



Northwest Florida Water Management District

DROUGHT CONDITIONS SUMMARY

July 16, 2007

Overview of Hydrologic Conditions

Drought conditions persist throughout the District with a slight improvement in recent weeks in the western counties of the panhandle. During the first two weeks of July isolated summer thunderstorms brought rainfall amounts ranging from about 1 to 5 inches across the District. The counties in the western half of the District and coastal areas generally received more rainfall in the first half of July with most rainfall stations reporting near normal or above normal rainfall for the two week period.

Rainfall deficits for the 2007 calendar year range from about 13 – 18 inches below normal for monitoring locations across the District with higher deficits in the eastern counties. The rainfall deficit continues a slow upward trend for most areas and is currently about 16 inches below normal District-wide. The U.S. Drought Monitor has changed little in July with the majority of the District indicating severe drought condition (D2) for the majority of the District with a small area along the Florida/Georgia border indicating extreme drought (D3).

Surface water levels on streams and rivers in the eastern counties were generally low with most river and stream flows in the 1 to 8 percentile range. On July 16th, four major rivers and streams in the District set new record low flows for the day including: Ochlockonee River – Havana in Leon County, Chipola River – Altha in Calhoun County, Telogia Creek – Bristol in Liberty County and the Little River – Midway in Gadsden County. Most stream and river flows from the Choctawhatchee River west to the Escambia River are higher with flows generally in the 23 to 45 percentile range. Many rivers in the western half of the District are in the normal flow range from recent rainfall.

Ground water levels continue a downward trend throughout most of the District. Local rainfall has stabilized or increased aquifer levels slightly in some areas. The Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer levels in Santa Rosa and Escambia Counties are about 3 ft above the record low levels observed during the period from 2000 - 2002. The Floridan Aquifer remains at or near record low levels throughout most of the District.

Current Conditions and Actions

- The Executive Director, with the concurrence of the Governing Board and after considering recommendations of District staff, issued Order No. 07-001, *Issuance of a Water Shortage Warning Within the Northwest Florida Water Management District*, on June 5, 2007.
- As a result of the Water Shortage Warning issued by the District and increased demand, nine water utilities issued voluntary water use restrictions to ensure system pressure and availability; including Auburn Water System in Okaloosa County, the City of Tallahassee Utility, Emerald Coast Utilities Authority in Escambia County, the City of Crestview Utility, the City of DeFuniak Springs Utility, the City of Niceville, the City of Fort Walton Beach, Gonzales Utilities in Escambia County and Bagdad-Garcon Point Water System in Santa Rosa County. Water utilities have been notified of the Water Shortage Warning Order issued by the District and were requested to advise customers of the need to conserve water. No mandatory restrictions have been implemented by water supply utilities in the District.
- No water supply shortages have been reported. The District will continue to monitor water resources and will work with water utilities and other users to implement conservation measures.