

**WATER RESOURCES BOARD
INTER-OFFICE MEMO**

To: Public Drinking Water Protection Committee
From: Beverly O'Keefe, Supervising Planner
Date: August 30, 2005
Subject: **Drought Update: Current Water Conditions**

BACKGROUND: Pursuant to State Guide Plan Element 724: The Rhode Island Drought Management Plan, the Water Resources Board is required to assess water conditions monthly. Staff has assembled climate information from a variety of sources to monitor the potential for drought conditions in Rhode Island.

The **NOAA National Weather Service (NWS)** issued a Hydrologic Outlook Statement on August 25, 2005 noting emerging drought conditions (Attachment A). The next Hydrologic Outlook Statement will be issued on Wednesday, September 14, 2005. The NWS Precipitation Report shows precipitation through July was below normal. The **NOAA Drought Severity Index** ending August 27, 2005 shows a moderate drought for Rhode Island. The **Crop Moisture Index** values for Rhode Island, period ending 20 August shows an excessively dry spell (see Attachment b). An updated report, if available, will be distributed at the meeting.

The **USGS Water Conditions Statement** reports groundwater conditions throughout Rhode Island ending July was generally **normal** (Attachment C). No new high or low ground water levels for the period of record were identified in Rhode Island. Surface water flows at the end of July 2005 were generally normal for all of Rhode Island. The Scituate Reservoir on August 24, 2005 was measured at 277.14 FEET (80.4 % of capacity).

A meeting of the Drought Steering Committee was convened on Tuesday, August 16, 2005 (Attachment D).

DISCUSSION

Water conditions for Rhode Island were generally below normal during the month of August. Anecdotally, the increase in daily temperatures through August has increased the increased demand for water prompting mandatory water restrictions (see Current Water Restrictions, <http://www.wrb.state.ri.us/wdata/waterrestr.html>).

The Drought Steering Committee meeting was well attended. Chaired by the WRB Chairman, the meeting covered committee responsibilities and actions. A second meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14, 2005, 9 a.m. in the Board Conference Room. The Board received favorable press coverage with direct website links to the Board water restrictions page.

RECOMMENDATIONS : Information only.

ATTACHMENT A: NOAA NWS Hydrologic Outlook Statement, August 25, 2005,
<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/box/fcsts/BOSESFBOX.html>

ATTACHMENT B: RI Precipitation Report July 2005
<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/box/fcsts/BOSCLIPVD.html>

NOAA NCEP Palmer Drought Severity & Crop Moisture Index - August 2005

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/regional_monitoring/palmer.gif

ATTACHMENT C: USGS Water Conditions Statement – July 2005

http://ma.water.usgs.gov/water_const/water_conditions_200507.htm

http://ma.water.usgs.gov/current_cond/cwrc_gw.htm

http://ma.water.usgs.gov/water/water_s.htm

ATTACHMENT D: Drought Steering Committee Agenda

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