



Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
Presentation to Drought Management Task Force
August 5, 2021



Ipswich River, North Reading (Haverhill Street)

7/23/21

- Watershed reached near records for month of July (records kept since 1938).
- Flows dropping, but still above normal for time of year.
- High turbidity observed at this site.

Photo: Ipswich River Watershed Association





Fish Brook, Mill Road, Boxford (Ipswich Watershed)

July 23, 2021

- Both sites near or bank-full and flowing.
- Fish Brook discharge 19 cfs.





Sudbury, Assabet, Concord



■ OARS:

- “I don't have any photos to share, but anecdotally, the rivers are all relatively full and flowing well. They are well down from the flood levels we saw the last few weeks, but still plenty of water.”



Hop Brook, Sudbury, Peakham Road (Sudbury watershed)

Hop Brook Protection Association



- Staff gage at 2'5"
- Normally 6", ranging to a 1 foot after a rainstorm.
- 4-6X higher than normal for this time of year
- In this range for most of July



Merrimack



- Merrimack River Watershed Council/Groundwork Lawrence:
 - “The Merrimack is flowing at a little more than 5 times its typical flow for this time of year. It's at roughly 13,000 cubic feet per second at Lowell, whereas in a typical year it's about 2,400 cubic feet per second. There is a huge quantity of water flowing downstream due to all the recent rain. So instead of drought concerns, we have CSO concerns -- during July we had 10 days of CSO events on the Merrimack, which is a record number in recent years. For 20 of July's 31 days, the Merrimack was technically unsafe to swim in. Not good!”
 - “The Merrimack River in Lawrence and Haverhill is the highest I've seen it this time of year. It's at spring levels or higher. I don't have comparative photos, it's what I see every day from my office and home.”



Merrimack (photos from River Merrimack)

August 4, 2021



August 9, 2020





Connecticut



■ Connecticut River Conservancy:

- “Though we had a very dry spring, out here in western MA, we had 11-16 inches of rain in July alone so we are having the opposite set of problems – washouts, flooding, waterlogged crops, too many mosquitoes, etc! And CSOs! Sewage notification can’t come soon enough. River levels are currently way above seasonal norms.”



Scituate Reservoir (North and South Rivers watershed)

- Chart N&S created for Scituate water managers projecting when they'll need to go into a water ban and cut off streamflow
- Darker lines show 2016 and 2020, lighter lines 2019 and 2021.
- Not projecting need for a water ban or cutting off streamflow.

