



Northwest Florida Water Management District

DROUGHT FACT SHEET **June 23, 2011**

WATER SHORTAGE WARNING ORDER

A Water Shortage Warning Order is in effect pursuant to Sections 373.083, 373.175 and 373.246, Florida Statutes and Chapter 40A-21, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), based on the following Findings of Fact:

1. Surface water flows continue to decline throughout the District with a number of monitored sites at or near record daily low flows.
2. Ground water levels continue to decline throughout the District and are approaching record low levels.
3. Extreme to exceptional drought conditions exist throughout the District's 16 county region.
4. Monthly rainfall totals across the District have been below normal for the past nine months.
5. In the event the drought continues or intensifies, there is an increased likelihood that localized upconing of salt water may occur in some coastal wells, and water resources may be impacted requiring mandatory conservation measures.

The Water Shortage Warning provides for voluntary water conservation actions. All users in all classes of use are encouraged to reduce water use and to conserve water to the maximum extent possible.

Current Conditions and Actions

- The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates extreme drought conditions in counties east of the Apalachicola River and in Gulf County. Exceptional drought conditions (the most intense drought category) is indicated in counties west of the Apalachicola River and northern portions of Gadsden, Leon and Jefferson counties.
- The Water Shortage Warning was issued due to declining trends in ground water and surface water resources and increased consumptive use caused by the drought.
- No water supply shortages have been reported. As a result of increased demand, the City of Crestview in Okaloosa County has issued a mandatory water use restriction requiring even or odd calendar day landscape watering based on even

and odd house numbers. It also limits watering to the hours between 5 p.m. and 11 a.m. Voluntary conservation measures have been implemented by the Auburn Water System in Okaloosa County and the Okaloosa County Water System.

- Rainfall was below normal in the panhandle at the end of the 2010 calendar year, averaging about 10 inches below normal across the District. The normal District-wide rainfall for the January through May, 2011 period is 24.90 inches. Rainfall deficits at the end of May for the 2011 calendar year range between 5 to 14 inches below normal.
- Surface water levels on streams and rivers from the Perdido Basin to the Apalachicola Basin are very low with most river and stream flows in the 1 – 2 percentile range. The Ochlocknee and St. Marks rivers are flowing at slightly higher levels in the 10 – 25 percentile range. The percentile flow represents the flow for a particular day relative to all the recorded flows for that day (e.g. - if 5 percent of all the flows for a day at a station were below 20 cubic feet per second (cfs), then 20 cfs would be the 5-percentile flow for that day).
- Ground water levels in the District are following a downward trend and approaching the historic low levels observed during previous drought periods. Current water levels for both the Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer and the Floridan Aquifer are below average but generally still 1 to 5 feet above previous lows of 2000 – 2001 and 2006 – 2007.
- Ground water resources supply about 75 % of consumptive use water supplies in northwest Florida. These ground water resources have the capacity, with regulatory permitting by NFWFMD, to meet all current consumptive use demands.
- During the most severe period of the drought in northwest Florida in recent years (May - July 2000) ground water levels dropped to historic low levels. The majority of problems were experienced by private well owners that had water levels drop below their pump intakes. All these problems were resolved by extending the depth of well pumps and/or wells and were not due to an insufficient supply of ground water. Some water utilities issued water use restrictions to customers due to water distribution limitations during peak use periods. These distribution problems were alleviated by restricting lawn watering and other non-essential water uses. The District issued a Water Shortage Warning during this period but no additional actions were necessary.
- The District will continue to monitor resources and implement additional actions enumerated in its Water Shortage Plan if necessary. Water conservation measures are promoted and encouraged as a regular practice by NFWFMD and water conservation information can be found on the District's web site:
www.nfwfmd.state.fl.us