

# Washington Metropolitan Region Drought and Water Supply Status and Outlook June 2009

## RECENT NEWS:

For additional information about this report contact Jim Shell at [jshell@mwkog.org](mailto:jshell@mwkog.org) or Christine Howard at [choward@mwkog.org](mailto:choward@mwkog.org)

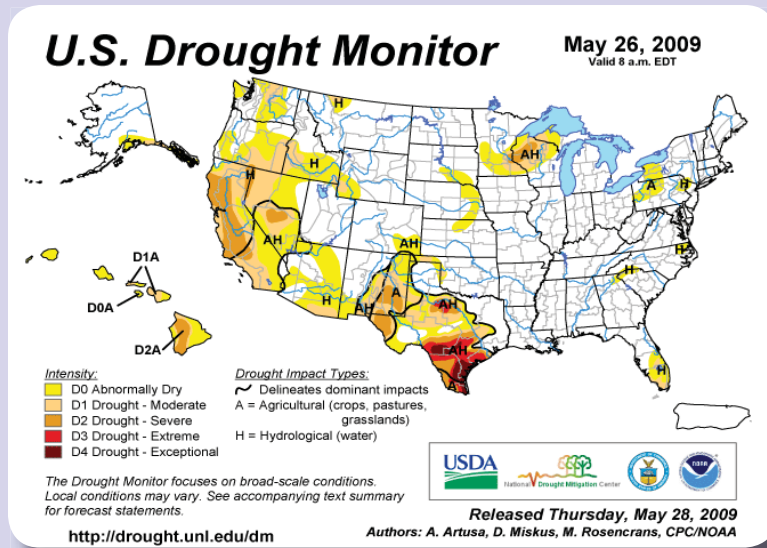
Water, Use it Wisely



## DROUGHT STAGES

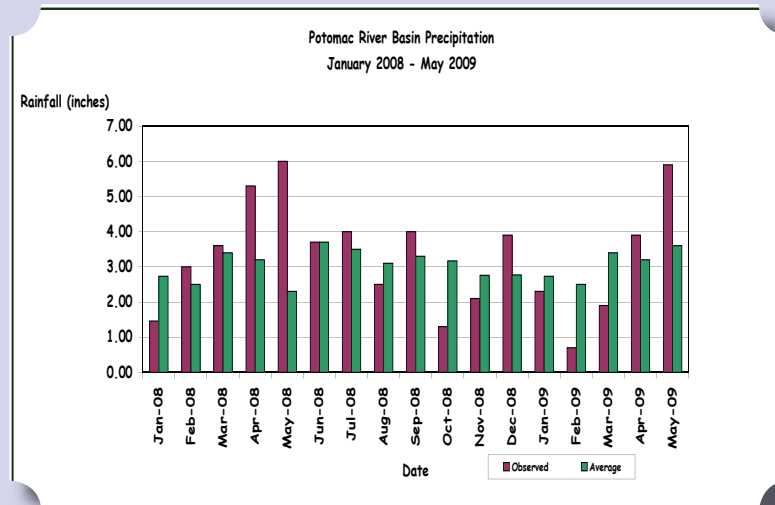
All jurisdictions are Normal except for the following:

Voluntary Water Restrictions  
Town of Hamilton, VA



## POTOMAC BASIN DROUGHT MONITOR

The Drought Monitor released on May 26, 2009, indicates that 100% of the Potomac River basin is now normal, a vast improvement from last month when 100% of the Basin was abnormally dry. As expected, above normal precipitation for the month of May improved conditions throughout the entire Basin. Regional experts will continue to monitor conditions and provide additional updates as needed.



## POTOMAC BASIN PRECIPITATION DATA - May 2009

May was a wet month - the Potomac River Basin received 6.10 inches of rain, 2.30 inches above normal for the month! Isolated areas like Reagan National Airport received over 8 inches of rain. The 2009 deficit is now only 0.73 inches below normal (from January - May 2009 we received 14.90 inches, normal is 15.43 inches).



## CURRENT BASIN CONDITIONS

Potomac Basin Drought Monitor  
100% Normal

COG Water Supply and Drought Stage  
NORMAL

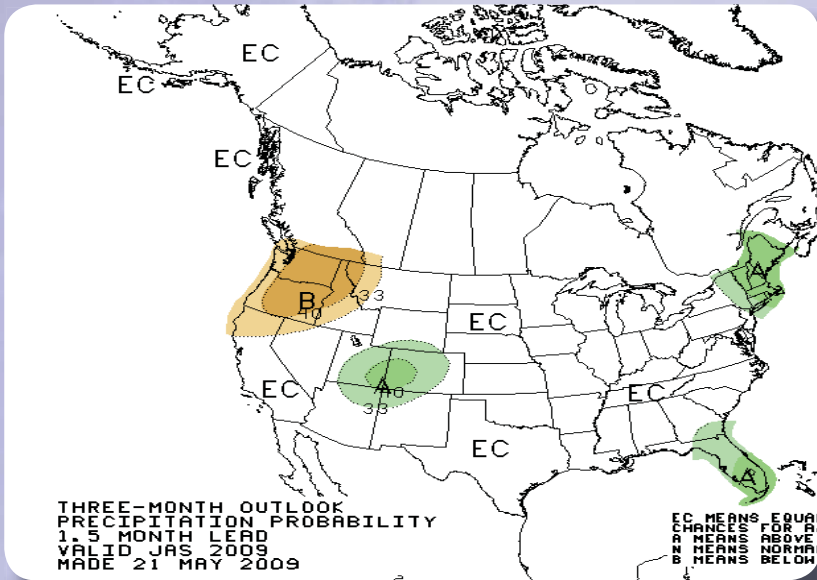
Potomac River Flow at Point of Rocks and Little Falls  
ABOVE AVERAGE

Groundwater Levels  
NORMAL AND HIGH

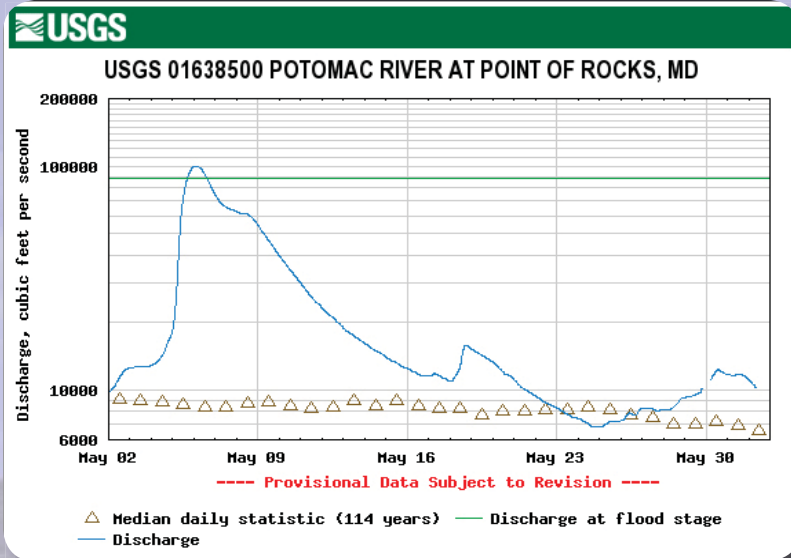
Precipitation Totals January - May 2009  
0.73 inches  
BELOW AVERAGE

Precipitation Totals May 2009  
2.30 inches  
ABOVE AVERAGE

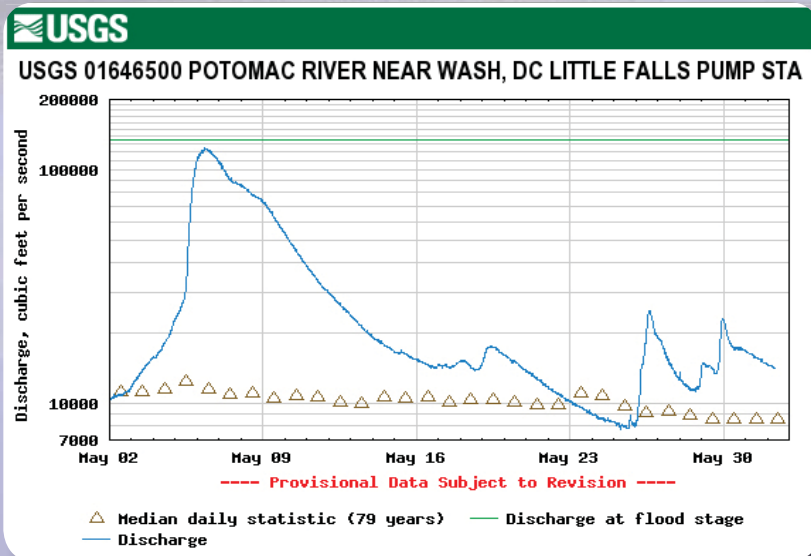
Reservoir Levels  
100% Full  
Below Normal Probability of Release



**THREE MONTH PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK**  
 The Climate Prediction Center of the National Weather Service produces three month precipitation forecasts for the United States. According to the July-August-September outlook, our region has an equal chance of above or below normal precipitation.



**POTOMAC RIVER FLOW AT POINT OF ROCKS**  
 May - June 1, 2009  
 On June 1, 2009 an instantaneous daily flow reading at Point of Rocks was 10,200 CFS or 6,589 MGD, well above the median of 6,570 CFS / 4,244 MGD.



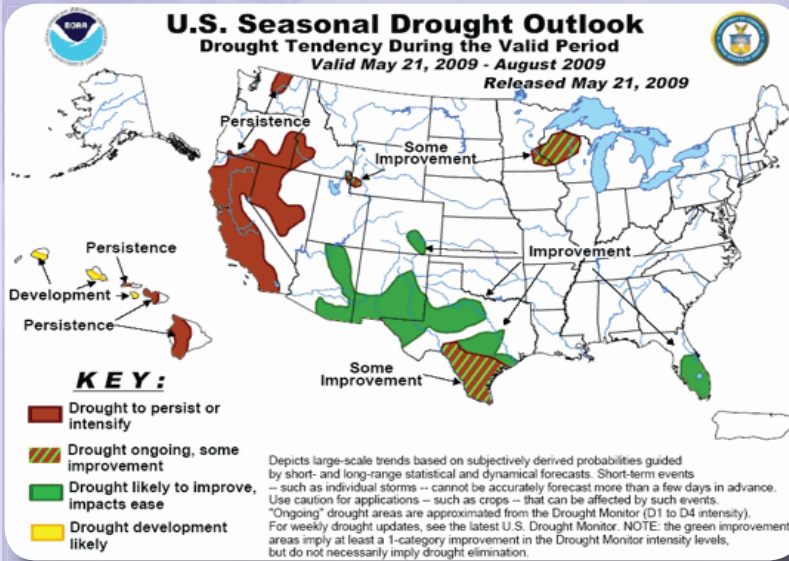
**POTOMAC RIVER FLOW AT LITTLE FALLS**  
 May - June 1, 2009  
 On June 1, 2009 an instantaneous daily flow reading at Little Falls was 14,000 CFS or 9,044 MGD, well above the median of 8,630 CFS / 5,575 MGD.

The Washington metropolitan region gets nearly 90% of its drinking water from the Potomac River. Its supply is further augmented by water from the Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca Reservoirs, the Patuxent and Occoquan rivers, Goose Creek (a Potomac Tributary), Lake Manassas (which feeds the Occoquan), and groundwater resources. Three major water supply agencies furnish about 95% of the metropolitan region's water. These are the Washington Aqueduct Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (WAD), Fairfax Water (FW) and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). A number of smaller agencies supply the remaining 5% of the water. Some parts of the region get their water through distribution agencies, which purchase water wholesale from one or more water supply agencies.

### Potomac River Cooperative System

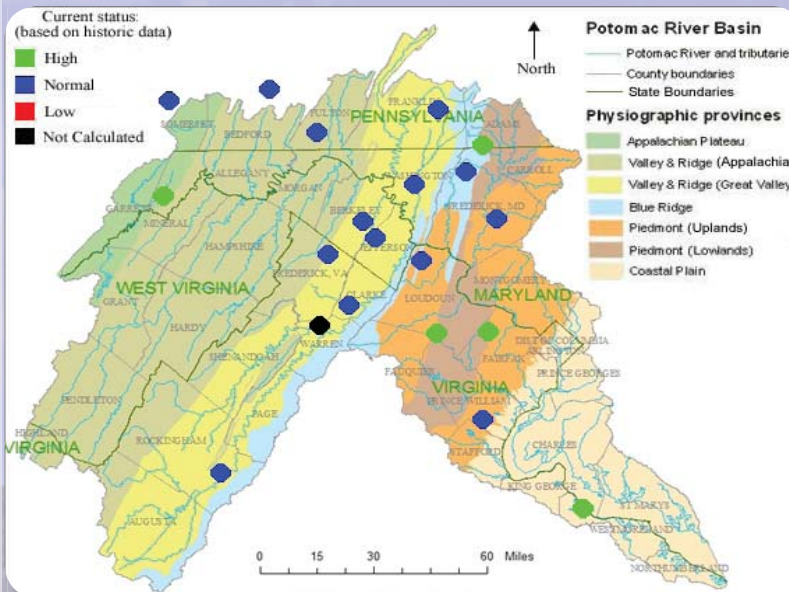
During times of drought, natural flows on the Potomac are not always sufficient to allow water withdrawals by the utilities while still maintaining a minimum flow in the river for sustaining aquatic resources. In such cases, a cooperative entity staffed by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin manages the water system as a whole. This group is known as the Section for Cooperative Water Supply Operations on the Potomac (CO-OP), and is formally associated with the three major supply agencies by the Water Supply Coordination Agreement of 1982.

The three major supply agencies have paid for water storage held in two reservoirs in the Potomac Basin, which can augment water supply during low flow conditions so that the region's water supply demands can be met without violating recommended environmental flow-by. Jennings Randolph Reservoir in the upper reaches of the Potomac River Basin stores 13 billion gallons of water allocated to water supply augmentation, but water released from the reservoir must travel for 7-9 days before reaching the Washington metropolitan region. Located in Montgomery County, Little Seneca Reservoir has 4 billion gallons of storage, which can quickly augment flow in stretches of the Potomac where the intakes for the major supply agencies are located. Go to ICPRB's website ([www.potomacriver.org](http://www.potomacriver.org)) for more information on how CO-OP manages regional water supply coordination.



### SEASONAL DROUGHT OUTLOOK May 2009

The seasonal drought outlook released on May 21, 2009 indicates that our region should not experience a drought over the next few months.



### GROUNDWATER STATUS June 2009

As of June 1, 2009 groundwater conditions throughout much of the basin have improved since last month and as a result all wells are reporting normal to high levels. Twelve of the groundwater wells monitored reported normal levels and five were high (scattered throughout the basin). Two wells outside of the basin are now reporting normal levels.

### RESERVOIR STATUS June 2009

The probability of releases this summer and fall from the Washington metropolitan area's back-up water supply reservoirs is below normal. There is a 5 to 7 percent conditional probability that Potomac flow will drop below 600- to 700-million gallons per day (MGD) at Little Falls through December 31 of this year; at these flow levels, water supply releases from Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca Reservoirs may occur. Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca Reservoirs are 100% full at this time.

Source: ICPRB