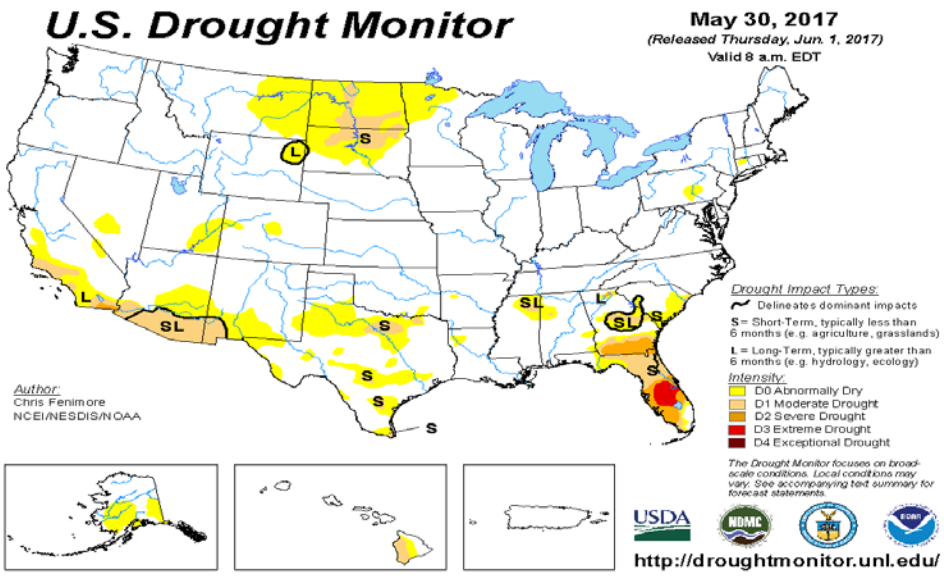
Regional Drought and Water Supply Status and Outlook June 2017

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS

The COG region received an above average amount of rain in May, and as a result, is drought free. Local reservoirs are full, and regional groundwater and streamflows are currently near median levels. Drought status conditions in Maryland and Virginia are improving although some watches and warnings are still in effect.

In Maryland, as of April 30, 2017, the Central region remains in drought Warning. The Eastern region's drought status has moved from Normal to Watch. In the Central region, over the last 30 days rainfall and stream flow conditions have improved, but the ground water indicator remained unchanged.

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 June 5, 2017, VADEQ's drought watch is still in effect. Abundant precipitation during the first part of May reduced or eliminated dry conditions over most of Virginia. However, portions of Northern Virginia, especially those areas within the Northern Virginia and Northern Piedmont drought evaluation regions, continue to experience dry conditions. Groundwater levels and water-year-to-date precipitation totals in these areas remain below normal levels.



The May 30, 2017 U.S. Drought monitor indicates that our region is currently free of drought.
Source: http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/

Metropolitan Washington
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POTOMAC STREAMFLOW LEVELS

Potomac streamflows are currently above median levels. Instantaneous flows readings on June 5, 2017 are indicated below:
Little Falls – 11,000 cfs/median7,780 cfs Point of Rocks 9,030 cfs/ median 6,370 cfs
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

The Potomac Basin received 6.6 inches of rain in May, which is 2.4 inches or 51-75% above normal. Source: Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center
http://www.weather.gov/images/marfc/departures/marfc.basin.dep.may.2017.png

GROUNDWATER LEVELS

Groundwater levels vary throughout the Potomac Basin from much below normal to normal, although many are reporting normal levels. 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 our region should not experience drought conditions over the next few months. Drought coverage across the country has progressively declined over the past several months, as assessed by the Drought Monitor. At the end of November 2016, drought encompassed more than one-quarter of the nation. That number dropped below 12 percent at the end of March 2017, and to 4.2 percent in early May, the least coverage since Drought Monitor statistics were first calculated at the beginning of 2000. In the last four weeks, drought was alleviated in substantial parts of the Northeast.
http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/sdo_summary.php

SHORT TERM FORECAST

The 7 Day quantitative precipitation forecast calls for roughly .50 – 1.25 inches of precipitation: Source: National Weather Service, Weather Prediction Center
http://www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov/qpf/day1-7.shtml

RESERVOIR LEVELS

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 a below 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 an 3 to 7 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.mwcog.org/drought