



**WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN REGION
DROUGHT AND WATER SUPPLY STATUS AND OUTLOOK
FOR DROUGHT COORDINATION COMMITTEE: APRIL 2017**

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS

Drinking water supplies remain sufficient in metropolitan Washington despite dry conditions. Local water authorities report that Potomac and Occoquan River flows meet the region’s drinking water supply needs and local reservoirs are full.

At the end of February 2017, the Maryland Department of the Environment issued a [drought warning](#) for central Maryland areas outside of the WSSC service territory. Areas inside the WSSC service territory in Prince George’s County and Montgomery County are exempt. On March 20, 2017, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality issued a [drought watch](#) for Northern Virginia public and private water supplies using groundwater and private water supplies using surface water. Water systems using the Potomac River or Occoquan Reservoir are not affected at this time. As of April 6, 2017, both the MDE drought warning and DEQ drought watch were still in effect.

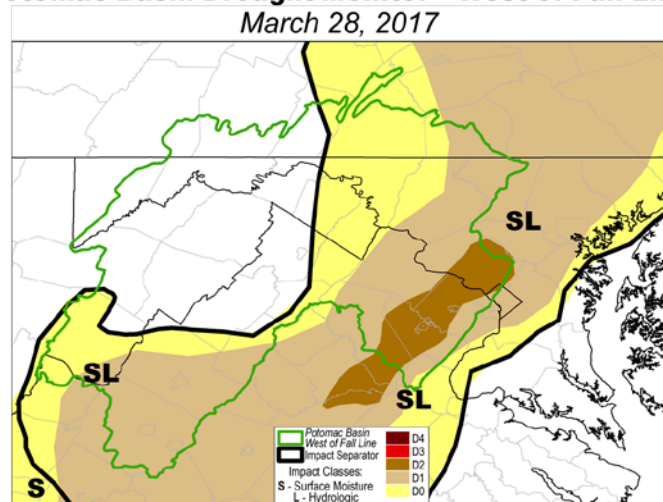
POTOMAC BASIN DROUGHT MONITOR

NOAA has designated parts of the Potomac Basin in differing drought conditions. The March 28th NOAA Potomac Basin Drought Monitor Report designated areas across the entire basin as:

- 43% is not dry
- 24% is abnormally dry (D0)
- 27% is in moderate drought status (D1)
- 6% is in severe drought status (D2)

Driest conditions are primarily located in the District and Montgomery, Fairfax and Prince William Counties. Abnormal dryness has the potential, depending on the amount of spring rains, to slow planting and growth of crops or pastures. Source: SOURCE: NOAA

Potomac Basin Drought Monitor – West of Fall Line
March 28, 2017



<u>Dryness Level</u>	<u>% Coverage in Basin West of Fall Line</u>	<u>% Coverage Across Entire Basin</u>
Not Dry	38.8	42.5
D0	25.9	25.2
D1	28.7	26.6
D2	6.5	5.7
Average Dryness Level [-1 = no dryness, to 4 = All D4]	+0.3	-0.5

POTOMAC STREAMFLOW LEVELS

Potomac stream flows are currently above average. Instantaneous flows readings on April 6, 2017:

Point of Rocks – 12,300 cfs/median 13,400 cfs

Little Falls 18,100 cfs/ median 15,600 cfs

Source USGS Little Falls: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/uv?01646500>

USGS Point of Rocks: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/uv?01638500>

POTOMAC BASIN PRECIPITATION

Over the past 7 days, the Potomac River Basin received 1” – 2” of rain (not including today’s rainfall). Precipitation levels in March were slightly below normal by 0.1 inch.

Source: Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center

<http://www.weather.gov/images/marfc/departures/marfc.basin.dep.mar.2017.png>

GROUNDWATER LEVELS

Groundwater levels vary throughout the Potomac Basin from much below normal to normal, depending upon well location. Source: USGS

https://md.water.usgs.gov/groundwater/web_wells/current/water_table/counties/index.html

<https://groundwaterwatch.usgs.gov/NetMapT1L2.asp?ncd=crn&sc=51>

DROUGHT OUTLOOKS

The latest U.S. Seasonal Drought outlook indicates that drought improvement and removal is likely for our region. SOURCE: NOAA, Climate Prediction Center

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/sdo_summary.php

SHORT TERM FORECAST

The 7 Day quantitative precipitation forecast calls for roughly 0.75 inches of precipitation:

Source: National Weather Service, Weather Prediction Center

<http://www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov/qpf/day1-7.shtml>

RESERVOIR LEVELS AND PROBABILITY OF RELEASES

Drinking water reservoirs at Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca are currently full.

Source: <http://www.nab-wc.usace.army.mil/nab/potopub.html>

There is an above normal probability of releases from the Washington metropolitan area’s back-up water supply reservoirs for the 2017 summer and fall seasons. Generally, the use of Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca reservoirs is triggered by low flows brought about by a combination of low summer precipitation and low groundwater levels. There is a 10 to 17 percent conditional probability that natural Potomac flow will drop below 600- to 700-million gallons per day (MGD) at Little Falls through December 31 of this year. Source: ICPRB

<https://www.potomacriver.org/focus-areas/water-resources-and-drinking-water/cooperative-water-supply-operations-on-the-potomac/drought-monitoring-and-operations/water-supply-outlook-status/>

For additional information regarding regional water supply and drought conditions, please visit COG’s website at: <https://www.mwccog.org/drought>