

# Brief Summary of State Drought Task Force Meeting: August 5, 2021

The Minnesota State Drought Task Force conducted its second meeting on August 5, 2021. The primary purposes of the Task Force are information sharing, coordination and planning. The first Drought Task Force meeting included updates on current drought status, brief summaries from members about their respective organizations' drought-related responses, and planning for future Task Force meetings. Media and interested individuals were invited to join the meeting at 4:00 for a meeting summary and Q and A opportunity.

Per the Minnesota Statewide Drought Plan, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Minnesota DNR) determines state drought phases and responses based on specific climatological and water data. Task Force members may share information and perspectives regarding these factors, but making phase determinations is not a role of the Task Force.

Minnesota DNR Ecological and Water Resources Director Katie Smith presented an update about the purpose of the Task Force and member roles, including:

- Being knowledgeable of your agency/organization's actions in response to drought and providing that information to the Task Force.
- Being aware of drought related issues involving your agency/organization and providing that information to the Task Force.
- Coordinating responses with other members of the Task Force.

State Climatologist Luigi Romolo presented an update, including:

- Drought status
- Streamflow
- Lake Levels
- Fire Danger
- Crop Report
- Short term outlook/forecast

Key topics discussed and actions being taken by Drought Task Force member organizations include:

- MNDOT is ending prescribed burning, and is encountering water availability issues at projects.
- Haying/grazing requests are being received and some allowances have occurred on various types of conservation lands.
- Minnesota DNR is continuing wildfire preparedness and response. Surface water permit suspensions continue. Responding to well interference (out of water) situations. Providing public information and responding to media requests.
- MN Dept. of Agriculture website updated for farmers, drought was the top issue at FarmFest.

- Crop, livestock, hay/pasture, pest and other ag-related condition updates and outlooks and best practices are being shared.
- Weather-related data collection, updates on social media and websites.
- MN Pollution Control Agency is suspending some water quality monitoring work because of low levels.
- Reservoir level updates were provided by USACE.
- Stream monitoring updates, and challenges with gages due to conditions were shared.
- Burning restrictions on White Earth Band lands, impacts to wild rice were shared.
- Public water utilities are experiencing reduced water use as customers follow conservation measures and requirements.

Discussion of other topics:

- Reviewed the [Statewide Drought Plan](#) phases and triggers.
- Reviewed progression of drought conditions on the [drought maps](#).
- Municipality water supply plan components were explained. Low flow efficiencies used in winter creates use level reduction challenges in spring, summer and fall.
- Programs are available to assist communities with water use reductions, for example from MN Rural Water.

Next steps:

- Summary will be sent, including links shared
- Next meeting – August 19 at 2:00, with media and interested parties invited at 4:00

State Drought Task Force members and supporting staff (marked with an asterisk) in attendance:

- Katie Smith, Minnesota DNR
- Randall Doneen, Minnesota DNR
- Pat Rivers, Minnesota DNR
- Luigi Romolo, Minnesota DNR
- Paul Lundgren, Minnesota DNR\*
- Ann Pierce, Minnesota DNR\*
- Mark Hauck, Minnesota DNR\*
- Amanda Dirnberger, Minnesota DNR\*
- Greg Husak, Minnesota DNR\*
- Kim Flanagan, Prairie Island Indian Community
- Deb Dirlam, Lower Sioux Community
- Rick Wahlen, Eden Prairie community water supply manager and liaison to American Water Works Association
- James Fallon, Upper Midwest Water Science Center, USGS
- John Walker, Upper Midwest Water Science Center, USGS\*
- Dave Jones, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA
- Dan Loftus, USDA
- Michelle Page, USDA
- Elizabeth Nelsen, USACE
- Teri Alberico, USACE\*

- Shawn DeVinny, National Weather Service (substituting for colleague)
- Dan Hawblitzel, NOAA
- Ali Elhassan, Met Council
- Heidi Roop, U of M Climatology
- Mark Seeley, retired U of M Climatology (will be rotating off the team)
- Todd Biewen, MPCA
- Marni Karnowski, MNDOT
- Joe Kelly, DPS
- Jacob Beauregard, DPS\*
- Riley Slimmer, DPS\*
- Tom Hogan, MDH
- Jeff Berg, MDA
- Lucia Hunt, MDA
- Dave Weirens, BWSR
- Ben Benoit, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Keith Karnes, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe\*
- Joshua Jones, Red Lake Band of Chippewa
- Dan DeSmet, Upper Sioux Community
- Brian Martinson, Association of MN Counties

The Statewide Drought Task Force will meet every other Thursday at 2 p.m. The next meeting is August 19. The Task Force will be convened as long as needed while drought conditions persist.

Media and other interested parties are welcome to join Task Force meetings at 4:00 for a brief meeting summary and Q and A with Task Force members. This gives interested parties and reporters the opportunity to ask questions. The summary and Q and A will start promptly at 4:00 and will end by 4:30.

4:00 media and interested parties availability

Meeting link:

<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=m9d55ecf67e9a447158038d3b4e0ed03c>

Meeting number: 146 356 8804

Password: Drought2021

OR

Join by phone

+1-415-655-0003 United States Toll

Access code: 146 356 8804

Individuals with a disability who need a reasonable accommodation to participate in these availabilities, please contact [Mark Hauck](#), 320-223-7846 at least two weeks prior to the availability you would like to attend, or call using your preferred Telecommunications Relay Provider.

# **Agenda: State Drought Task Force**

**Date: 08/19/2021**

**Time: 2 p.m.**

## **Opening: Randall Doneen, DNR Ecological and Water Resources Manager**

Welcome and meeting agenda review

## **Drought Situation Review and Update: Luigi Romolo, State Climatologist**

Drought status, stream flow, lake levels, fire danger, and crop report

## **Agency Actions: Task Force members**

Each representative will give a brief update on drought related actions their agency or organization has been taking

## **Drought Issues Discussion: All**

Given growing impacts, what issues are we anticipating that may need additional information?

## **Other Topics: All**

Upcoming meetings

## **Availability for Media/Interested Parties, 4:00-4:30**

Meeting summary  
Q and A