

Regional Drought and Water Supply Status and Outlook May 2017

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS

The region received some much needed rain during the month of April and as a result almost half of the Basin, especially west of the fall line, is no longer dry. Local reservoirs are full and streamflows in the Potomac are currently near median levels.

At the end of February 2017, the Maryland Department of the Environment issued a drought warning for central Maryland areas outside of the WSSC service territory and the Eastern region. Areas inside the WSSC service territory in Prince George's County and Montgomery County are exempt. As of April 15, [the eastern region drought status has returned to normal](#) but the central region drought status remains in Warning.

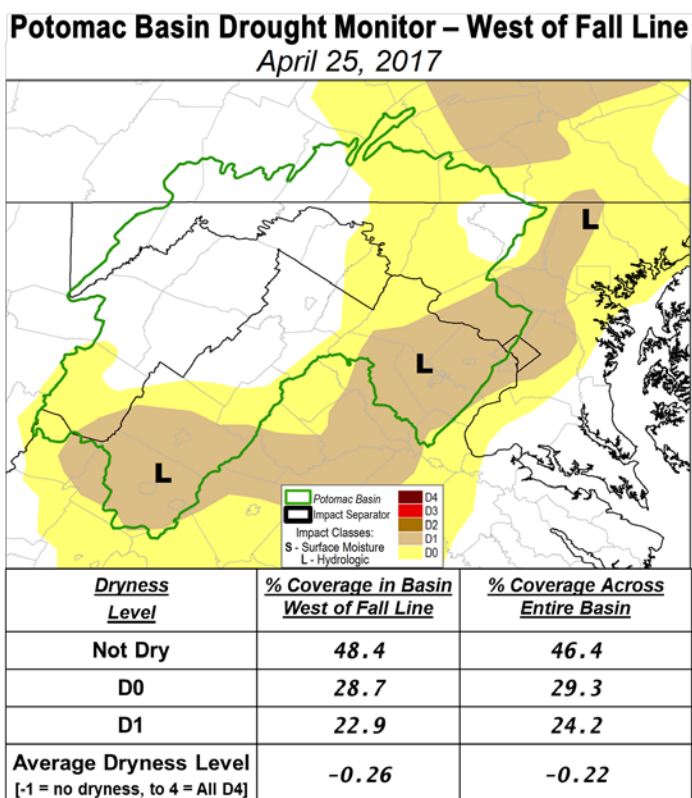
On March 20, 2017, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality issued a [drought watch](#) for Northern Virginia public and private water supplies using groundwater and private water supplies using surface water. Water systems using the Potomac River or Occoquan Reservoir are not affected at this time. As of May 4, 2017, VADEQ's drought watch is still in effect.

POTOMAC BASIN DROUGHT MONITOR

NOAA has designated parts of the Potomac Basin in various drought conditions. The April 25th Potomac Basin Drought Monitor designated areas across the entire basin as:

- 46% is not dry
- 30% is abnormally dry (D0)
- 24% is in moderate drought status (D1)

Note that the Drought Monitor reflects observed precipitation through Tuesday, 1200 UTC (8 am, EDT); any rain that has fallen after the Tuesday 1200 UTC cutoff will be reflected in next week's map.



POTOMAC STREAMFLOW LEVELS

Potomac streamflows are currently at or above median levels. Instantaneous flows readings on May 4, 2017:

Point of Rocks – 11,300 cfs/median 9,070 cfs Little Falls 12,000 cfs/ median 12,100 cfs

USGS Little Falls: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/uv?01646500>

USGS Point of Rocks: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/uv?01638500>

POTOMAC BASIN PRECIPITATION

The Potomac Basin received 2.9 inches of rain in April, which is slightly below normal.

Source: Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center

<http://www.weather.gov/images/marfc/departures/marfc.basin.dep.apr.2017.png>

GROUNDWATER LEVELS

Groundwater levels vary throughout the Potomac Basin from much below normal to normal, depending upon well location. Source: USGS

https://md.water.usgs.gov/groundwater/web_wells/current/water_table/counties/index.html

<https://groundwaterwatch.usgs.gov/NetMapT1L2.asp?ncd=crn&sc=51>

DROUGHT OUTLOOKS

The latest U.S. Seasonal Drought outlook indicates that drought improvement is likely for our region.

SOURCE: NOAA, Climate Prediction Center

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/sdo_summary.php

SHORT TERM FORECAST

The 7 Day quantitative precipitation forecast calls for roughly 1.00 – 2.5 inches of precipitation:

Source: National Weather Service, Weather Prediction Center

<http://www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov/qpf/day1-7.shtml>

RESERVOIR LEVELS

Drinking water reservoirs at Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca are currently full.

Source: <http://www.nab-wc.usace.army.mil/nab/potopub.html>

There is a slightly elevated probability of releases from the Washington metropolitan area's back-up water supply reservoirs for the 2017 summer and fall seasons. Generally, the use of Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca reservoirs is triggered by low flows brought about by a combination of low summer precipitation and low groundwater levels. There is an 8 to 17 percent conditional probability that natural Potomac flow will drop below 600- to 700-million gallons per day (MGD) at Little Falls through December 31 of this year. Source: ICPRB

<https://www.potomacriver.org/focus-areas/water-resources-and-drinking-water/cooperative-water-supply-operations-on-the-potomac/drought-monitoring-and-operations/water-supply-outlook-status/>

For additional information regarding regional water supply and drought conditions, please visit COG's website at: <https://www.mwcog.org/drought>