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## **Drought Advisory for Northeast and Central Massachusetts**

*Stepped-Up Monitoring of Water Resources to Begin for Two Regions of the Commonwealth*

[Map of drought advisory area.](#)

[Drought data, reports and water conservation tips.](#)

BOSTON – AUGUST 13, 2010 – Following three months of unusually dry weather, the Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force has found conditions warranting a Drought Advisory in two of the Commonwealth's six water resources management regions. The Advisory covers the Northeast and Central Regions of Massachusetts, and calls for state, regional and local water officials to be vigilant, especially concerning fire danger and water supply for firefighting.

The Drought Management Task Force made this finding at its Friday, August 13, meeting at the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) headquarters in Framingham. The second of five levels of drought conditions outlined in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan (Normal, Advisory, Watch, Warning and Emergency), Advisory indicates a level of dry conditions that warrants closer tracking by agencies at all levels of government. Of particular concern is fire danger, when dry soil conditions can allow fire to burn deep and spread rapidly to large areas.

Task Force officials noted that while some smaller reservoir systems in Drought Advisory areas are low for this time of year, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) supply system is well within normal operating range. Some other public water suppliers have issued conservation measures in response to the dry conditions. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and its agencies encourage people to conserve water as a matter of good practice. Today's Drought Advisory may require that additional outdoor water conservation measures be implemented by public water supply managers and other permitted users as required by their water management permit. Citizens are asked to abide by water restrictions imposed by their public water supplier.

A Drought Advisory requires the Drought Management Task Force to begin meeting on a regular basis to more closely assess conditions across the state, coordinate dissemination of information to the public, and help state, federal and local agencies coordinate any responses

that may be needed in the future. The Task Force will meet monthly, with the next meeting in September.

The state's rainfall in the Northeast and Central Regions has declined since May, with cumulative precipitation deficits of up to four inches below normal for the months of May through July. August rainfall to date is also below normal. Stream flow is extremely deficient in many areas of the state, even for this time of year when seasonally low stream flow is expected. Ground water levels have also declined, although these are slower to respond than stream flow to the rainfall deficit. So far this year, 86 municipalities have informed the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that they have instituted outdoor water use restrictions to conserve water.

A Drought Advisory is based on thresholds contained in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, a blueprint developed by the Drought Management Task Force to guide state activities in response to droughts and extended periods of dry weather.

The Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force comprises representatives of MEMA, EEA, DEP, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Agricultural Resources, Department of Public Health, MWRA, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Weather Service, Massachusetts Water Works Association and the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards.

MEMA is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and manmade. For additional information about MEMA, go to the MEMA website at [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema).

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