

UNH Expert Says Despite Dreary Summer, Rainfall Totals Were Average

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DURHAM, N.H. -- So whose vacation wasn't a washout? Anybody find sun this past Labor Day weekend? Word on the rain soaked streets is it's been one of the wettest summers in recent years.

Not many would argue that assumption, but the fact is summer rainfall totals were close to normal across New Hampshire, according to Barry Keim, New Hampshire state climatologist.

"What was abnormal, says Keim, University of New Hampshire associate professor of geography, "was the amount of cloudiness and number of rain days. For example, preliminary data for some locations indicate that 50 to 60 days over the summer experienced at least some rainfall. It is normal to get 30 to 35 days of summer rain."

Because rainfall amounts were average, but the number of rain days were above average, many rain events produced only drizzle rather than torrential conditions. This is ideal for keeping soils saturated, while producing little run-off to streams and rivers, says Keim, who conducts research in UNH's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space.

Adding to the perception of a lackluster summer is the fact that clouds prevailed more than usual, blocking the sun and suppressing afternoon temperatures, says Keim. "Across most of the state, June had above normal temperatures, while July and August were below normal. At least in Durham, this is the first time that both July and August were below normal since 1992."

He adds, "Because we are so used to temperatures being above normal in recent summers, it feels frigid when near normal temperatures prevail." - 30 -
Professor Barry Keim can be reached today at 603-862-3136.

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