



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

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**Parts Of Western North Carolina Now Enduring Severe Drought**  
*People Urged to Conserve Water and Not Burn*

**RALEIGH** – State and federal officials say a lack of significant rainfall in recent months has thrust the westernmost parts of North Carolina into severe drought.

At the recommendation of state drought officials, experts with the U.S. Drought Monitor announced Thursday that Clay, Graham, Cherokee and parts of Swain and Macon counties are in a severe hydrological drought. Most of the rest of western North Carolina continues to experience a moderate drought or abnormally dry conditions, said Woody Yonts, chairman of the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council, the body of state experts who made this week's recommendation.

Hydrological drought refers to deficiencies in water resources available for water supply and is measured based on streamflows as well as lake, reservoir, and ground water levels. Even after recent rains, the areas experiencing severe drought are seeing stream flows at near-record low levels and ground water levels below normal for this time of the year. However, reservoir levels throughout North Carolina are at normal levels.

Drought advisories issued by the council provide information to assist local governments and other water users in taking appropriate drought response actions. State drought officials are urging people in western North Carolina to conserve water and stay informed on drought conditions and any advisories that may be issued by local governments.

The following are some practical tips people can use to conserve water during drought and abnormally dry conditions:

- Don't leave the water running while rinsing, shaving or brushing teeth or rinsing dishes.
- Replace old gaskets. A dripping faucet can waste 3,800 gallons of water a year. Also, check for and repair leaky garden taps, hose connections and sprinkler valves.
- Take shorter showers.
- Limit car washing. Use a bucket and a hose with a spray attachment.
- Add compost and other organic matter to your soil to improve its water-holding capacity.

In addition to water conservation, state officials are recommending that people not burn yard vegetation during these dry and windy conditions. Officials with the N.C. Division of Forest Resources say dry conditions statewide are creating high potential for wildfires. They are urging people to postpone outdoor burning until rainfall levels return to normal. This has been a busy spring fire season as firefighters with the Division of Forest Resources and local fire agencies have been battling blazes statewide for several months, including a 1,000-acre wildfire in Pender County that started Monday and was contained Wednesday.

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