State of Maine
Drought Task Force
Report on Current Drought Conditions
September 4, 2025

Drought conditions have worsened across the southern two-thirds of the state from June to September 2025. This report serves to inform Drought Task Force members and the public of current drought conditions, reservoir levels, precipitation, temperature forecasts, drinking water impacts, wildfire risk, environmental and agricultural impacts, and the online resources used to monitor these conditions.

Overview

- The **U.S. Drought Monitor** reports 24% of the state is Abnormally Dry (D0), 10% is in Moderate Drought (D1), and 53% is in Severe Drought (D2) by area.
- An estimated 87% of Maine's population resides in drought-stricken regions.
- Conditions are not expected to improve within the extended 8-14 day and fall outlook forecasts.
- National Weather Service categorizes this as a flash drought, with persistent lack of rainfall through July and August leading to rapid expansion of impacted areas in Maine.
- Though some streamflows have seen an improvement this week due to recent rains, the majority of streamgages report below to much below normal discharge for this time of year.
- Non-irrigated farms in central and southern Maine are seeing impacts including a poor second hay crop and reduced berry and potato yields.
- Wildfire occurrence is above average and there is concern with the dry fall forecast, Maine Forest Service notes that some of the most destructive wildfires in Maine have occurred in fall.

***Access Drought Task Force reports here*: www.maine.gov/mema/hazards/drought-task-force**. This report summarizes information presented by Task Force members on current hydrologic and drought conditions as of this date. Task Force partners will report any drought-related impacts for which they are notified.

U.S. Drought Monitor Brief

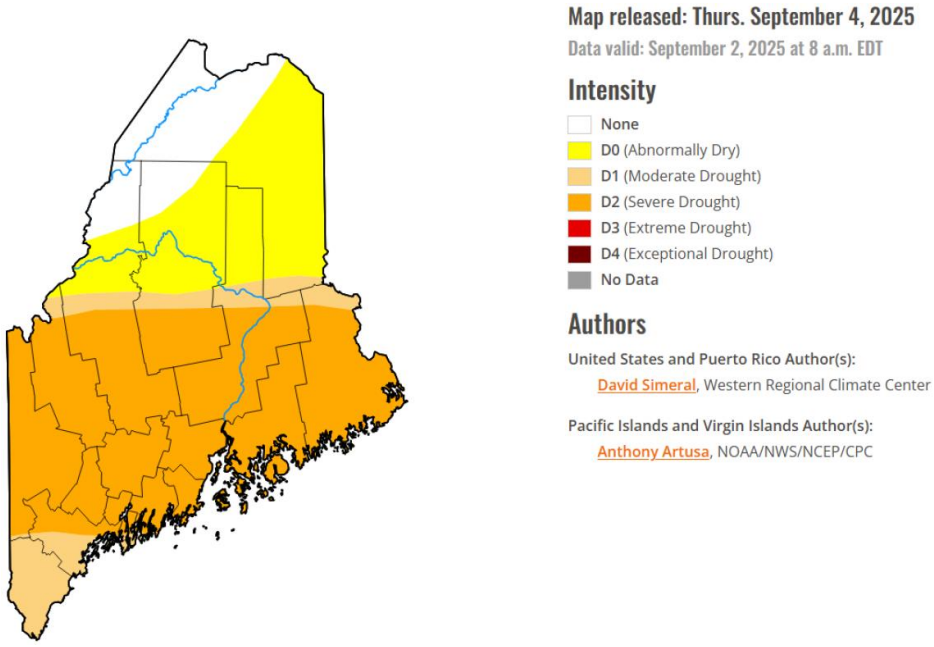


Figure 1: U.S. Drought Monitor: https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu;

The US Drought Monitor is a tool sustained by the National Weather Service with the data/modeling support services of the Environmental Prediction Center and the Climate Prediction Center (all housed

under NOAA). The US Drought Monitor is a tool that offers an overview of broad scale conditions across every state and territory in the US, with categories of drought and their corresponding historically impacts laid out from D0 (abnormally dry) to D4 (exceptional drought). This map is updated weekly, every Thursday morning with the latest conditions exemplified on the screen. This map and the associated statistics are what USGS and the state of Maine reference in determining if thresholds for the activation of the Drought Task Force have been met.

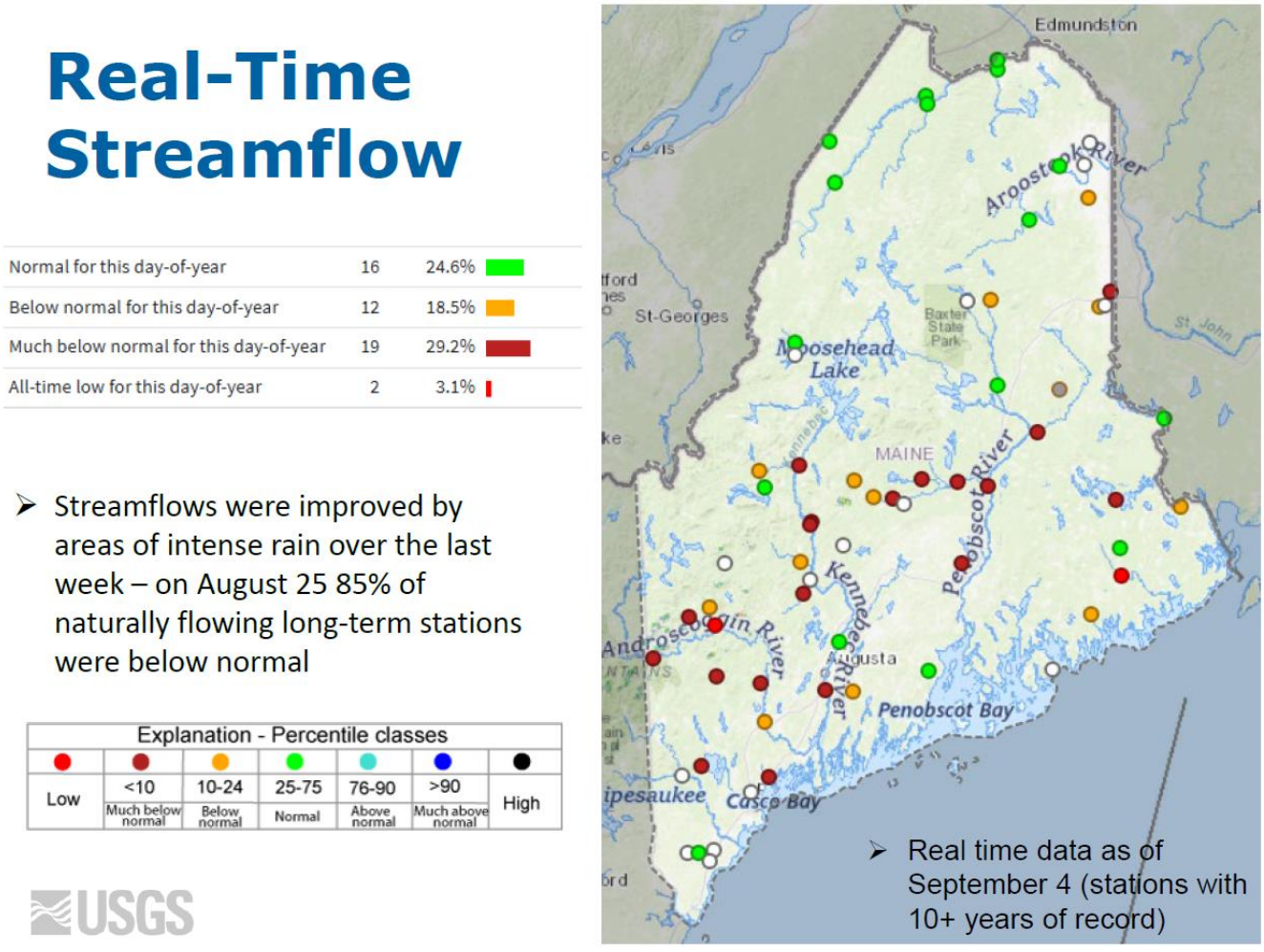
Maine experienced a rapid onset of drought through July and into August with many drought impacts apparent by early August. MEMA and USGS determined that the increased drought impact reports and rapid increase in Drought Monitor D1 and D2 areas met the “Warning” trigger level of the State’s Incident Annex, requiring activation of the Drought Task Force. The Drought Task Force ensures unified situational awareness and messaging across all members.

Current Hydrologic Conditions

Stream Flows

Most sites started showing impacts from the current drought in mid-August. Conditions near the end of August saw a majority of monitored streamflows below normal for this time of the year. There was a small period of recharge at the start of September for some locations due to localized rainfall. The spring 2025 runoff peak occurred earlier than usual, and spring rains kept discharge at or above normal earlier in the year, but an absence of rainfall in July and August contributed to a widespread drop in streamflows in the southern two-thirds of the state.

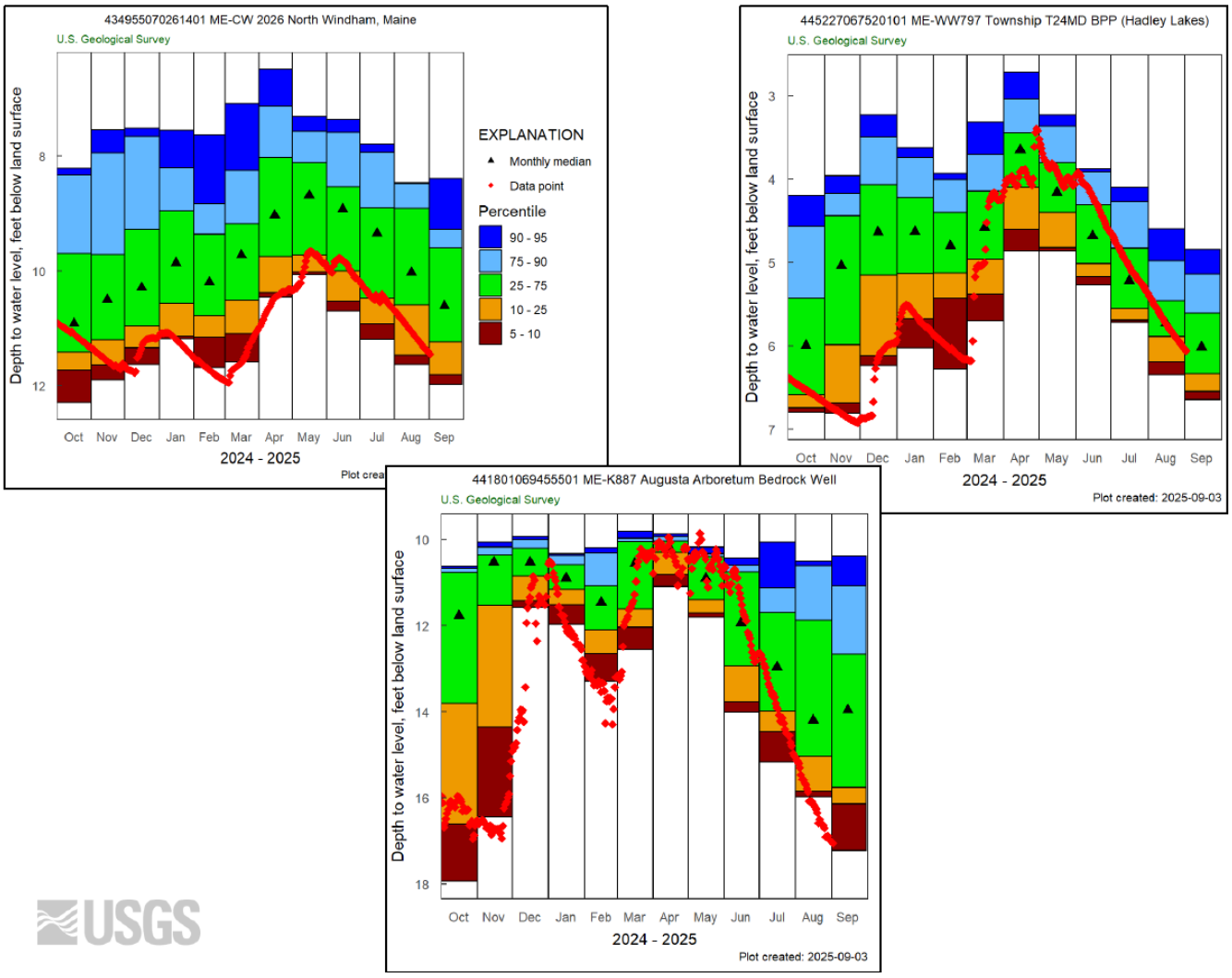
Northern Maine streamflows are normal, but conditions degrade as you move south. Recent rains improved these conditions, but 7-day averages rank in the lowest 10 in the period of record for several long-term stations



Ground Water

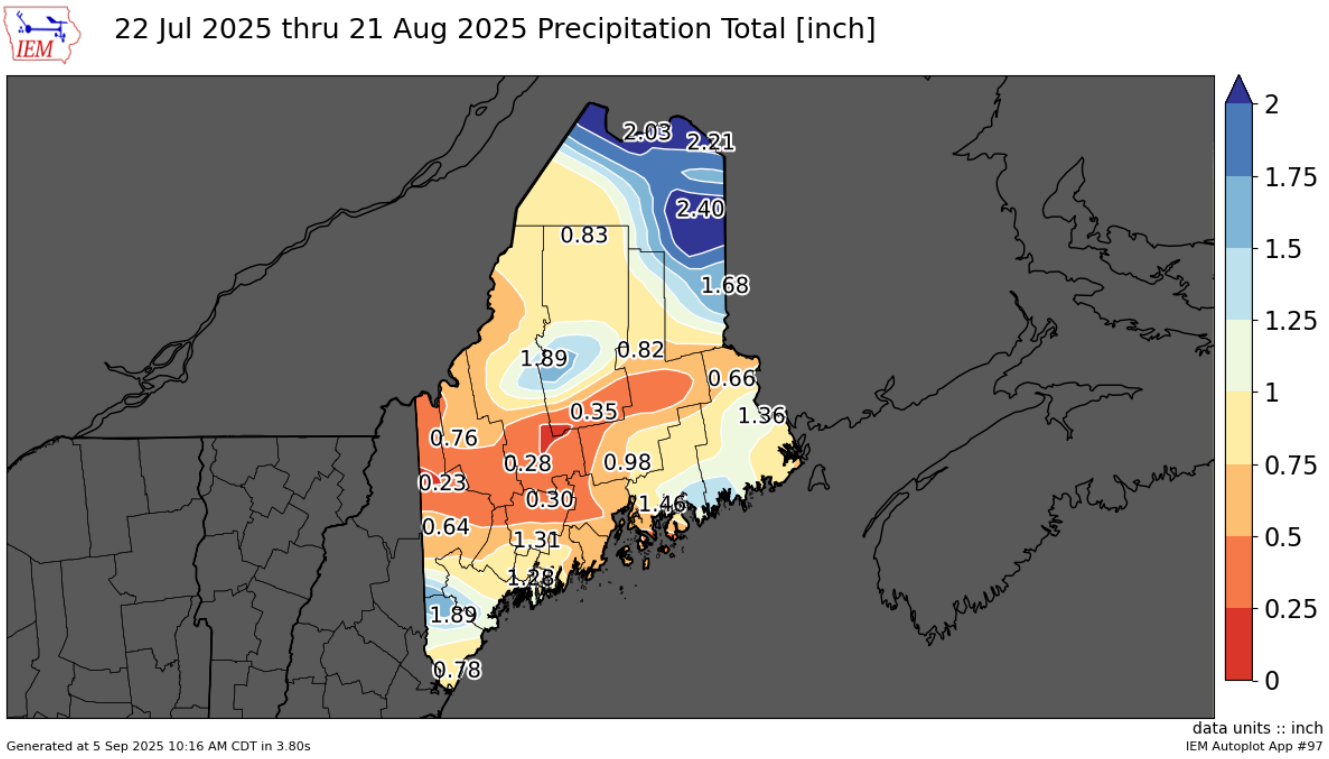
Many stations showed apparent improvement in September due to a change in the monthly statistic. September tends to have lower GW levels than August. The period of record in Maine is 30-40 years for many wells.

While some wells have struggled to recover from last fall's drought, others improved this spring. Conditions are variable statewide, but many wells will trend below normal for September, a month when groundwater levels are at their lowest.



Weather Review and Outlook

Summary: Rapid onset drought developed across Maine due to negligible rainfall coinciding during a period of excessive heat from late July through mid August. Once established, growing rainfall deficits led to further drought expansion across the state heading into the fall season. The drought can be directly connected to a 30-day period of time between late July and mid August when temperatures warmed into the mid to upper 90s over in a half dozen unique events, yet much of the state received less than an inch of rainfall. The evaporation during this period of time was measured at the National Weather Service Office at Caribou over 5.00",and estimated to be high in southern Maine.



Summer Overview:

Maine summers are normally characterized by rainfall variability caused by the hit and miss nature of shower activity. Coastal areas typically average 6-10” of rainfall, Inland 8-12”, and locally higher in the mountains. Summer of 2025 fell well shy of these values for all but northern Maine, with most of the state receiving less than half of normal rainfall. For central and southern Maine, it was one of the top 10 driest summers, and the 3rd driest summer in Bangor and 6th driest in Portland. Overall temperatures were only slightly above average for the season (June, July, and August saw +1-2 F more than normal).

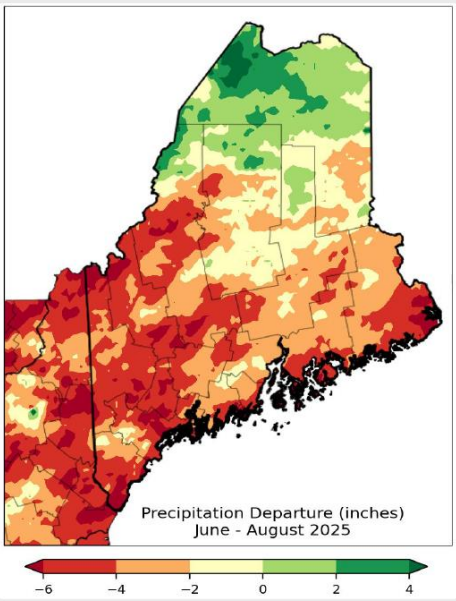
Snowmelt and wet conditions in May helped alleviate drought conditions lingering from the fall, and saturating soil moisture levels for green-up. Rainfall in June was below normal for much of the state (~50-75%), but residual soil moisture from May kept drought at bay. Rainfall in July ranged from above normal in north Maine with 7”, to well-below normal in the south with only 1”. The southern half of the state experienced 25-50% of normal precipitation.

August was *exceptionally dry* with 25-50% of normal precipitation. Much of the state received less than 2” rainfall. Meanwhile temperatures were well above normal for the first 3 weeks of August. An unusually high evaporative demand can lead to moisture stress on the land surface, and ultimately to drought—even if precipitation had been near-normal.

Rainfall Deficits ending Aug 31 2025

August 28, 2025
11:43 AM EDT

Station	30 Day Deficit	60 Day Deficit	90 Day Deficit
Caribou	-0.24	-0.19	-4.59
Houlton	-1.94	-1.43	-2.47
Millinocket	–0.51	–2.72	-4.37
Bangor	–1.26	–3.52	–4.59
Portland	-2.97	-3.74	-5.63
Rangeley	-2.40	-3.42	-4.63

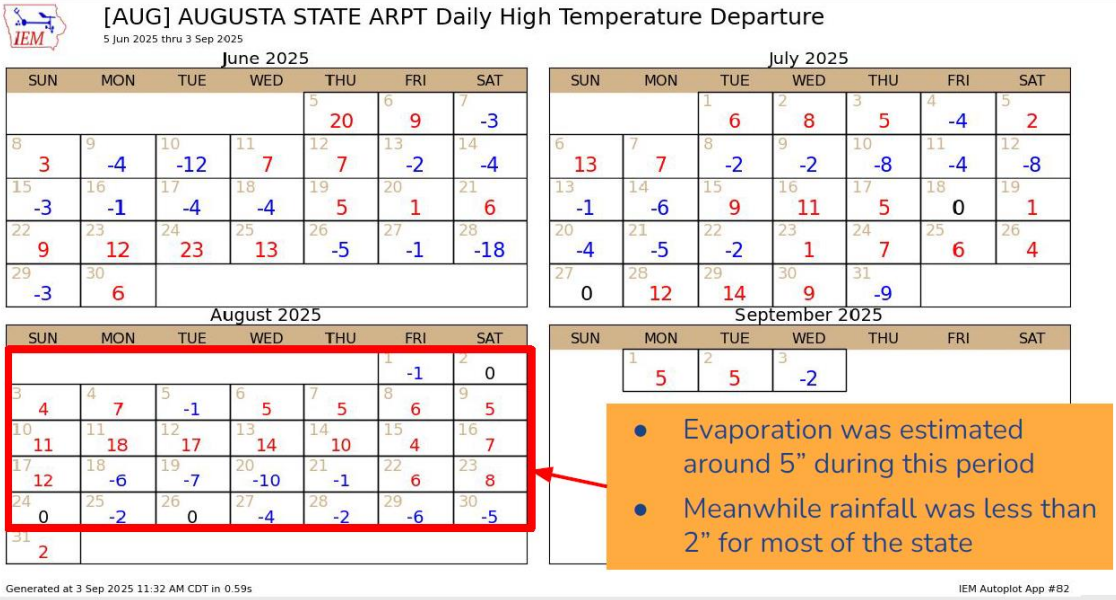


National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Gray-Portland, ME

Daily Temperature Departures- Augusta

August 28, 2025
11:43 AM EDT



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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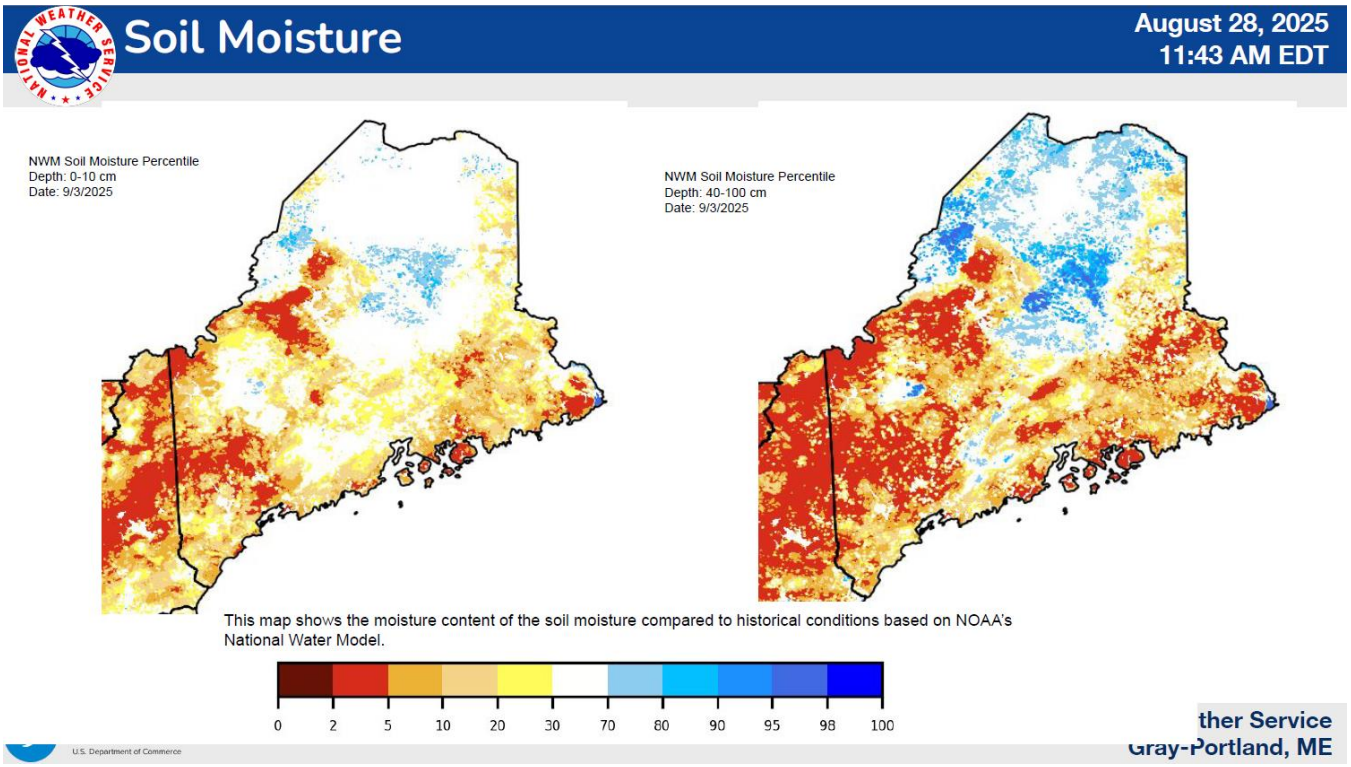
National Weather Service
Gray-Portland, ME

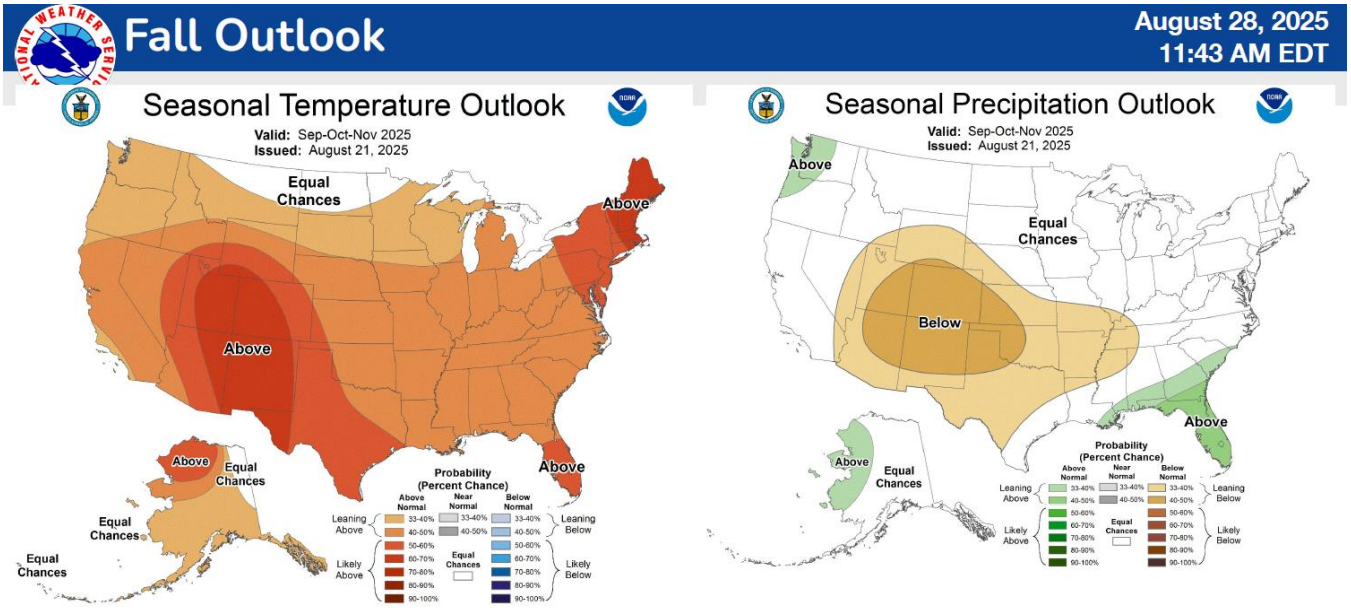
Climate Prediction Center Soil Moisture Products show rapidly drying topsoils resulting in deteriorating pasture conditions and increased watering needs for gardens and young trees. The drought is expected to have negative consequences for crop yields (see ag sector impacts below).



One week outlook: The 7 day forecast calls for a few light showers early Friday, followed by more widespread showers and thunderstorms Saturday afternoon. *High pressure is expected to bring another extended dry spell for next week*.

Two week outlook: A broad area of low pressure is expected to dominate most of the country in September, bringing colder temperatures. This fall-like pattern will limit evaporation but bring little drought relief. These conditions are expected to persist through mid-September.

Fall Seasonal Outlook: The Climate Prediction Center outlook for Fall (September, October, November) indicates strong signals favoring above normal temperatures but does not show any strong climate signals for precipitation. *There will be limited opportunities for rain events*.



Headwater Storage Levels

- **Presumpscot River** – Sebago Lake's Water Quality Certification requires a target water level range of 262.0-266.65 feet, and the lake currently reads at 263.92 feet. Total outflow from Sebago Lake is 365 cfs with 125 cfs allocated to the bypass reach.

- **Androscoggin River** – storage is 70.4% full, 5.2% below the long-term average. Rangeley Lake is down 1.18 feet with an outflow of 20 cfs; Mooselookmeguntic is down 3.65 feet with an outflow of 500 cfs; Richardson is down 5.81 feet with an outflow of 400 cfs; Azizcohos is down 9.04 feet with an outflow of 600 cfs; and Errol is down 2.54 feet with an outflow of 1000 cfs. River flows remain stable while discharging 1,200 cfs at Gorham, 1,300 cfs at Rumford, and 1,250 cfs at Auburn.

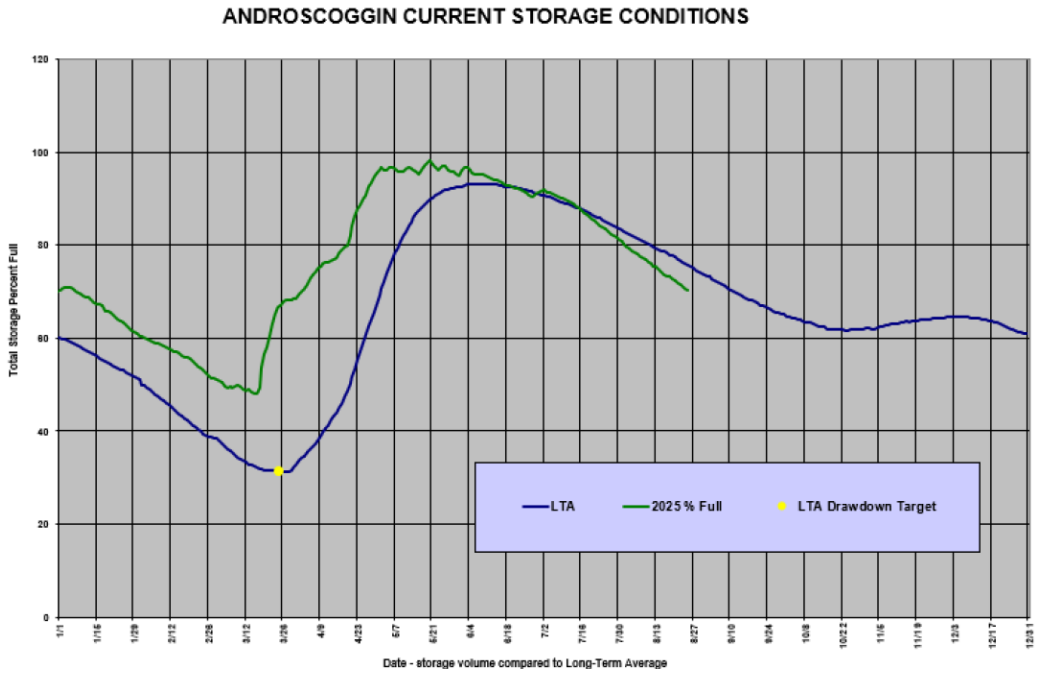
- **Kennebec River** – Kennebec River Storage is 10.5% below the long term average. Kennebec River Storage is 78.1% full, 0% below the long-term average. River flow at Solon is set at 1,300 cfs, Madison is at 1,400 cfs, and Weston is at 1,500 cfs. Brassua Lake is down 4.55 feet and has an outflow of 250 cfs. Moosehead Lake is down 1.62 feet and has an outflow of 1,000 cfs. Flagstaff Lake is down 2.91 feet and has an outflow of 300 cfs

- **Penobscot River** – Storage is 72.2% full, which is 2.3% below the long-term average.

- **Union River** – Storage is 47.7% full, which is 7.9% below the long-term average.

- **St. Croix River** – East Grand Lake is 55.82% full, outflow is 78.4 cfs; West Grand is 62.26% full, outflow is 133 cfs; Grand Falls is 53.4% full, outflow is 605 cfs; and Vanceboro is 62.3% full and outflow is 605 cfs. Operators are struggling to maintain minimum flow requirements at the dams while also maintaining lake level requirements. Operations are being geared towards maintaining stable levels across the board.

- **Overview** – Many complaints of low water levels coming from waterfront property owners. Most dam operators are experiencing difficulties maintaining minimum flow and water level requirements.



Drought Impact Sectors

Public Water Suppliers
The Maine CDC Drinking Water Program (DWP) is reporting relatively few drought-related water quantity and quality issues despite the fact that most of the state is experiencing moderate drought conditions or worse, including in highly populated areas. Public Water Systems (PWSs) have made capital improvements over time to improve drought resilience, which have contributed to the ability to more easily ride out drought conditions. The DWP has recently been notified of drought-related water quantity challenges to operations across Cumberland, Oxford, and Somerset Counties. Specifically, the South Berwick Water District issued a mandatory conservation order on August 11, 2025, which is still in effect. The Stonington Water Company issued a mandatory conservation order on July 22, 2025, through August 31, 2025, and hauled in bulk water to help meet demand.

Private Well Owners
MEMA reports as of 8/30/2025, there were 22 Dry Wells reported in 11 Counties. There were no dry wells reported in Aroostook, Lincoln, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Sagadahoc. Kennebec and Oxford Counties reported 4, and Knox 3. The remaining three counties reported 2, and five reported 1. All reports indicated residential with some agricultural impacts. Dry Well Depths range from as deep as 240 feet to 12 feet from the surface.

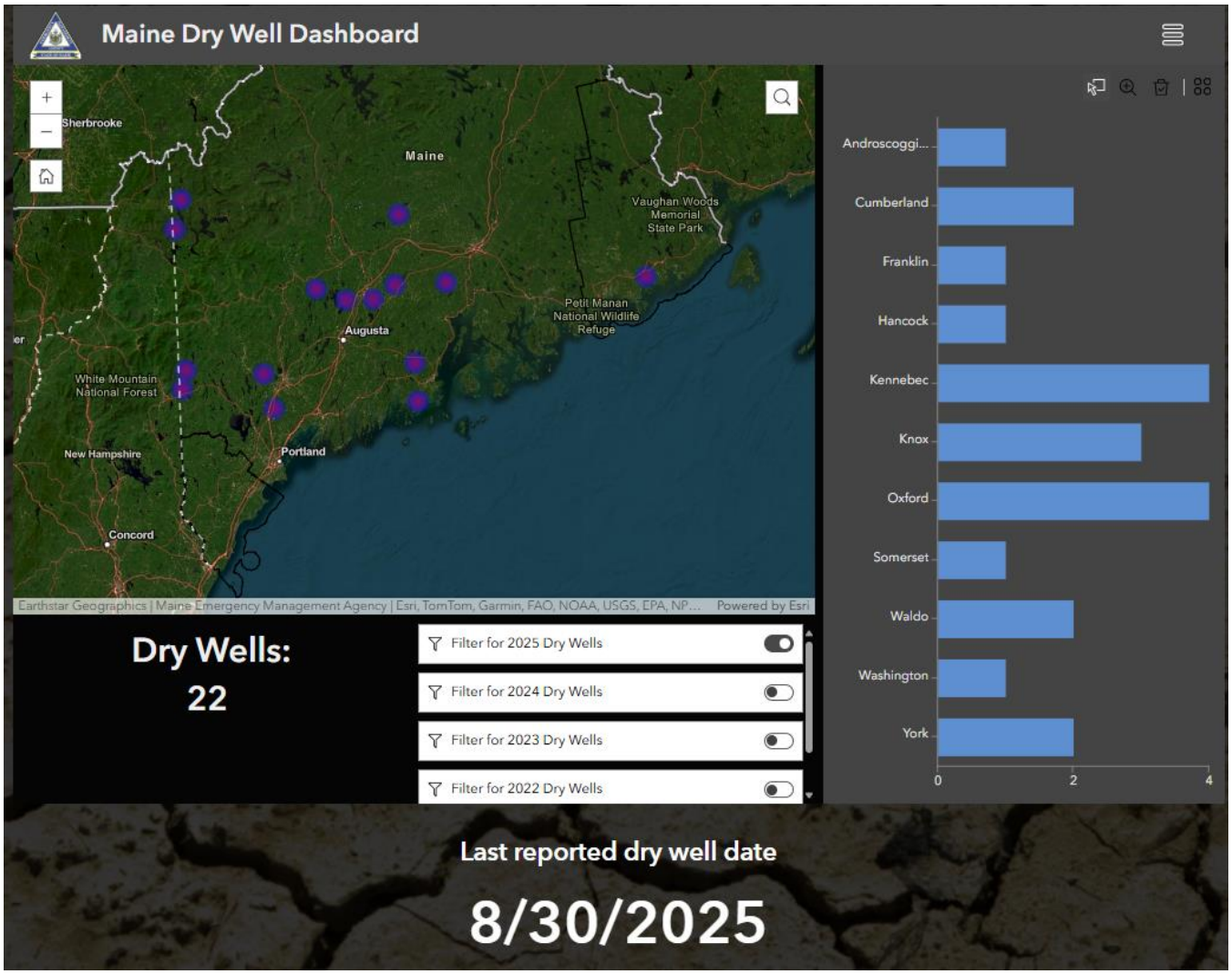
The Drinking Water Program Private Well Coordinator offers technical assistance to private well owners and refers them to MEMA's Dry Well Survey. The DWP Private Well Coordinator has not noted an increased volume of calls pertaining to dry wells. However, the DWP has been notified of private wells with apparent water quality issues, possibly related to drought.

Poland Springs has reported several calls related to residential wells running dry.

Maine homeowners with dry wells are encouraged to report this information to the Dry Well Survey and review assistance programs: **https://maine-dry-well-survey-maine.hub.arcgis.com/**.

MEMA has activated 211 Maine to assist with capturing dry well information. Their call service has referred to the dry well survey 6 times since July 25*th*. The last time referred was on 8/29. Mainers can dial 211 or 1-877-463-6207, or they can text a Maine zip code to 898-211 for assistance with filling out this survey.

For low income homeowners requiring assistance with dry private wells (including drilling a well deeper, drilling a new well, laying pipes to the home, associated labor costs, etc.) please refer to the **USDA Single Family Housing Repair Program** or the **Maine State Housing Authority Home Repair Program**.



Agricultural Conditions

Maine's economy sees approximately $900M in market value of agricultural products sold on a yearly basis. Around 445K acres are dedicated to cropland but only 33K are irrigated, indicating a large amount of vulnerability during drought conditions.

Conditions have been quite variable early in spring and summer with late starts for some seedings and early crop impacts to berries. Current yields are expected to drop based on persistent drought, at least for operations lacking irrigation. Crops typically require about 1" of water per week and this has not happened during June through August. Second hay crops show poor quality or are nonexistent in some locations which will impact the need to purchase hay, potentially driving prices and availability over winter. Growers for other shoulder season crops such as sweet corn cannot keep up with water needs. Northern Maine potato crops look reasonably healthy and have not seen as many drought impacts. Potatoes require late-summer water to bulk up and improve quality and profitability.

Maine Legislature passed the Farmers Drought Relief Fund, a program providing financial and technical assistance to farmers for water management planning, ag well drilling, and farm pond installation. DACF has awarded $75K devoted to ten farms for water needs planning, $194K for well drilling at ten farms, and $163K invested for water storage ponds at four farms. The Farmers Drought Relief Fund is intended for use by Maine farms of all sizes, but primarily those with over $10,000 in annual sales. The DACF commissioner may approve exceptions in some cases.
DACF has also updated and redistributed the Maine Irrigation Guide in collaboration with the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District. The original Guide was completed in collaboration with Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District. An on-line copy of the Maine

Irrigation Guide is available at https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/resources/water-management/docs/maine-irrigation-guide-2024.pdf

Farmers should also contact their local USDA Farm Service Center to review possible federal sources of technical and financial assistance. USDA is keeping track of counties impacted by drought conditions as certain assistance programs may be issued through Secretarial Disaster Designation after an 8-week period of D2 conditions or any instance of D3 conditions. Emergency Assistance Programs include assistance for drought-related damages to livestock (LFP, LIP), croplands (NAP, TAP), and well service (ECP).

- USDA - Disaster Assistance Programs: https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery
- USDA offices: https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/USDA-service-centers
- FSA Service Center Locator: USDA FSA Service Center Locator
- Stay Connected to USDA FSA: Signup for Email and Text Alerts

Environmental Conditions

DEP's Northern Maine Regional Office has been monitoring irrigation and river flows. While irrigation is currently happening, little impacts are being seen, and no calls or concerns are coming to the Department.

Wildfire Conditions

For the month of August, Maine Forest Service (MFS) had shut down burn permit systems in drought-stricken areas. This fire season has seen a high proportion of wildfires caused by debris and open burning, recreation, and equipment and vehicle use. Thunderstorm activity in early August led to some natural lightning strikes causing wildfires in a number of remote areas. MFS has increased ranger staffing and canceled time to keep up with anticipated wildfire response needs across most of Maine in the month of August. Task forces, including ranger, fire engine, and water tanker teams are stationed across Maine. The MFS helicopter team is positioned for quick response. The MFS incident management team held daily briefings with National Weather Service and partners and is ready to manage wildfire response efforts.

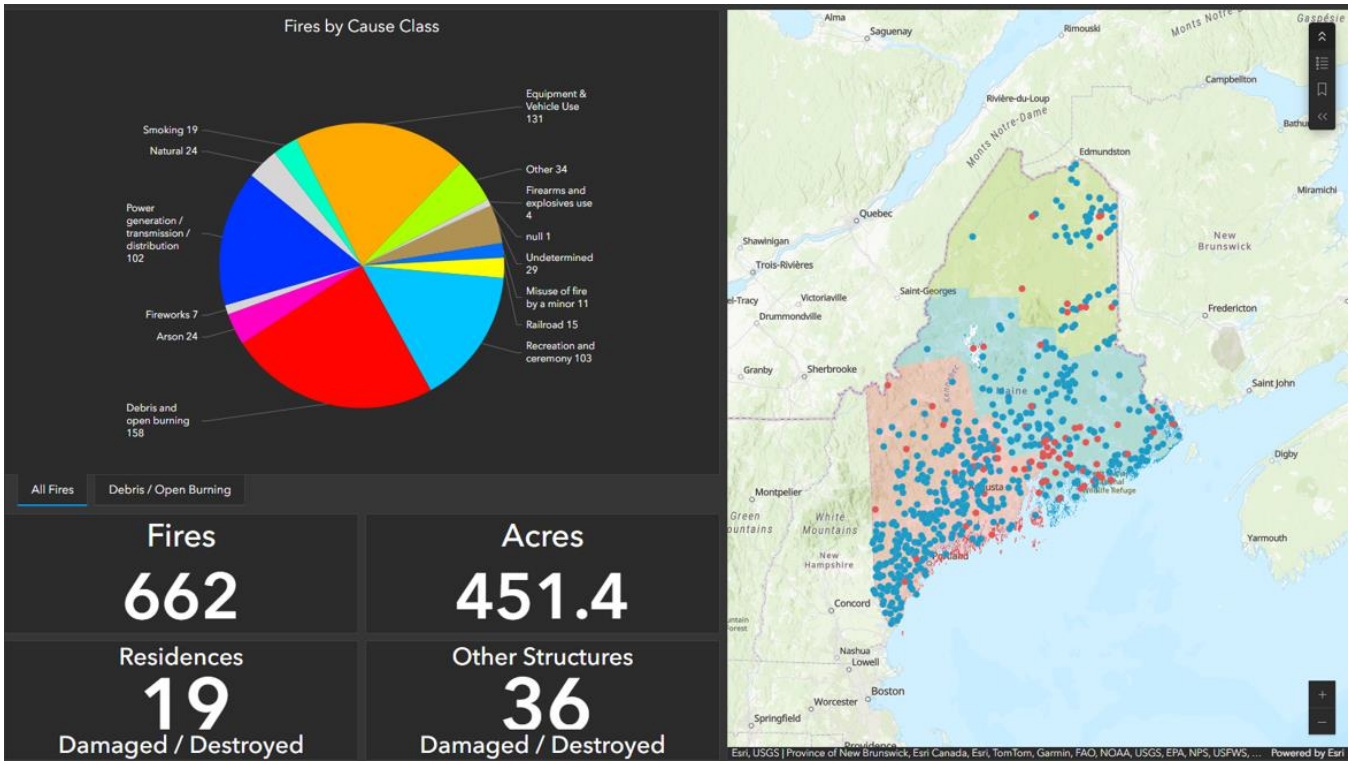
Technology such as NASA heat signature and lightning detection maps are being used to improve responsiveness. MFS has reached out to landowners to determine their availability to assist with response with the availability of relevant equipment. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has sent an additional fire engine and crew to support wildfire response as well as on tribal lands. The Northeast Compact partners communicate on a weekly basis to gauge the need and availability of additional resources. MFS has reached out to Quebec Province to determine the availability of Canadair CL-215 and CL-415 "scooper" planes capable of delivering water for fire suppression.

Current conditions up to this point are comparable to conditions during the historic 1947 wildfires season in Maine. If on going dryness, premature loss of foliage from drought-stressed trees, and the potential for early frosts may lead to an active fall wildfire season. This in itself does not cause wildfires. If a wildfire occurs due to an ignition source, the dry conditions will increase difficulty of suppression efforts. With the recent rainfall, fine fuels (i.e., kindling) have become less available to burn, thus lowering probabilities of ignition. However, with the continued effects of seasonal drought on heavier, ground fuels, wildfires that do get established may burn persistently and require greater efforts to control and suppress. Under these conditions, higher intensity ignition sources such as unextinguished campfires and lightning strikes, may increase the chances of wildfire occurrence.

Comparison to previous years:

- 2025: 662 wildfires as of 9/4/2025 burning a total of 451 acres. 227 wildfires have burned in August alone, burning a total of 106 acres.
- 2024: 652 wildfires fires burning 296 acres for the year
- 2023: 496 wildfires for the year.
- 2022: 624 wildfires for the year.

- 2021: 650 wildfires for the year.
- 2020: 1,154 wildfires for the year. Record high wildfire occurrence. Maine experienced drought conditions during this year. More people were at home due to COVID utilizing wildland fire to work around the home.



Please visit the Maine Forest Service Wildfire Danger Report https://mainefireweather.org/ Posted everyday during the fire season after 0900 hours. The Maine Forest Service works with the National Weather Service in posting Elevated Wildfire Danger and Red Flag Day Watch/Warnings

Please visit the Maine Forest Service Maine Burn Permit System for burning permit https://apps1.web.maine.gov/burnpermit/public/index.html or contact your Town Warden/Fire Chief for current burning conditions.

Please contact your local ranger for wildfire conditions. https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_protection/offices.html.

Hazard Mitigation Grants

Nothing reported. Hazard Mitigation grant questions can be directed to the Acting State Hazard Mitigation Officer at HMAgrant@maine.gov.

Drought News

- Drought Task Force held a meeting to discuss drought during the summer, and what it means for fall | Local News | foxbangor.com
- Severe drought rapidly expands across Maine
- Drought conditions could dull Maine's fall foliage this year
- Maine's intensifying drought couldn't come at a worse time for potato growers - The County
- Drought increases across Maine as river levels drop

About this Report

Current information represents a “snapshot” of conditions throughout the state for the date of reporting. 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. These conditions will be monitored, and the Drought Task Force will monitor the situation until warning indicators subside.

Information Resources

Please refer to these sources for more information on current water conditions:

- Maine Drought Task Force website, with links to other reports and drought monitoring resources: https://www.maine.gov/mema/hazards/drought-task-force
- Drought.gov site for the State of Maine: https://www.drought.gov/states/maine
- Northeast DEWS: http://nedews.nrcc.cornell.edu/
- National Integrated Drought Information System: https://www.drought.gov/current-conditions
- U.S. Drought Monitor: https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?ME
- Well monitor data: https://newengland.water.usgs.gov/web_app/GWW/GWW.html
- Streamflow data: https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/?m=real&r=me
- Streamflow data aggregated by watershed: https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/index.php?m=dryw&r=me
- Maine Cooperative Snow Survey: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mgs/hazards/snow_survey/
- NWS Gray short- and long-term forecasts: https://forecast.weather.gov/product.php?site=NWS&issuedby=GYX&product=AFD&format=CI&version=1&glossary=1&highlight=off
- NWS Caribou short- and long-term forecasts: https://forecast.weather.gov/product.php?site=NWS&issuedby=CAR&product=AFD&format=CI&version=1&glossary=1&highlight=off
- USDA farm assistance and loan programs: https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/drought
- CoCoRaHS local volunteer weather condition monitoring: https://www.cocorahs.org/maps/conditionmonitoring/index.html

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Tommy Higgins, USDA Farm Service Agency, Maine State Office	USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation updates	sherry.hamel@usda.gov
George Harris, Regional Forest Ranger, Maine Forest Service	Wildfire conditions	George.harris@maine.gov
Nathan Robbins, Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection	Environmental conditions	Nathan.p.robbins@maine.gov
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Crystal Stiles, National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)	Regional/National drought conditions	crystal.stiles@noaa.gov