

2019 Massachusetts Drought Management Plan – Final Draft

What's Changed?

MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

and

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

September 12, 2019

History of the Drought Plan

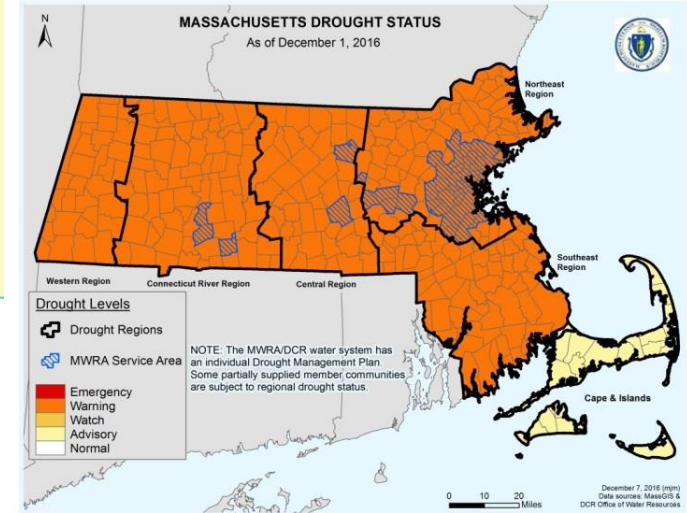
- Originally developed in early 2000s as a result of drought, late 1990s–early 2000s
- Ad-hoc Drought Management Task Force set up by the WRC made recommendations to Secretary
- First DMP developed in 2001 as working document
- Minor Updates in 2013
- Major changes and updates following 2016–2017 Drought

WRC Meetings on Drought Plan

- February 2019: Draft Plan Presented to WRC
- Public comment period extended to March 15 to allow additional review of Appendix D
- March 2019: Summary of comments presented
- September 2019: Summary of changes in response to comments and Final DMP presented

The Plan

1. Introduction
2. Authority & Coordination
3. Drought Assessment & Determination
4. Process of Determining Drought Status
5. Drought Communication
6. Summary of Responsibilities by State Agency
7. Drought Preparedness & Response Actions of State Agencies
8. Drought Preparedness & Response Actions – Guidance for Communities
9. Post-Drought Actions
10. Drought & Emergency Declarations: Legal Powers



Highlights of Comments Received

Overall

- broad support, vastly improved

1: Introduction

- Keep climate discussions, add impervious impacts
- Add RPAs

2: Authority & Coordination

- Environmental representative and hydrologist on Task Force
- Clarify Drought Mission Group responsibility
- Clarify DPH and DPU roles in preparedness & response

3: Drought Assessment & Determination

- Nomenclature: broad agreement, request to change “mild” to “moderate”
- Question Brookline changing regions
- Concern about ability to make declaration for portion of a region
- Concern about best professional judgement clause for index severity

Highlights of Comments Received, cont.

4: Process of Determining Drought Status

- Clarify whether/how specific indices may be considered for end of drought

5: Drought Communication

- positive reaction to the new communications section
- Add RPAs, MMA
- Send Hydro Conditions to all

6: Summary of Responsibilities by State Agencies

- request to compile local bylaws
- request reporting all outdoor water-use restrictions

Highlights of Comments Received, cont.

7: Drought Preparedness & Response: State Agencies

- Timeline of data used; update of plan should coordinate with State's Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Support for outdoor watering restrictions; clarify application
- Alternative outdoor restrictions proposed
- Foster development of new water, support system reliability

8: Drought Preparedness & Response: Local Guidance

- Section is helpful; all towns should have a drought plan
- Concern about downstream releases during drought

Appendices

- Add guidance for MWRA customers
- Add more information on lakes & impoundments & groundwater

Brief Summary of Proposed Changes

2: Authority and Coordination

- Added Mass Rivers Alliance and Northeast River Forecast Center
- Mission Group “monitors” impacts & coordinates vs. “assess”

3: Drought Assessment & Determination

- Kept “mild” drought level, vs. “moderate”
- Brookline back in its drought region (Northeast), not its county
- Kept declaration option for portion of a region
- Clarified index severity will not be adjusted from its calculated value

Brief Summary of Proposed Changes, cont.

4: Process of Determining Drought Status

- Clarified that deliberation considers which phase of drought is occurring, most relevant indices and severity. Not based on majority of indices
- Precip and groundwater remains prioritized for end of drought

5: Drought Communication

- Added section on communicating with the media

6: Summary of Responsibilities by State Agencies

- Clarified responsibilities for MassDEP, DFW, and DPH
- Added tracking of outdoor water-use restrictions by MassDEP

Brief Summary of Proposed Changes, cont.

7: Drought Preparedness & Response: State Agencies

- Kept outdoor watering restrictions, clarified application
- Drought level 4 – added all agencies work to establish & enable emergency water supply connections

8: Drought Preparedness & Response: Local Guidance

- Added local or regional supplier drought plans initiate actions based on their system capacities, in addition to regional indices
- Stayed silent on downstream releases during drought because not applicable to this plan; should be case by case

Next Steps

- Revise and Automate Index Calculations and Maps
- Develop Drought Dashboard
- Prioritize and Assign Implementation Actions

- QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?