

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

2007 DROUGHT AND BURN BAN SITUATION REPORT # 22 24 April 2008, 1300 Hours

New Information in Bold Italic Type

SUMMARY

Statewide precipitation for the previous water year (1 October 2006 through 30 September 2007) was below normal. Statewide precipitation for the period from October 1, 2006 until **April 18, 2008** was below normal. **Statewide precipitation for the period from March 1, 2008 through April 18, 2008 is in the normal range.** Precipitation greater than 85% of normal is considered to be in the normal range. **The relatively wet period from February 1 until April 18 has had minor impact on accumulated precipitation deficits across the Commonwealth however, the recent rainfall event resulted in significant short term drought improvement in Central VA with a little improvement in the western portion of the State.**

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation: The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at **Recovery Operations** and is operating with **normal staff in response to severe weather that impacted the Commonwealth on 4 March.**

State of Emergency: Governor Timothy M. Kaine declared a Statewide Emergency on 18 October 2007 and imposed a statewide ban on all open burning. The statewide ban on open burning was lifted by Governor Timothy M. Kaine on 15 November. The Statewide Emergency remains in effect to deal with potential or actual drought related issues.

Governor Kaine requested that the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture declare Virginia a statewide disaster area due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures in 2007. The Acting US Secretary of Agriculture designated 78 additional counties and 34 independent cities as primary natural disaster areas on 18 October 2007 due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred from January 1, 2007, and continuing.

Governor Kaine sent a letter to all localities dated 29 November 2007 advising them that the most effective water restrictions are those developed at the local level and asked that localities review their drought water conservation and contingency plans associated with public waterworks and if there was no current drought plan, one should be developed. Governor Kaine also asked localities to review their local ordinances requiring mandatory non-essential water use restrictions during declared emergencies and assure that the ordinances are consistent with the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan and if the locality has not adopted such ordinances, they should consider the development and adoption of these. DEQ – [COV Drought Response Plan](#)

Executive Order: [Executive Order 57 \(2007\)](#)

ESF 15 – External Affairs: Public Affairs Officers from VDEM, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Forestry and Department of Health and representatives from VDH Office of Drinking Water developed and presented a comprehensive state communication plan to the Drought Monitoring Task Force on 22 February and are incorporating recommendations into the plan, prior to submission for final approval.

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WEATHER FORECAST

Southwest VA: Thursday, 24 Apr: *Mostly sunny; high temperatures in the low to mid 70's; light and variable winds. Thursday night: Partly cloudy; low temperatures in the low to mid 50's; light and variable winds. Friday, 25 Apr:* *Partly sunny; 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon; high temperatures in the mid to uppers 70's; southwest winds 5 to 10 MPH. Friday night: Mostly cloudy; 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms; low temperatures in the low to mid 50's; light and variable winds.*

OPERATIONS SECTION

ESF 5 – Emergency Management: VDEM posting event related items to WebEOC under event titled “WebEOC, 2007-10 Drought and Burn Ban”; Participating as member of the Drought Monitoring Task Force; assessing the impact across the Commonwealth; ***limited exemption of hours worked for hay and feed carriers was extended until 0600 hours, 15 June 2008.*** VDEM Operations Director, Harry Colestock, and VDEM Recovery and Mitigation Director, George Roarty, attended a North Carolina Emergency Management Forum in Asheville, North Carolina, that discussed the drought in the Southeastern US. Points discussed for North Carolina were:

- Description of a tiered system to identify water systems vulnerability to drought and a group of functional state task forces to address specific drought issues
- State actions included water basin meetings, tracking of public water system status and promotion of conservation (especially industries and big users).
- NC Governor Easley Press Release issued on 14 January detailed new actions to combat the drought.
 - Governor told the state's 30 most vulnerable communities that they need to take actions now to ensure adequate water during the potential summer drought
 - Governor directed his Dept of Natural Resources to quickly identify the funding needed to make sure undue amounts of water are not being lost to leaks and other structural problems
 - Governor also requested that public water systems adopt conservation-based rate structures to encourage both residential and commercial customers to save water
- Virginia's plans and current efforts were discussed and included background of recent droughts, development of the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan, current drought impacts, Governor's Emergency Declaration, resources in readiness, water system problems exacerbated by drought and potential funding and other resources to mitigate the impacts of the drought situation.

State Warning Point: Normal operations

Local Liaison: VDEM Region Four Coordinator is attending the monthly water planning/drought issues meetings held by the Lenowisco Planning District Commission.

EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH

ESF 4 – Firefighting: *The Department of Forestry reports that, since January 1, 2008, 934 wildfires have burned 25,252 acres, and damaged or destroyed 14 homes and 37 other structures. The Department of Forestry reports that wildfire conditions have generally seen modest improvements over the last month as the normal spring green-up helps to bring an end to the spring wildfire season. Several recent frontal passages, with generally light precipitation, have kept fuel moistures high in the short term and have helped to eliminate the threat of widespread wildfire activity. The higher elevations of western and southwestern Virginia have accounted for most of the significant wildfire activity over the last few weeks. These numbers are all well above 5 and 10 year averages for the period and Virginia's spring fire season will likely end by the first week of May. The next*

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real threat for significant wildfire development will return later this fall. The most intense single day of wildfire activity in the preceding 70 years occurred on February 10, 2008. During this event wildfires driven by unusually high winds were reported in 62 localities across the Commonwealth. There were 357 reported fires that burned almost 14,000 acres, and damaged or destroyed 9 homes, 19 other structures and 7 vehicles. [Outdoor Fires Unlawful Before 4 p.m.](#); [Local Burn Ban Restrictions](#); [VDOF Fire Summation Report 24 April 08](#)

ESF 8 – Public Health & Medical Services: Virginia Department of Health and Office of Drinking Water continue to monitor and stand by for consultation and coordination.

HUMAN SERVICES BRANCH

ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources: Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services reported that according to the USDA Crop Weather Report ***released on April 14, 2008, 86% of topsoil moisture was adequate or better during the previous week. The low temperatures hindered small grain progress and delayed corn planting in parts of the state. However, recent scattered showers have helped to improve hay and pasture crop conditions. Most crops are reported as being in fair to good condition throughout the state.*** As a result of the hay shortages caused by the drought, the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission has allocated \$500,000.00 to livestock producers in the Southwest Virginia counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe. All Virginia localities have access to federal drought disaster assistance. [VDACS Drought Related Information](#); [VDACS Hay Clearing House](#)

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries reports all boating access facilities are accessible and operating to support the beginning of the spring fishing season. Reservoirs are expected to be at normal levels for both recreation and the spring fish spawning period. Trout stocking is on schedule in the western part of the state, however the average size and the total number of fish is down due to the drought and reduced production during 2007. While river and stream flows increase to near normal levels during rainfall events, flows rapidly decrease due to depressed ground water levels. As the spring growing season begins significant precipitation events will be necessary to maintain stream flows and recreational opportunities. Periodic spring rains are necessary to recharge seasonal pools and wetlands that amphibians require for reproduction.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality chairs the Virginia Drought Monitoring Task Force and reports that drought conditions have remained stable over the Commonwealth during the last month. The NOAA seasonal drought outlook through July 2008 indicates that drought conditions may improve in the majority of the Commonwealth with the potential for improvement greater in the early portion of this time period. Most major reservoirs have fully recharged and will be entering the low flow, high use season in good condition. Inflows, which normally peak in March and April, remain at very low levels for this time of year. The rainfall event of April 20 and 21 will likely reduce accumulated precipitation deficits in the eastern half of the Commonwealth but should be viewed as short-term improvement and will not end the current drought. The long-range monthly climatologic outlook calls for equal chances of below normal, normal and above normal precipitation and temperatures for the Commonwealth through May of 2008. The long-range seasonal outlook calls for equal chances of below normal, normal and above normal precipitation and temperatures for the Commonwealth through July 2008. [US Drought Monitor - VA](#); [US Seasonal Drought Outlook](#); [USGS Water Watch-Drought](#); [DMTF Drought Status Report 22 April 2008](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH

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ESF 1 – Transportation: *The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles jointly authorized an extension of the temporary waiver of registration and license requirements along with normal weight and width restrictions for the purpose of ensuring essential emergency relief supplies reach the disaster area in a timely manner through 0600 hours, 15 June 2008. [Wavers to Carriers Extended](#)*

ESF 3 – Public Works & Engineering: The Virginia Department of Health has not reported any impacts to public water supplies that have compromised their ability to provide the needs of their customers. **35 systems have initiated water conservation measures; 4 mandatory water conservation requirements and 31 voluntary water conservation requirements.** The reduction in conservation requirements is likely reflective of decrease water demands during the winter season and is down from a high of 64 systems in November 2007.

Waterworks are encouraged to develop water conservation and contingency plans and local governments are encouraged to adopt local water conservation ordinances. [DEQ Water Conservation Tips](#)

PLANNING SECTION

Situation/Documentation Unit: Based on the current improvements, Situation Reports will be prepared and issued monthly. If drought conditions deteriorate significantly we will resume for frequent Situation Reports. ***Next Situation Report will be issued Thursday, 22 May 2008.***

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Wise County declared a local emergency on 31 October due to drought conditions that caused a severe raw water supply shortage to retail water customers. The Mayor and Town Council of Appalachia along with Wise County declared a water emergency and implemented conservation measures and prohibited non-essential water usage. An Emergency Virginia Water Permit was issued by the VA Department of Environmental Quality that permits withdrawal of 500,000 gallons per day from the Powell River and pumps it to their reservoir. Towns of Appalachia and Big Stone Gap are working on an interconnecting pipe with an estimated cost of \$500,000.

Lee County has relocated the intake pipe at KVS Quarry to deeper water and has not requested any assistance from the Commonwealth. Lee County has a contract with the Arthur-Shawnee System in Tennessee as an alternate source of water and is working on an agreement with the Town of Jonesville as an alternate source of water.

The Town of Dungannon and Scott County declared a local emergency on 9 November due to a water infrastructure issue involving the Town of Dungannon water system. Scott County Emergency Management reported on 24 March 2008 that Dungannon Water Department personnel reported that the major leak has been repaired and that the water storage tank has been refilled. Water sample testing by VA Department of Health has been conducted and approved and the boil water notice has been lifted. The Scott County Board of Supervisors closed the local emergency on 2 April 2008.

Prepared by: Michael Gray, Plans Section Chief
Authority of Michael Cline, State Coordinator
/s/ Harry Colestock, Operations Director