

Updates in lieu of State Drought Task Force meetings

Due to recent rainfall and an easing or leveling of some drought conditions, the Sept. 2 and Sept. 16 State Drought Task Force meetings were cancelled. Members were asked to submit any updates on new drought-related actions.

We have been watching the fire danger levels on the DNR site and notifying residents when not to burn. This has not been an issue, due to the recent rains and greener grass.

Kim Flanagan
Prairie Island Indian Community

U.S. Geological Survey staff continue to make routine and supplemental low-flow discharge measurements at approximately 120 streamgages in Minnesota, to ensure provisional streamflow data displayed for streamgages in Minnesota are as accurate as possible.

Specifically, to ensure discharge data accuracy and reliability, staff have:

- relocated stage sensors to maintain accurate stage readings as river pools shrink.
- added secondary stage sensors at key streamgages, including the [Mississippi River at Brooklyn Park](#).
- updated shifts and extended the lower ends of stage-discharge ratings at many gages.

USGS staff have responded to numerous low-flow queries and data requests from water resource managers, Federal, State and local agencies, hydropower operators, and the general public.

Links to streamflow information that may be useful to data users and water resource managers include:

- USGS streamflow data table <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/mn/nwis/current/?type=flow>
- The new USGS National Water Dashboard including enhanced data layers from NWS <https://dashboard.waterdata.usgs.gov/app/nwd/?aoi=default>
- USGS WaterWatch, which provides current streamflow in context to historical (drought and other) conditions <https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/>

James Fallon
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U.S. Geological Survey

- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture continues to update our drought webpage as needed, with info including hay exchanges. [Drought Resources | Minnesota Department of Agriculture \(state.mn.us\)](#)
- Rural Finance Authority (RFA) Disaster Loan Program has been opened for drought impact loans, MDA's portion of the loan (45%) is 0% (the loan applicant works with a local bank). [Disaster Recovery Loan Program | Minnesota Department of Agriculture \(state.mn.us\)](#)
- Governor Walz has waived hours of service for transporting livestock, forage and water across state until the end of September (this may be extended). [EO 21-30 Final tcm1055-495736.pdf \(mn.gov\)](#)
- Thank you to the Board of Water and Soil Resources and the DNR for working to make state lands and state easements available to farmers for grazing and haying.
- As part of an anticipated upcoming special session, a drought package that would help livestock and specialty crop growers is being considered.

Jeffrey Berg
 Water Policy Specialist
 Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers continues to monitor conditions in all basins. Five of our six Mississippi River Headwaters reservoirs remain below conservation (0.4-1.1 feet). Red Lake also remains below conservation. All seven of those reservoirs continue to release minimum flows (where they have been all summer), and are still above drought lines where they would need to reduce outflow. With the August rains, we were successfully able to raise Lac qui Parle to its winter conservation elevation (1 foot higher).

Elizabeth Nelsen, P.E.
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 USACE St. Paul District

USDA/FSA:

CRP emergency haying and grazing concluded, there are 67 primary and 16 contiguous county secretarial disaster designations in place, and 67 counties are eligible for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP). Recently, USDA expanded assistance under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP) Program to cover feed transportation costs where grazing and hay resources have been depleted.

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