



## N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

---

Release: Immediate  
Date: Oct. 18, 2007

Contact: Jamie Kritzer  
Phone: (919) 715-7357

---

### **REGIONAL DROUGHT MEETINGS SCHEDULED**

RALEIGH – As drought conditions worsen in North Carolina, state officials have scheduled three regional meetings with local governments, industries and others to work cooperatively on ways to limit water consumption and stretch public water supplies during one of North Carolina’s worst-ever droughts.

“State agencies are working directly with communities already experiencing significant water supply problems,” said Secretary Bill Ross of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. “It is also important for us to work with communities that can still take steps to maintain and improve water supplies. The drought could last through the winter and good stewardship of our water will be needed to avoid a more widespread water emergency later.”

The meetings will be held: Oct. 30 at the McKimmon Center for Extension and Continuing Education, 1101 Gorman St., Raleigh; Nov. 1 in meeting room No. 1 of the Greensboro Coliseum’s Special Events Center, 1921 W. Lee St.; and Nov. 8 at the Asheville Civic Center, 87 Haywood St. Registration starts at 8 a.m. and the meetings will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude about 1 p.m. The meetings are open to the public.

The meetings will be aimed at local governments, municipal elected officials, public water system operators, community well users and industries in areas experiencing severe drought conditions.

The meetings will provide valuable information on the status of the drought and offer policy options for conserving water and identifying supplemental water sources. State officials aim to provide communities with information that enables them to stretch available water supplies in case North Carolina experiences a prolonged drought.

Ross said he hopes that like in 2002, communities will benefit from information provided by state officials and other communities that are responding to the drought.

The federal drought map released Thursday showed the drought intensifying as the entire state is now experiencing the three worst categories of drought. Seventy-one counties – 15 more counties than last week – in the mountains and Piedmont are experiencing exceptional drought, the worst level of drought. The remaining 29 counties are experiencing extreme or severe drought. Carteret, Hyde and Pamlico counties moved from moderate to severe drought. The drought map can be found at [www.ncdrought.org](http://www.ncdrought.org).

Gov. Easley’s repeated requests for communities to conserve water have been well-received in many North Carolina communities during the past several months. In total, 141 public water systems have enacted voluntary water use restrictions and another 117 systems have put in place mandatory restrictions. About 4.99 million people, or 74 percent of the people served by water systems the state tracks, are subject to water use restrictions.

-MORE-

-2-

Those communities who have instituted sharp water cutbacks have already resulted in reduced water consumption. The following is a list of some of the communities and measures they've taken to conserve water:

- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department instituted mandatory conservation in late August and enacted a full ban on yard watering and car washing Sept. 26.
- The Lenoir Public Utilities Department has placed water conservation tips on the city's Web site and water billing statements.
- Officials in Moore County are requiring residential and business customers in Pinehurst and Seven Lakes to cut water usage by 50 percent.
- Valdese in Burke County sent brochures to more than 5,000 customers outlining conservation measures and started a radio campaign that corresponded to the brochure.
- The city of High Point has implemented special water rates that encourage conservation.

If you're interested to see if your community has enacted water conservation measures, go to [http://www.ncwater.org/Drought\\_Monitoring/reporting/displaystate.php](http://www.ncwater.org/Drought_Monitoring/reporting/displaystate.php).

For a list of water conservation tips, go to <http://p2pays.org/water/TopTen.asp>.

###