

Drought News— Drought, fires gripping the Deep South October 28, 2016

Drought gripping the Deep South

Farmers in Alabama and Georgia have sold cattle for lack of grazing and hay for the winter. Water supplies were running low, with water restrictions looming if rain does not fall soon. Wildfires have become more problematic as the forests and vegetation become drier and ready to burn. Restrictions on outdoor burning were in effect from Louisiana to Alabama, and in Georgia, burn permits were not being issued.

Connecticut's first drought watch in effect

Connecticut Gov. Daniel Malloy has urged all residents to conserve water wherever possible as drought persists in the state. The request for water savings was made after the Connecticut Interagency Drought Workgroup issued the state's first drought watch for Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven and Torrington counties. A drought advisory remained in effect for New London and Windham counties.

Fire danger in eastern U.S.

Higher than normal fire danger affected drought-stricken parts of the eastern U.S., where fall is typically fire season. Officials in numerous states have warned the public to be extra careful with fires.

Vermont Drought Task Force met

Vermont residents were urged to report low water levels and dry wells to the State Drought Task Force via the ANR Drinking Water Drought Reporter. The state's dry spell prompted the assembly of the task force which met during the third week of October.

Danbury, Connecticut in water supply crisis

Danbury entered a water supply crisis and was drawing emergency reserves from Lake Kenosia. During the 30-day emergency, Danbury's Water Bureau was permitted to provide drinking water to Danbury, Bethel and Ridgefield from Lake Kenosia, but was required to follow state-imposed water conservation measures. Danbury followed Waterbury and Aquarion Water Company in being granted emergency relief from the state as drought diminished water supplies.

Roads damaged by drought in Mississippi, Alabama

Drought has left big cracks in Lowndes County's paved and gravel roads as the soil shifts when it dries. The county road manager stated that it has already cost the county about \$60,000 to repair roads in the last four to six weeks. The paving machine is used as much as possible for the fixes, but sometimes crews must patch the roads by hand.

*More road damage reported in [northern Alabama](#) and [Mississippi](#).

Lake Lanier in northern Georgia down about 8 feet

Lake Lanier Association members were warned to move their docks because the level of the lake was down eight feet, prompting the closure of 22 boat ramps. Boaters have been hitting sand and beaching their boats, not realizing how shallow the lake has become.

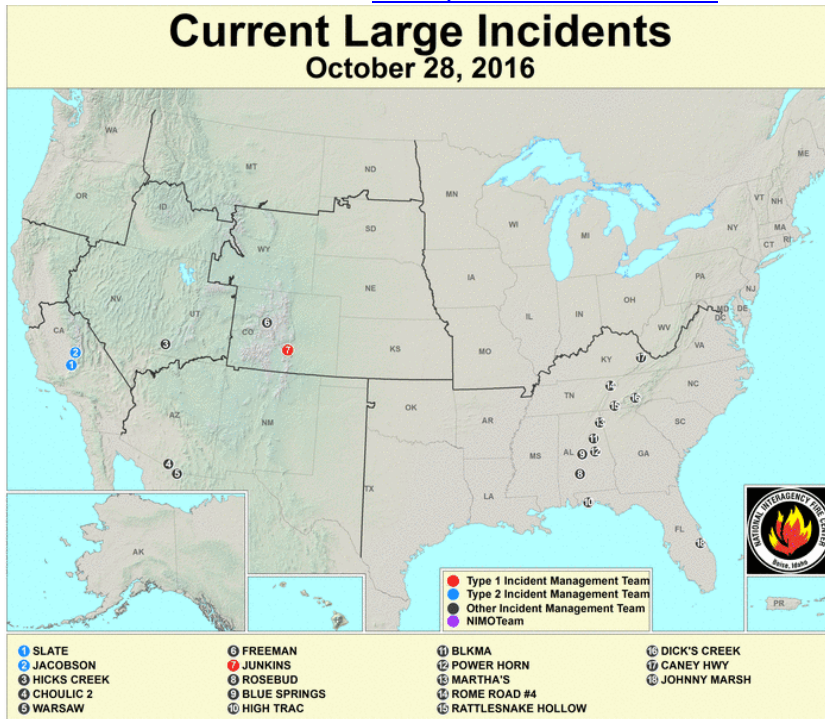
Water plant in Canton, Georgia struggling to meet demand

Residents of Canton were asked to forgo lawn watering and vehicle washing because the town's water plant cannot keep up with water demand. Canton draws its water from the Etowah River, which was running low amid drought.

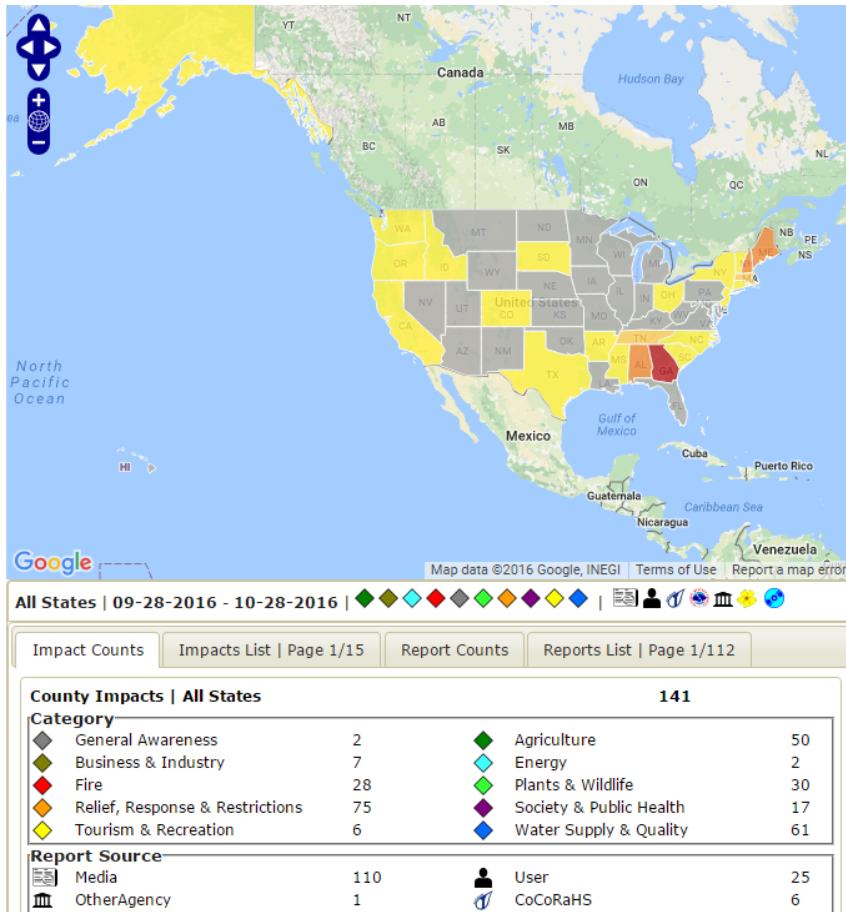
Drought returning to New Mexico

The extremely dry October that New Mexico endured will certainly bring drought conditions back into the state, determined the New Mexico Drought Monitoring Workgroup when they met on Oct. 27.

[Large wildfires](#) as shown by the Remote Sensing Applications Center continued to spark from eastern Kentucky south to the Florida panhandle. Yesterday most of the country's large wildfires were clustered in the [vicinity of eastern Tennessee](#).



The [Drought Impact Reporter](#) has 167 impacts for the last 30 days.



Agriculture

[Deep South drought kills crops, threatens herds, dries lakes](#)

Bluffton Today (S.C.)

Oct 28, **Georgia, Alabama**. Farmers in Alabama and Georgia have sold cattle for lack of grazing and hay for the winter. Water supplies were down to a trickle, with water restrictions looming if rain does not fall soon. Wildfires have become more problematic as the forests and vegetation become drier and ready to burn. Restrictions on outdoor burning were in effect from Louisiana to Alabama, and in Georgia, burn permits were not being issued.

[Farmers Feeling Effects Of Dry Fall](#)

WKDZ Radio

Oct 25, **Western Kentucky**. Winter wheat was affected by the dry weather in western Kentucky.

Fire

[Drought causes more than 900 wildfires in October with 'no end in sight'](#)

AL.com (Birmingham, Ala.)

Oct 24, **Alabama**. More than 900 wildfires charred more than 100,000 acres in Alabama in October, reported the Alabama Forestry Commission on Oct. 24. Low humidity and a lack of rain upped the fire danger, prompting Gov. Bentley to sign a Drought Emergency Declaration earlier in October. Forty-six counties in north and central Alabama were not to burn materials, while those in south Alabama were in a fire alert.

"The situation causes grave concern for fire officials with the agency struggling with reduced availability of both firefighting manpower and suppression resource," said interim State Forester Gary Cole as the state's streams and rivers began to run dry.

[Dry Fall Increases Wildfire Risk in Tennessee](#)

Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance

Oct 25, **Tennessee**. Extra caution was advised with the use of fire in Tennessee, due to the ongoing dry conditions and absence of rain in the 10-day forecast. Drought contributed to the 837 wildfires in the state that burned 20,000 acres.

[Forest fire spreads to 374 acres in Jackson County](#)

Smoky Mountain News (Waynesville, N.C.)

Oct 26, **Western North Carolina**. Severe to extreme in Jackson County has driven up the fire danger, contributing to a wildfire burning within a few hundred feet of several structures. Streams and rivers were low, while many springs were completely dry in the western part of the state.

[Foresters: Drought has increased threat of wildfires](#)

Seacoast Online (Portsmouth, N.H.)

Oct 24, **New Hampshire**. New Hampshire forestry and officials warned that drought conditions made firefighting more difficult. The public was urged to be more careful with fires and the use of power equipment.

[Wildfires burning around South as drought worsens](#)

Associated Press

Oct 27, **Southern U.S.** Wildfires in the South were charring hundreds of acres daily as the parched conditions increased the fire danger and made fires more difficult to extinguish. Wildfires burned more than 12,000 acres in Alabama in the last 30 days, amounting to about 400 acres a day.

General Awareness

[Drought conditions developing across Louisiana, Mississippi](#)

WGNO (Metairie, La.)

Oct 25, **Louisiana, Mississippi**. The weather has been unusually dry in Louisiana and along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, and looks to remain dry into November.

[NM nearly free of drought, but not for much longer](#)

ABQJournal Online (N.M.)

Oct 27, **New Mexico**. The extremely dry October that New Mexico endured will certainly bring drought conditions back into the state, determined the New Mexico Drought Monitoring Workgroup when they met on Oct. 27.

[Pacific storm brings needed rain to north, central California](#)

Orange County Register (Santa Ana, Calif.)

Oct 28, **California**. While California's drought status has improved in the north, compared to one year ago, much of the central and southern portions still need much more precipitation to emerge from drought. With a possible La Niña this fall, Southern California could see another winter of below-normal precipitation.

Just so you know.... (not necessarily drought-related)

[Carbon Dioxide in the Atmosphere Has Passed a Worrying Threshold](#)

MIT Technology Review

Oct 25. Carbon dioxide levels reached 400 parts per million on average around the world in 2015. This past September CO2 levels failed to fall below 400 ppm, and levels are expected to remain above 400 ppm for many generations.

[Chocoholics rejoice, today is your day!](#)

USA Today

Oct 28, Just give me an excuse—any excuse—to indulge in chocolate and I'm there. ☺

[Cubs, Indians World Series droughts raise stakes](#)

USA Today

Oct 24. Both the Chicago Cubs and the Cleveland Indians had their own World Series droughts, but together they have the longest combined championship drought of 174 years, according to USA Today.

Relief, Response, & Restrictions

[Malloy urges water usage limit amid first "drought watch"](#)

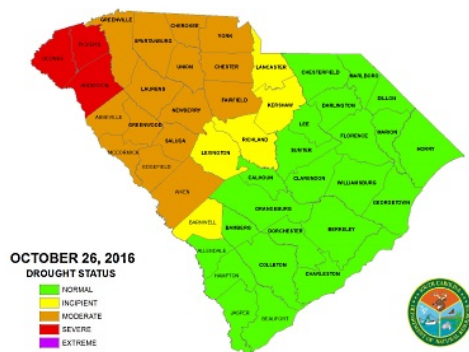
Greenwich Time (Conn.)

Oct 28, **Connecticut**. Connecticut Gov. Daniel Malloy urged all residents to conserve water wherever possible as drought persists in the state. The request for water savings was made after the Connecticut Interagency Drought Workgroup issued the state's first drought watch for Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven and Torrington counties. The voluntary conservation goal in the drought watch area is 15 percent. A drought advisory remained in effect for New London and Windham counties, along with a recommendation for voluntary conservation of 10 percent.

[S.C. Drought Response Committee updates drought statuses for counties statewide](#)

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Oct. 27, **South Carolina**. The South Carolina Drought Response Committee updated the drought statuses of all counties, assigning severe drought status to Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties and moderate status to much of western South Carolina.



Society & Public Health

[Denmark, Maine, To Hold Hearing On Water Extraction](#)

Conway Daily Sun (N.H.)

Oct 26, **Denmark, Maine**. Activists opposing the renewal of Poland Spring Bottling Co.'s water extraction permit were preparing for a public hearing on Nov. 15 in Denmark. Amid the drought, disaster designations in 16 counties from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, stressed groundwater and reduced streamflows, some people felt that Poland Spring Bottling Co. threatened Denmark's water resources by taking and selling large quantities of water while people's wells were running dry.

[Drought causing county road problems](#)

The Dispatch (Columbus, Miss.)

Oct 25, **Lowndes County, Mississippi**. Drought has left big cracks in Lowndes County's paved and gravel roads as the soil shifts when it dries. The county road manager stated that it has already cost the county about \$60,000 to repair roads in the last four to six weeks. The paving machine is used as much as possible for the fixes, but sometimes crews must patch the roads by hand.

*More road damage reported in [northern Alabama](#) and [Mississippi](#).

Tourism & Recreation

[As Lake Lanier levels drop, other concerns rise](#)

Gainesville Times (Ga.)

Oct 23, **Lake Lanier, Georgia**. Lake Lanier Association members were warned to move their docks because the level of the lake was down eight feet. Twenty-two boat ramps on the lake were closed, due to low water.

*Thanks to Natalie Umphlett of the High Plains Regional Climate Center for this article that she found while checking her hometown news.

[Drought causing Lake Lanier to drop significantly](#)

WGCL-TV CBS 46 (Atlanta)

Oct 24, **Lake Lanier, Georgia**. Boaters on Lake Lanier have been hitting sand and beaching their boats, not realizing how shallow the lake has become.

[Drought warning begins to affect NJ fall recreation](#)

News 12 New Jersey (Edison)

Oct 27, **Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey**. Boaters were not sailing on Lake Hopatcong because drought dropped the water level by about 1 ½ feet, leaving boat owners worried about damaging their vessels in shallow water. Meanwhile, lakeside businesses were losing money with fewer visitors to the lake.

Water Supply & Quality

[Alabama streams, rivers drying up due to extreme drought](#)

AL.com (Birmingham, Ala.)

Oct 23, **Alabama**. Patton Creek and the Little River in northeastern Alabama were dry, as were the falls in Little River Canyon. The Locust Fork, one of the main tributaries of the Black Warrior River, consisted of a series of puddles rather than a flowing river along some of its stretches. Less freshwater was flowing into Mobile Bay, which may hurt the bay's oysters.

[Drought plunges Danbury into water supply crisis; city gets state permission to draw on emergency reserves](#)

The News-Times (Danbury, Conn.)

Oct 25, **Danbury, Connecticut.** Danbury entered a water supply crisis and was drawing emergency reserves from Lake Kenosia, according to the Connecticut Department of Health. During the 30-day emergency, Danbury's Water Bureau was permitted to provide drinking water to Danbury, Bethel and Ridgefield from Lake Kenosia, but was required to follow state-imposed water conservation measures. Danbury followed Waterbury and Aquarion Water Company in being granted emergency relief from the state as drought diminished water supplies.

[Georgia city asks residents to stop outdoor watering](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Ga.)

Oct 24, **Northern Georgia.** Residents of Canton were asked to forgo lawn watering and vehicle washing because the town's water plant cannot keep up with water demand. Canton draws its water from the Etowah River, which was running low amid drought.

[New York City mindful of low water levels in upstate reservoirs, but no drought advisories planned](#)

The Daily Freeman (Kingston, N.Y.)

Oct 27, **New York.** Although New York City's upstate reservoirs were down to about 63 percent of capacity, there was no drought alert planned for the area.

[Phase II water restrictions](#)

Cullman Sense (Ala.)

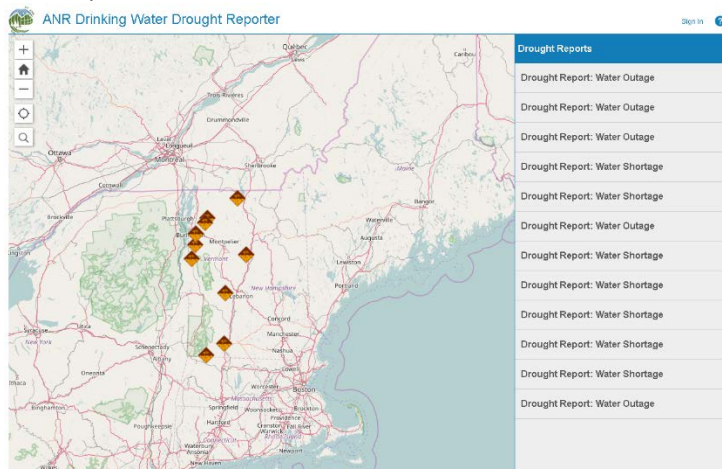
Oct 27, **Cullman, Alabama.** Cullman entered phase II of its water conservation plan because Lake Catoma was 15 feet below full pool. Water conservation was recommended for all customers.

[State asks residents to report low or dry wells](#)

The Manchester Journal (Vt.)

Oct 25, **Vermont.** Vermont residents were urged to report low water levels and dry wells to the State Drought Task Force via the ANR Drinking Water Drought Reporter at <https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/droughtreporter/>. The state's dry spell prompted the assembly of the task force which met during the third week of October.

The [ANR Drinking Water Drought Reporter](#) offers a nice map where water shortages/outages have been reported. Click on the right-hand side for more info about the locations marked on the map.



[Tennessee American Water Asks Suck Creek Customers To Voluntarily Conserve Non-essential Water Usage](#)

Chattanooga.com

Oct 25, **Tennessee**. Well capacity at the Suck Creek water plant was reduced, due to extreme drought. The Suck Creek wells provide about two-thirds of the water for roughly 250 customers in Suck Creek in Marion County.

[Vershire scrambles for water amid drought](#)

MyNBC 5 (Plattsburgh, NY)

Oct 25, **Vershire, Vermont**. Many wells have run dry in Vershire, a small town of 629 or so people, where neighbors were helping each other as they awaited an end to the drought.

International

[Crop losses in southern Madagascar mean severe hunger likely to persist into 2017](#)

ReliefWeb

Oct 27, **Madagascar**. Drought continued to hamper crops in southern Madagascar, leaving nearly 850,000 people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The maize crop was down by 80 percent this year and was poor in 2015, too.

[Drought Threatens Production in World's Biggest Tea Exporter](#)

Bloomberg

Oct 26, **Kenya**. Tea and coffee production in Kenya were expected to fall below expectation as drought damaged the crops. If La Niña materializes, it would likely lead to dryness, in place of the heavy rainfall that El Niño brought.

[Eight million in East Africa face starvation as drought eats into low food reserves](#)

ReliefWeb

Oct 26, **East Africa**. A poor harvest in Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and Burundi has left more than 8 million people looking at starvation as the region's food reserves become depleted.

[Severe southern African drought to worsen: UN](#)

Yahoo! Finance

Oct 28, **Southern Africa**. The United Nations expects drought to continue to intensify in southern Africa and peak in January 2017, according to Macharia Kamau, special envoy on El Nino and climate. About 18 million people in the southern African region have been affected by the drought, with the hardest-hit countries being Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho and southern Madagascar.