

DROUGHT MONITORING TASK FORCE
Preliminary Drought Status Report
March 24, 2006

Conditions appear favorable for the development of an early season drought through out much of the Commonwealth. While statewide precipitation for the current water year (beginning October 1, 2005) is in the normal range, statewide participation since January 1, 2006 is only 55% of normal. During the most recent period, March 1-18, statewide precipitation is only 13% of normal. Appendix A contains precipitation tables for periods going back to the beginning of the current water year and a graphical illustration of monthly precipitation. This lack of precipitation since January 1 coupled with abnormally high temperatures during January and February is setting the stage for the early onset of drought impacts across the Commonwealth. The long-range climatological outlook calls for equal chances of below average, average, and above average precipitation through June of 2006 in the northern half of the Commonwealth and a greater than 50% chance of below average precipitation in the southern half of the Commonwealth (Appendix B). It should be noted that current moisture deficits are more severe in the southern portion of the Commonwealth than in the remainder of the state.

The latest NOAA drought monitor indicates the occurrence of moderate drought conditions in the south central and south western portions of the Commonwealth and is included as Appendix C. Appendix D contains information from the national drought monitor with only Virginia displayed. The NOAA seasonal drought outlook through June 2006 shows the potential for drought impacts to intensify in south central Virginia. The seasonal drought outlook is included as Appendix E.

Seven day average streamflows for the majority of the Commonwealth are less than the 10th percentile when compared to average flows for March 23 and about half of the Commonwealth is less than the 5th percentile. Ground water levels are below normal in 12 of the 19 real-time drought monitoring wells across the Commonwealth and the remaining 7 wells are in the lower portion of the normal range. Levels of large reservoirs such as Lake Moomaw, Smith Mountain Lake, Kerr Reservoir, and Philpott Reservoir are near full but inflows are much below normal and reservoir levels are likely to decline very early during the spring-summer season.

As of March 6 forty nine Virginia localities have been declared primary drought disaster areas and sixty nine Virginia localities have been declared contiguous drought disaster areas due to losses that occurred during the 2005 growing season. Appendix F contains a table identifying these localities.

The US Forest Service rates the entire Commonwealth at moderate to high risk for forest fires (Appendix G).

No reports of impacts to public water supplies have been received at this time.

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries reports that access has not been affected at any of the public boat ramps in the Commonwealth but the stocking of trout in certain western portions of the Commonwealth are being curtailed due to very low stream flows. The Department also is concerned that continuing low flow conditions will adversely impact spawning and recruitment of important recreational and commercial species of fish.

APPENDIX A

Precipitation departures by Drought Evaluation Region.

DROUGHT REGION	MAR 1, 2006 - MAR 18, 2006			
	OBSERVED	NORMAL	DEPARTURE	% OF NORM.
1 Big Sandy	1.38	2.47	-1.09	56%
2 New River	0.51	2.13	-1.62	24%
3 Roanoke	0.24	2.48	-2.24	10%
4 Upper James	0.31	2.20	-1.89	14%
5 Middle James	0.18	2.36	-2.18	8%
6 Shenandoah	0.20	1.86	-1.66	11%
7 Northern Virginia	0.41	2.12	-1.71	19%
8 Northern Piedmont	0.25	2.21	-1.96	11%
9 Chowan	0.05	2.54	-2.49	2%
10 Northern Coastal Plain	0.14	2.49	-2.34	6%
11 York-James	0.06	2.72	-2.66	2%
12 Southeast Virginia	0.02	2.44	-2.42	1%
13 Eastern Shore	0.07	2.50	-2.43	3%
Statewide	0.29	2.35	-2.05	13%

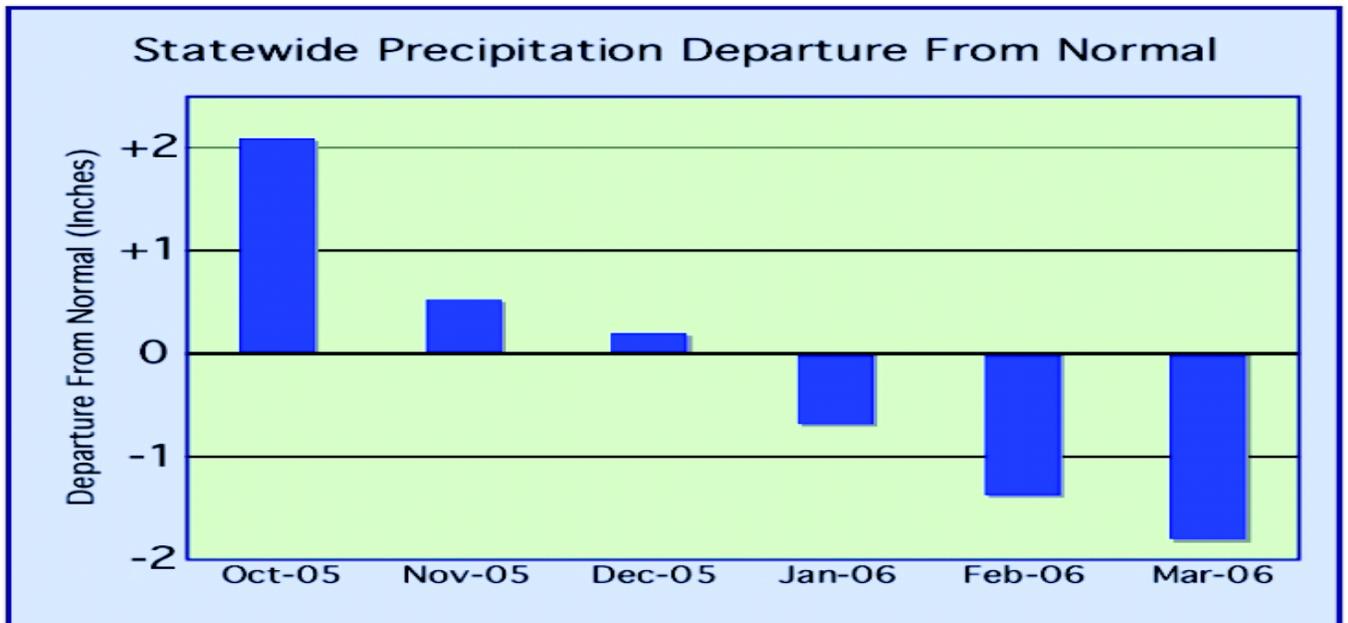
DROUGHT REGION	FEB 1, 2006 - MAR 18, 2006			
	OBSERVED	NORMAL	DEPARTURE	% OF NORM.
1 Big Sandy	3.24	6.04	-2.80	54%
2 New River	2.39	5.06	-2.67	47%
3 Roanoke	1.83	5.79	-3.96	32%
4 Upper James	1.64	5.05	-3.41	32%
5 Middle James	1.96	5.48	-3.52	36%
6 Shenandoah	2.48	4.26	-1.78	58%
7 Northern Virginia	2.61	4.79	-2.18	54%
8 Northern Piedmont	2.05	5.18	-3.13	40%
9 Chowan	1.73	5.70	-3.98	30%
10 Northern Coastal Plain	2.40	5.62	-3.22	43%
11 York-James	1.09	6.25	-5.16	17%
12 Southeast Virginia	1.44	5.94	-4.50	24%
13 Eastern Shore	1.35	5.69	-4.34	24%
Statewide	2.06	5.48	-3.41	38%

DROUGHT REGION	JAN 1, 2006 - MAR 18, 2006			
	OBSERVED	NORMAL	DEPARTURE	% OF NORM.
1 Big Sandy	6.50	9.78	-3.28	66%
2 New River	5.46	8.27	-2.81	66%
3 Roanoke	4.81	9.70	-4.89	50%
4 Upper James	4.76	8.33	-3.57	57%
5 Middle James	4.87	9.14	-4.27	53%
6 Shenandoah	5.00	7.12	-2.12	70%
7 Northern Virginia	5.43	8.07	-2.64	67%
8 Northern Piedmont	4.63	8.70	-4.07	53%
9 Chowan	4.07	9.82	-5.75	41%
10 Northern Coastal Plain	5.56	9.38	-3.81	59%
11 York-James	5.17	10.38	-5.21	50%
12 Southeast Virginia	4.81	10.10	-5.29	48%
13 Eastern Shore	4.04	9.26	-5.22	44%
Statewide	5.02	9.12	-4.09	55%

DROUGHT		DEC 1, 2005 - MAR 18, 2006			
REGION	OBSERVED	NORMAL	DEPARTURE	% OF NORM.	
1	Big Sandy	9.83	13.42	-3.59	73%
2	New River	7.86	10.98	-3.12	72%
3	Roanoke	8.38	12.95	-4.57	65%
4	Upper James	7.35	11.27	-3.92	65%
5	Middle James	9.00	12.32	-3.32	73%
6	Shenandoah	6.57	9.71	-3.14	68%
7	Northern Virginia	8.05	11.16	-3.11	72%
8	Northern Piedmont	7.77	11.98	-4.21	65%
9	Chowan	9.75	12.84	-3.09	76%
10	Northern Coastal Plain	9.93	12.65	-2.72	79%
11	York-James	9.26	13.77	-4.51	67%
12	Southeast Virginia	8.86	13.28	-4.42	67%
13	Eastern Shore	7.95	12.50	-4.55	64%
	Statewide	8.34	12.24	-3.89	68%

DROUGHT		NOV 1, 2005 - MAR 18, 2006			
REGION	OBSERVED	NORMAL	DEPARTURE	% OF NORM.	
1	Big Sandy	12.79	16.71	-3.92	77%
2	New River	11.59	14.01	-2.42	83%
3	Roanoke	12.32	16.31	-3.99	76%
4	Upper James	12.46	14.63	-2.17	85%
5	Middle James	12.46	15.82	-3.36	79%
6	Shenandoah	11.27	12.75	-1.48	88%
7	Northern Virginia	10.98	14.57	-3.59	75%
8	Northern Piedmont	11.45	15.78	-4.32	73%
9	Chowan	13.34	15.95	-2.61	84%
10	Northern Coastal Plain	13.46	15.79	-2.33	85%
11	York-James	12.41	17.14	-4.73	72%
12	Southeast Virginia	12.65	16.35	-3.70	77%
13	Eastern Shore	10.53	15.44	-4.91	68%
	Statewide	12.10	15.47	-3.36	78%

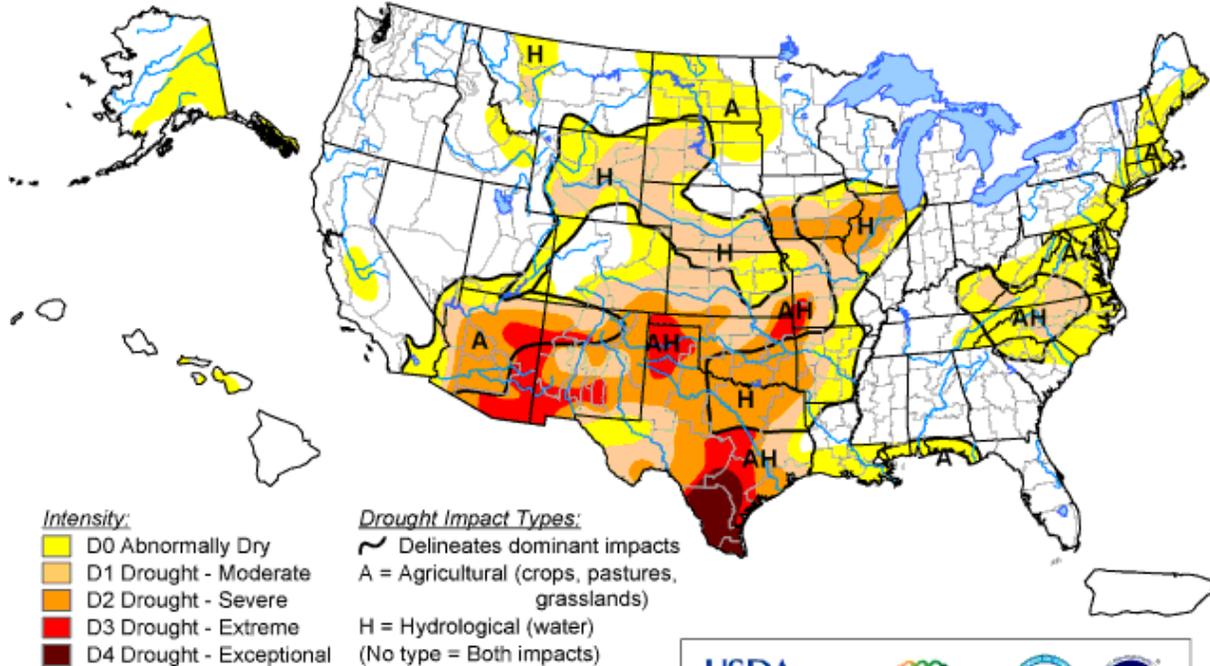
DROUGHT REGION		OCT 1, 2005 - MAR 18, 2006			
		OBSERVED	NORMAL	DEPARTURE	% OF NORM.
1	Big Sandy	14.85	19.59	-4.74	76%
2	New River	15.61	17.18	-1.57	91%
3	Roanoke	18.59	20.03	-1.44	93%
4	Upper James	17.45	17.88	-0.43	98%
5	Middle James	18.90	19.66	-0.76	96%
6	Shenandoah	16.32	15.94	0.38	102%
7	Northern Virginia	19.62	18.05	1.57	109%
8	Northern Piedmont	19.80	19.77	0.03	100%
9	Chowan	17.81	19.53	-1.72	91%
10	Northern Coastal Plain	20.27	19.30	0.98	105%
11	York-James	18.91	20.67	-1.76	91%
12	Southeast Virginia	19.32	20.01	-0.69	97%
13	Eastern Shore	16.47	18.65	-2.18	88%
	Statewide	17.69	18.97	-1.27	93%



APPENDIX C

U.S. Drought Monitor

March 21, 2006
Valid 7 a.m. EST



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

Drought Impact Types:

- Delineates dominant impacts
- A = Agricultural (crops, pastures, grasslands)
- H = Hydrological (water)
- (No type = Both impacts)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



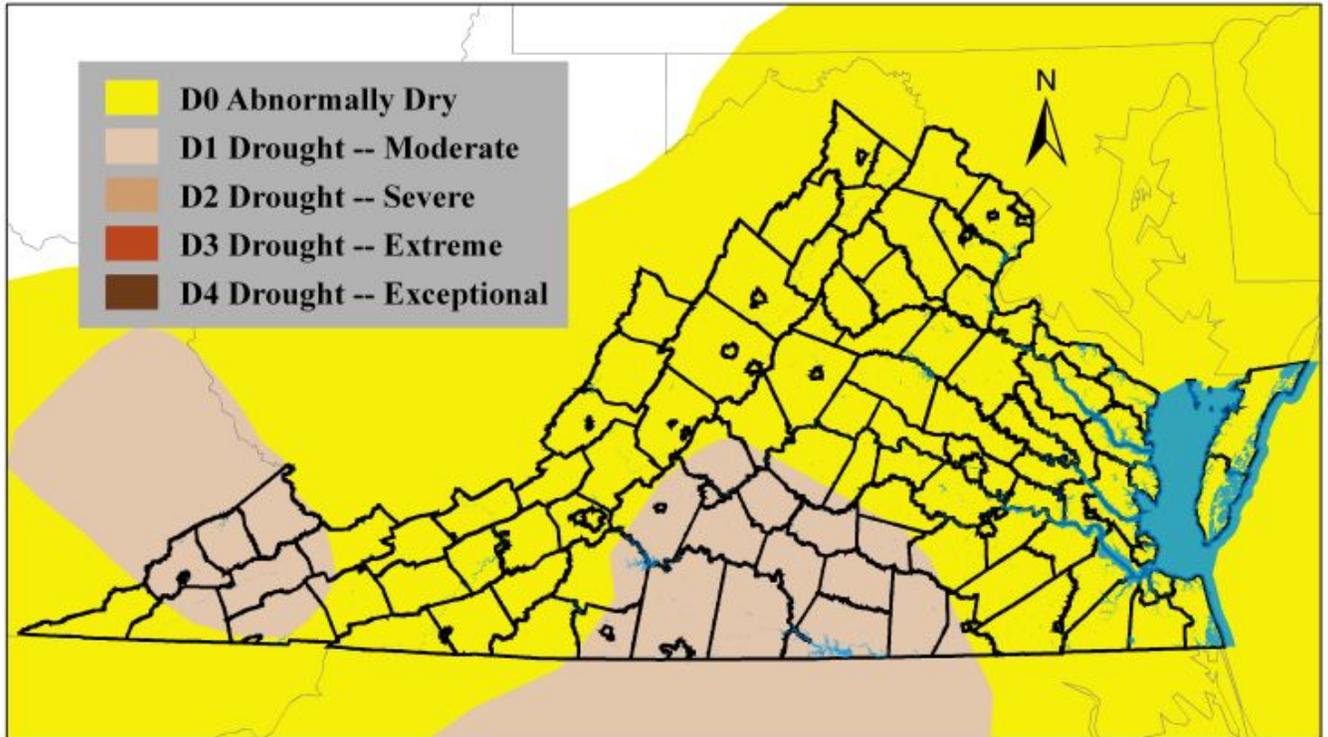
Released Thursday, March 23, 2006
Author: R. Heim/L. Love-Brotak, NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC

National Drought Summary – March 21, 2006

A large part of the east coast, from the Carolinas to southern Maine, has been significantly dry during the last 30 to 90 days. There were widespread reports of precipitation deficits of 2 to 4 inches over the last 60 days, 7-day average streamflows were significantly below normal across the area, and red flag warnings for fire potential have been issued. D0A was expanded from Maryland-Delaware northward across southeast Pennsylvania to coastal Maine.

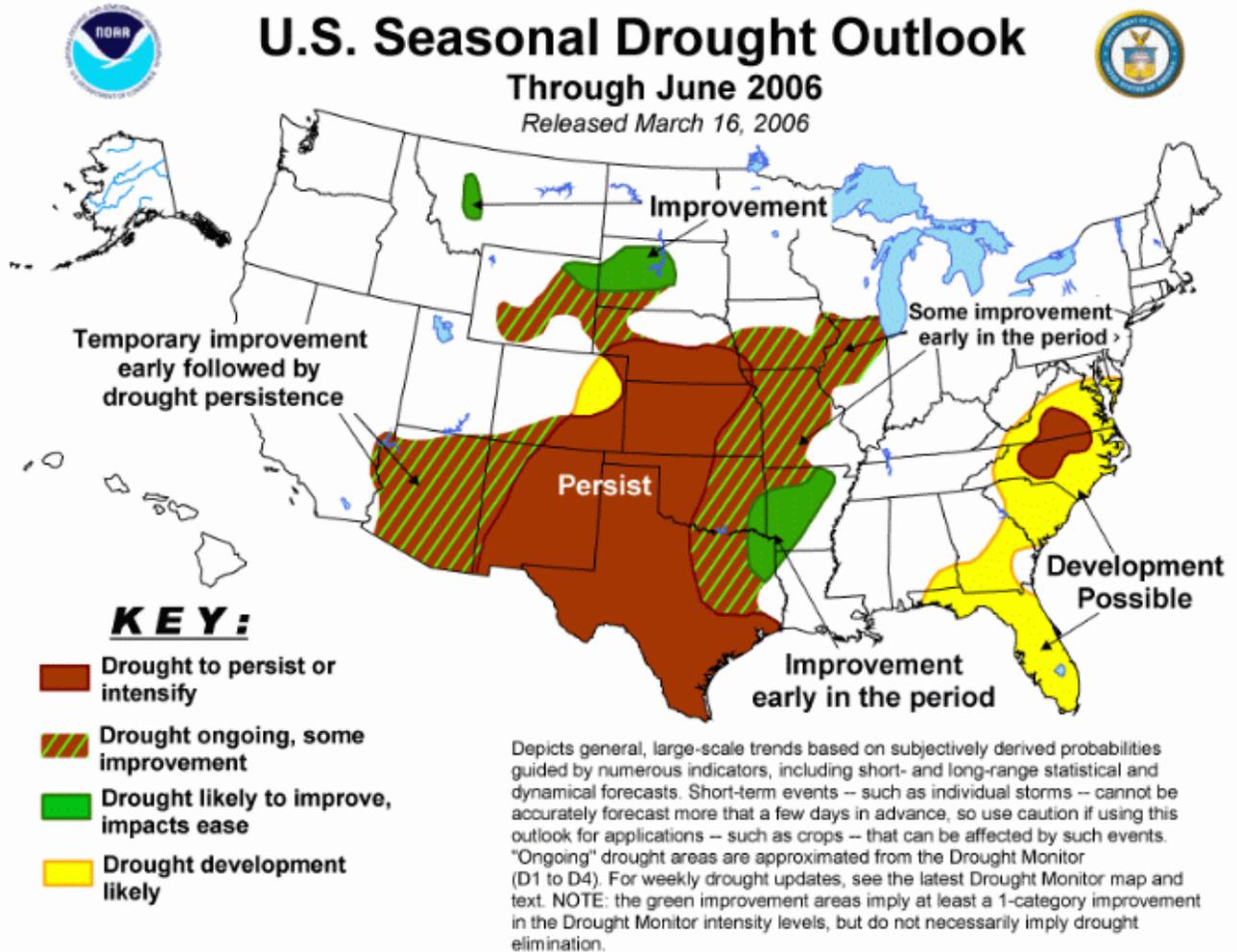
APPENDIX D

U.S. Drought Monitor - Virginia March 21, 2006



Note: The U.S. Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. Click on map to view complete U.S. Drought Monitor graphic.

APPENDIX E



APPENDIX F

2005-2006 VIRGINIA'S DISASTER DESIGNATIONS - STATUS REPORT (03/06/06)

- 49 Virginia locality has been designated a primary disaster area by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture due to drought and high temperatures:

Amelia	Goochland	Powhatan
Bedford	Greensville	Prince Edward
Bland	Grayson	Pulaski
Brunswick	Halifax	Russell
Buckingham	Hanover	Scott
Campbell	Isle of Wight	Shenandoah
Charlotte	King & Queen	Smyth
Chesterfield	King William	Southampton
Culpeper	Lee	Surry
Cumberland	Louisa	Washing
Dinwiddie	Lunenburg	Tazewell
Essex	Mecklenburg	Wise
Fauquier	Montgomery	Wythe
Floyd	Nelson	
Fluvanna	Nottoway	
Franklin	Page	
Frederick	Patrick	
Giles	Pittsylvania	

- 69 Virginia localities have been designated contiguous disaster areas by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture due to drought and high temperatures:

Albemarle	Goochland	City of Radford
Amherst	Grayson	Rappahannock
Appomattox	Greene	City of Richmond
Augusta	Hanover	Richmond
City of Bedford	Henrico	Roanoke
Botetourt	Henry	Rockbridge
City of Bristol	City of Hopewell	Rockingham
Buchanan	Isle of Wight	Russell
Campbell	James City	Scott
Caroline	King and Queen	Smyth
Carroll	King George	Southampton
Charles City	King William	Spotsylvania
Chesterfield	Lee	Stafford
Clarke	Louisa	Surry
City of Colonial Heights	Loudoun	Sussex
Craig	City of Lynchburg	City of Suffolk
Culpeper	Madison	Tazewell
Cumberland	Middlesex	Warren
City of Danville	New Kent	Washington

Dickenson	City of Newport News	Westmoreland
City of Emporia	City of Norton	City of Winchester
Fauquier	Orange	Wise
Fluvanna	City of Petersburg	Wythe
City of Franklin	Pittsylvania	
Franklin	Powhatan	
City of Galax	Prince George	
Gloucester	Prince William	

APPENDIX G

