

BURKE COUNTY

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Burke County Water Customers Help Reduce Demand as Stage 2 Restrictions Remain in Effect

BURKE COUNTY, NC — Burke County Government and the Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group would like to thank Burke County Water customers for doing their part to reduce water usage during the current drought conditions.

Since Stage 2 Mandatory Water Restrictions were implemented, Burke County Water customers have helped relieve stress on the regional water supply system by reducing nonessential water use. These efforts are appreciated and remain important as the region continues to deal with the impacts of prolonged dry conditions.

While recent rainfall and short-term improvements provided temporary relief to area reservoirs, those improvements have not been enough to end the current drought response. Reservoir levels have begun receding again, and one of the major reasons is continued low streamflow across the region.

Current streamflow monitoring graphics show that many waterways across western North Carolina and the upper Catawba River Basin remain in very low flow conditions. Several stream gauges in and around the region are reporting flows in the “Extremely Dry” or “Very Dry” percentile categories, meaning streamflow’s are running well below what is typical for this time of year.

The individual stream gauge graphics also show only brief rises following recent rainfall, followed by flat or declining trends on several waterways. This includes monitoring points along the Catawba River, Johns River, Linville River, Hunting Creek, Wilson Creek, Silver Creek, and the North Fork Catawba River. These trends show why short periods of rain may help temporarily but do not immediately end the need for conservation.

Streamflow is an important part of the water supply picture because creeks, streams, and rivers help feed larger reservoirs. During extended dry periods, rainfall is often first absorbed by dry soils, vegetation, and smaller waterways before enough runoff reaches rivers and reservoirs. As a result, reservoirs may briefly improve after rain but begin falling again when inflows remain low and water demand continues.

Burke County officials also recognize that some area wells appear to remain near normal levels at this time. However, private wells and public water systems do not always respond to drought in the same way. Customers served by public water systems are still required to follow Stage 2 Mandatory Water Restrictions because those systems depend on shared regional water supplies, reservoir levels, streamflow, and the requirements of the Water Shortage Response Plan.

Burke County Water is a purchase-water system supplied by the City of Morganton, the Town of Valdese, and the City of Hickory. Burke County will continue working closely with suppliers and regional water management partners to monitor weather patterns, reservoir conditions, streamflow, water demand, and overall supply levels.

Stage 2, identified as Mandatory Reductions I under Burke County's Water Shortage Response Plan, requires all Burke County Water customers to reduce water use.

The following mandatory restrictions remain in effect:

- Lawn and landscape irrigation utilizing public water systems is limited to twice per week, no more than 0.50 inch per week, and only between 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.
- Use of water from public water systems for washing driveways, sidewalks, and other impervious surfaces is prohibited.
- Residential vehicle washing using public water systems is not allowed.
- Use of water for certain testing and training activities has been limited.

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These restrictions are designed to reduce demand on the system and protect the county's water supply for essential needs, including drinking water, sanitation, public health, and fire protection.

"We appreciate the community's continued cooperation, and the steps customers have already taken to conserve water," said Burke County General Services Director Mark Delehant. "The recent improvements were helpful, but they were temporary. Until streamflow and overall water supply conditions show sustained recovery, continued conservation remains necessary."

Failure to comply with Stage 2 restrictions may result in enforcement actions. Violations may result in a warning, followed by fines and potential service disconnection for repeated noncompliance.

Burke County officials will continue to monitor conditions closely and will provide updates as conditions change. Additional restrictions could be implemented if drought conditions worsen.

Customers are encouraged to continue fixing leaks, limiting outdoor water use, reducing unnecessary water consumption, and using water wisely until restrictions are lifted.

For additional information regarding current water restrictions and conservation tips, please contact Burke County Water/Sewer at 828-764-9063 or visit the Burke County Water Shortage Response Plan on the County website via <https://www.burkenc.org/DocumentCenter/View/206/Burke-County-Water-Shortage-Response-Plan-PDF-?bidId=>

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