

Water Supply Conditions – July 28, 2011

From a water supply standpoint, New Jersey remains in relatively good shape despite several episodes of extended hot, dry weather in the month of July. A relative lack of rainfall over the past 45 days for most areas of the state, coupled with a spike in water system demands since early July, call for continued monitoring by DEP staff. A more detailed summary of conditions follow:

As of July 21st, storage in the State's principal water supply reservoirs was about 8 percentage points above "normal". The abundant precipitation that brought an end to last summer's "mini-drought" and continued throughout the winter and spring allowed substantial recovery to depleted water reserves. Rainfall for the northern tier of counties where the largest reservoirs are located range from 5.3 to 10.7 inches above normal over the past 180 days. The relative health of reservoirs this year is in stark contrast to last summer when reservoirs were nearly 8 percentage points below the long-term average on this date and dropping rapidly. Nevertheless, the hot, dry weather over the last few weeks has resulted in sharply increased customer demands, and reservoir storage has begun to drop fairly sharply for the first time this summer.

New Jersey's southern counties and Atlantic coastal region have been somewhat drier over the past 90 days and this shortfall prevented a full recovery from last year's accumulated rainfall deficit. The lack of precipitation in this region is evident in the drought indicators where shallow ground water levels and stream flows are moderately below-average.

DEP will continue to monitor all water supply conditions. The public can help avoid a potential water shortage in the event that hot, dry conditions persist through the summer by moderating their water usage in, and especially, outdoors.

Useful Water Conservation Tips

1. To save water (and money!) in the home, fix leaky faucets and pipes.
2. Do not over-water lawns and landscaping – 2 times per week for 30 minutes (in the cool of the morning or late evening) is enough to keep grass green and thriving.
3. Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and shaving.
4. Run washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
5. Install high-efficiency, water saving toilets, faucets and showerheads.

A complete list of water conservation tips at (www.njdrought.org/ideas.html).