systems in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health.
- Impose water use restrictions when consistent with local water supply conditions.
- Aggressively pursue leak detection and repair programs.

Statewide information on the current drought status is available on the DEQ website at [www.deq.virginia.gov](http://www.deq.virginia.gov).

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