

## Shutesbury Drought Notice

As many residents are likely aware, much of New England is currently experiencing varying degrees of drought conditions. According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), our region is experiencing a severe drought due to above average temperatures and below average rainfall for much of 2016. March 1 through September 6 rainfall at Amherst was at 56% of normal (the third driest total for this period on record). Many regional towns with municipal water supplies have instituted mandatory water restrictions. While Shutesbury relies on private wells, residents should be aware of the current drought conditions and their potential to persist into the fall. Residents are encouraged to practice water saving measures and recognize that our individual wells draw from a common groundwater source. As a result, during periods of reduced groundwater storage it is possible for high water consumption from an individual well to affect the water supply at neighboring wells.

The Town's shallow monitoring well located behind town hall has recently gone dry as a consequence of the drought conditions, however water levels in the deep monitoring wells installed around Town are currently at similar levels to those experienced at this time last year – a positive sign for the resiliency of our regional groundwater supply to short-term drought. Nonetheless residents, especially those with shallow or dug wells, should be cautious about their water consumption and aware of signs that wells may be drying out

Warning signs that a well might be drying out include:

- Lots of air in the system (sputtering at the faucet)
- Frequent pump cycling and/or longer run times
- Reduced water pressure or slow recovery
- Cloudy/murky water, odd taste or odor
- The neighbor's wells are having problems
- Running out of water

Note: most new pumps have shut-offs to prevent “burning-out” a pump if a well runs dry, however, frequent pump cycles and turbid water associated with a dry well can cause premature wear and should be avoided. If you suspect your well is going dry you should get it evaluated by a well specialist and avoid using it.

Potential water saving measures include: cutting back on outdoor use (e.g. lawn watering, washing automobiles, filling pools), or limiting laundry, toilet flushing, and bathing. Timing water use to spread out your water demand over the entire day may also help.

Links:

[Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Drought Declaration of July 6, 2016](#)

[Water Conservation Tips](#)

[Northeast Regional Climate Center Drought Impacts and Outlook](#)

[UMass Extension Drought Information and Resources](#)

Shutesbury Water Resources Committee  
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