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State of Maine Drought Task Force Report on Current Hydrologic Conditions, August 4, 2016

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**State of Maine
Drought Task Force
Report on Current Hydrologic Conditions
August 4, 2016**

Overview:

The Drought Task Force convened Thursday, August 4, 2016 for the first time since 2002 in response to the dry weather that has led to below average ground and surface water levels across Maine. Factors such as stream flow, groundwater levels, reservoir levels, soil moisture, and weather forecasts are being monitored closely. This report summarizes the information presented on current hydrologic and drought conditions as of this date.

Current Hydrologic Conditions:***Stream Flows***

Current stream flows vary statewide, though they trend below normal. Stream flows are normal to below normal in the northern portion of Maine, while stream flows in the southern portion of Maine are below normal to much below normal. Low stream flows are a result of the very low snow pack that occurred in this past winter/spring.

The United States Geologic Survey maintains real time groundwater and surface level water information.

Water Watch: waterwatch.usgs.gov

Ground Water Watch: groundwaterwatch.usgs.gov

Ground Water

Groundwater levels vary significantly statewide. Groundwater levels in northern and eastern Maine trend normal to below normal, and ground water levels in the southern portion of Maine trend much below normal to low. Conditions worsen from north to south. However, unlike stream flow data, there is not a long accurate history of groundwater levels.

Headwater Storage Levels:

Reservoir storages in the headwaters are below their long term averages. Sebago Lake, the largest water supplier in Maine, currently has water levels 6 inches below the long term average for August 1.

Weather Outlook:

For the next two weeks, there is a fair chance that precipitation will be above normal. There is an equal percent chance that precipitation levels will be above or below normal in the one month and three-month outlooks. There is a La Nina watch into the winter, which would bring colder and drier temperatures into the winter months, which are a crucial time for ground water recharge to occur.

There are no strong indicators of weather trends beyond this time frame. All interests should monitor both weather forecasts and hydrologic factors as conditions progress.

Drought Outlook:

Currently portions of 15 counties in Maine are abnormally dry and portions of 10 counties are experiencing moderate drought, according to the United States Drought Mitigation Center. Conditions are expected to persist in the southern coastal region of Maine through

For up to date information on the drought status and outlook check out the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center.

www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

October, according to the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center.

Conclusion:

The current conditions information in this report represents a “snapshot” of conditions throughout the state as of August 4, 2016. This report provides information on the preliminary effects of the drought and more monitoring must be done to assess potential impacts if the situation worsens. Many new factors will influence drought potential in Maine as the season progresses. These factors will be monitored, and the Drought Task Force will convene monthly to monitor the situation until warning indicators subside.

The Maine Drought Task Force is composed of representatives from major river basin management operations, utility operators as well as state agencies and federal agencies. The Task Force is convened when necessary based on drought threat.

Commission members will stay in close communication until the dry conditions subside. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) provides real time ground and surface water level data and the U.S. Drought Monitor Program provides weekly drought outlooks.

Information Resources:

For additional information on particular aspects of this report, please contact:

Bruce Fitzgerald/Thomas Redstone , Maine Emergency Management Agency	Flood preparedness and mitigation	207-624-4400
Bob Lent/Nick Stasulis , USGS	Stream flow	207-622-8201
Tom Hawley/John Jensenius , National Weather Service, Gray, Maine	Drought potential for central and southern Maine	207-688-3216
Maureen Hastings/Rich Okulski , National Weather Service, Caribou, Maine	Drought potential for northern and eastern Maine	207-492-0180
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