

Southern New Hampshire (SNH) Drought Information

- Extreme Drought Emergency has been declared for Southeastern New Hampshire.
- For the 12 months ended August 2016, actual rainfall in SNH is 13.9 inches or 30% below normal.
- This drought is the worst in over a decade. The drought of 2001-2002 was the third worst in NH history.
- Flow rate of Souhegan River for August 2016 at Merrimack is 18% of normal. Streamflow and groundwater levels are at historic low levels.
- Across the state, 119 communities/water systems have implemented water restrictions or bans. List updated 9/15/16.
- Average water use per capita in NH is 63 gallons per day for indoor use. In the summer, total water use increases to 93 gallons per day due to outdoor use, mostly attributed to lawn watering.
- Lawn watering can cause household water use to more than double.
- The National Weather Service predicts above normal temperatures and normal to below normal precipitation in the long-range forecast. This will not replenish our aquifers.
- Extended drought into winter after the ground freezes is a significant threat because any rain and snow melt will runoff into rivers instead of being absorbed into aquifers and groundwater.
- Private wells are failing and are a major concern. Well drilling is much more difficult and costly during winter.
- Wildfires are burning deeper and longer. Risk is highest in spring and fall.
- Farmers are expecting 20-80% crop loss. Dairy farmers have not been able to grow enough hay and will be forced to buy feed.
- The projection is that the drought will get worse before it gets better.