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Drought Continues to Plague New England, Says New Hampshire State Climatologist

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DURHAM, N.H. -- In New Hampshire, fire danger is up, and lawns and gardens are clearly under low moisture stress as the dry pattern that started in April continues to plague the state and the New England region.

Currently, New England is classified as experiencing "moderate drought" while the rest of the region is classified as "abnormally dry," one step before moderate drought.

"Although we have had a few wet months since April, most of the months over the past year and a half have been dryer than normal, and some have been exceptionally dry," says Barry Keim, N.H. State Climatologist and associate professor of geography at the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study for Earth, Oceans, and Space.

New Hampshire experienced its second-worst drought in December and January. Above normal rainfall in May and June largely eliminated the past drought by bringing reservoirs and river flow back to near normal. Groundwater in parts of the state, however, never fully recovered, Keim says.

Precipitation in July again was deficient throughout the state and across New England. Precipitation in Durham was only 40 percent of the normal rate.

"Some towns in the Seacoast already are strongly urging conservation of water, and this should be practiced throughout New England, given the current situation," Keim says. "Avoid the 30 minute shower. Don't run the water while brushing your teeth. Every little bit helps. If everyone could contribute, it could mitigate a serious problem much like we experienced last year around this time when shallow wells quit producing."

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