

Virginia Drought Update

Created by:
Virginia Drought Monitoring Task Force (DMTF)

For more information, visit
www.deq.virginia.gov/water/water-quantity/drought

For the assessment period ending
May 18, 2026

Main Takeaway

Drought conditions persist throughout the Commonwealth. The period of October 2025 – April 2026 is the second driest on record. Declining streamflow and groundwater levels show evidence of severe hydrologic drought. Most reservoirs remain full, but declines at Smith Mountain Lake have triggered conservation protocols. Much drier than normal soils, and lack of precipitation present agricultural producers with challenges such as reduced crop yield.

This Week's Summary

Precipitation totals were generally near 0.75-inches (near normal) across the Commonwealth. Extreme drought (D3) conditions expanded through a portion of south-western portions of the State.

Next Week's Outlook

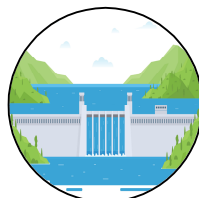
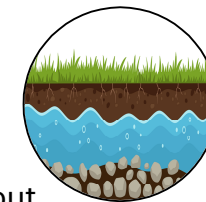
Warmer than normal temperatures and dry conditions expected early in the week. Cooler temperatures and rain forecasted for later in the week, with near normal precipitation totals of 0.5 – 1 inch forecasted for much of the Commonwealth, and higher totals up to 1.4 inches around Roanoke.



Recent 30-day precipitation totals were approximately 50% of normal statewide, with most of the Commonwealth receiving between 1 – 2-inches of rain. Most of the State measured between a six-to-10-inch precipitation deficit since October 1, 2025, with the greatest deficits in central and south-central areas of the State.

[U.S. Drought Monitor \(USDM\)](#)

Groundwater levels in the Commonwealth generally experienced moderate decline. Well levels remain much below normal throughout northern areas, along the Blue Ridge Mountains, and around Roanoke.



The Smith Mountain Lake reservoir indicator was in warning status. All other major water supply reservoir indicators were in normal status.

Streamflow levels declined, with much below normal levels observed throughout the State.

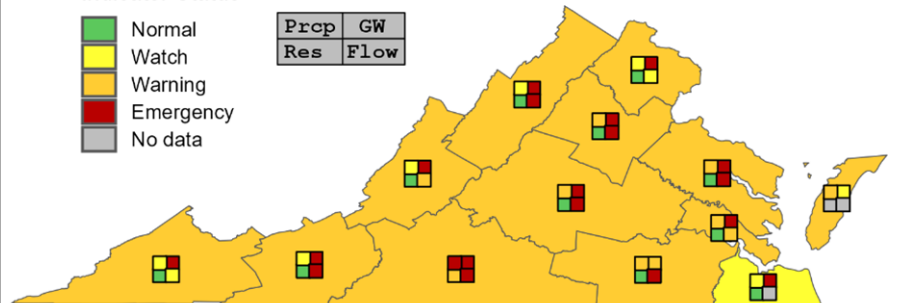


DMTF Drought Region Status

Indicator Status

- Normal
- Watch
- Warning
- Emergency
- No data

Prp	GW
Res	Flow



Precipitation from 2026-05-17

Updated: 2026-05-18

Statewide Coverage by Category (USDM)

Category	Current Coverage	Change Since Last Week
DO: Abnormally Dry	0.00%	0.00%
D1: Moderate Drought	2.61%	0.00%
D2: Severe Drought	71.49%	-8.33%
D3: Extreme Drought	25.90%	+8.33%
D4: Exceptional Drought	0.00%	0.00%