



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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DROUGHT OFFICIALS: CONDITIONS NORMAL FOR FIRST TIME IN ALMOST THREE YEARS

RALEIGH – No county in the Tar Heel State is experiencing drought or abnormally dry conditions for the first time in nearly three years, according to Thursday's map released by the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The last time North Carolina experienced normal conditions was Jan. 30, 2007.

A copy of the drought map, which can be found at www.ncdrought.org, shows a plain depiction of North Carolina. During most of the past three years, parts of the state have been color coded on the drought map, indicating conditions that ranged from abnormally dry to exceptional drought.

The state experienced its worst drought on record in the summer, fall and winter of 2007.

North Carolina has seen great improvements since then, as above average rainfall helped replenish streams, rivers and reservoirs to normal and above-normal levels. The past month has been unusually wet across North Carolina, with many locations experiencing record-setting rainfall amounts. Based on preliminary data from the state climatologist at N.C. State University, the one-month period ending Dec. 9 was the wettest for this time of the year for many areas. Those areas include Asheville, Chapel Hill, Durham, Elizabethtown, Greensboro, Hickory, Kinston, Lewiston, New Bern, Plymouth, Raleigh, Roanoke Rapids, Whiteville, Wilkesboro and Wilmington.

The last counties moving from abnormally dry conditions to normal conditions this week are in the Sandhills region, where the groundwater table began the upward seasonal swing later in the season compared to wells in other parts of the state.

North Carolinians remain mindful of the importance of conserving water whenever possible. As of Thursday, 3.64 million people, or 51 percent of the people who receive water from public systems the state tracks, are subject to voluntary or mandatory water use restrictions. For more information on water conservation, see the state's official Web site devoted to the topic, www.savewaternc.org.

To see the recent drought history, go to http://www.ncwater.org/Drought_Monitoring/dmhistory/?startdate=2006-11-07&enddate=2009-12-08&label=false.

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