



Drought Response Fact Sheet - March 2018

KWO conducts water planning, policy coordination, water marketing and facilitates public input throughout the state.

Drought response is common in Kansas. While normal precipitation in eastern Kansas is much greater than in the west, the entire state is subject to drought. In recent years significant advances have been made in drought monitoring and forecasting. Intergovernmental coordination of drought response including development of state response plans has also received greater emphasis.

Drought Monitoring

The KWO website, www.kwo.ks.gov has current information on drought conditions in Kansas, including county drought stage designations declared by the Governor and the Kansas Drought Report.

For more info call KWO at 785-296-3185.

The Kansas Water Office (KWO) is responsible for monitoring drought and notifying the Governor when drought conditions exist within the state. This monitoring relies upon information collected and compiled by several state and federal agencies including the Kansas Department of Agriculture, the Kansas State University Weather Data Library and the Applied Remote Sensing Program at the University of Kansas.

No single index defines drought for all circumstances, so multiple indices are used. Kansas monitors precipitation, stream flow, reservoir levels and soil, crop and vegetation conditions while considering the tools such as the U.S. Drought Monitor and the Seasonal Drought Outlook prepared by the National Weather Service to judge drought status.

Governor's Drought Response Team

Coordination of drought response activities in Kansas is accomplished through the Governor's Drought Response Team which has been in place since the 1980's. The Director of the KWO serves as the committee chair and advises the Governor when to assemble this team, which represents 11 state and federal agencies

Kansas Drought Response Process

- Kansas Water Office monitors state drought conditions
- Director of KWO calls Drought Response Team meeting when conditions indicate drought
- Drought Response Team reviews conditions
- Drought Response Team recommends drought stages and counties
- Director of KWO makes recommendation to Governor
- Governor Issues Declaration
- Declaration in effect until rescinded or superseded
- KWO monitors state conditions, coordinates with agencies as well as seeks input on federal drought status
- Repeat cycle

Drought Stages

Watch: Impacts include some damage to crops and pastures, high rangeland fire danger and a growing threat of public water supply shortages. The Governor is notified and the Governor's Drought Response Team assembled. Open outdoor burning bans may be imposed. Public water systems may ask for voluntary water use restrictions.

Warning: Crop and pasture losses are likely with some stock water shortages and very high rangeland fire danger. Public water supply shortages may be present and some streamflow targets may not be met. Public water systems may impose mandatory water use restrictions. Urgent Kansas Water Marketing Program surplus water supply contracts can be authorized for municipal and industrial users. The Governor may request emergency haying and grazing authorization for Conservation Reserve program acres.

Emergency: Widespread major crop and pasture losses are accompanied by stock water shortages and extreme rangeland fire danger. Severe public water supply shortages are widespread with many streamflow targets not met. The Governor may declare an outdoor burning ban. Public water systems may impose additional mandatory water use restrictions. Emergency Kansas Water Marketing Program surplus water supply contracts can be authorized for municipal and industrial users. Emergency water withdrawals from Corps of Engineers reservoirs and state fishing lakes can be authorized. Corps of Engineers emergency water assistance to municipalities is available if needed. The Governor may request a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for drought.



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Implications of recommending Governor declare drought conditions in parts of the state:

Governor Drought or other State Disaster Declarations

- Allows for the sharing of some resources
- Allows the waiver of some bid processes (to get materials or services rapidly)
 - Certain waivers of service hours (ex: electrical linemen if power lines are down)
 - Allows the activation of the National Guard
 - Other than Reclamation monies, no other federal funding is triggered with Governor's Declaration

Drought Disaster Declaration

- Provides public awareness of conditions:
 - Federal, State and Local Agencies
 - General Population
- Allows easing of rules to provide rapid response
- Opens State up to Bureau of Reclamation Title 1 (mitigation) and Title 2 (planning) funds
- Federal Disaster Declarations requested separately by Governor through separate processes

Once a Federal Disaster has been declared may be more assistance available to local communities for coping with drought:

State Emergency Assistance: When the resources needed to respond to an incident such as wildfire exceeds local capabilities, state assistance may be provided. For example, the Kansas Army National Guard can provide limited equipment for pumping, hauling and storing potable water in an emergency related to drought or other causes. Resources and assets from other state agencies may also be deployed. Local officials must request a Governor's proclamation of a state of disaster emergency. Contact the Operations Officer at the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (785/274-1406) for more information or call KDEM's 24-hour hot line, 1-800-905-7521 or 785/296-3176 to request assistance.

Corps' Emergency Water Assistance: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) may provide temporary emergency water assistance for human consumption/usage to a drought distressed area to meet minimum public health and welfare requirements. Assistance may include transportation of water by vehicle, small diameter pipeline or other means. Assistance for construction of wells may also be available. All local and state resources should have been utilized, and a state of drought emergency declared prior to seeking assistance. A written request from the Governor or the Governor's authorized representative is required. Contact the Kansas Division of Emergency Management at 785/296-3176 or 1-800-905-7521 to request assistance.

Kansas Water Marketing Program Surplus Water Contracts: Urgent or emergency water contracts can be obtained for surplus water that may be available from state controlled storage in 12 Corps of Engineers reservoirs located in eastern and central Kansas. While surplus contracts may be applied for at any time, urgent and emergency contracts are specifically authorized at the Drought Warning and Drought Emergency county drought stages, respectively. An expedited application process applies to both. Water must be used for municipal or industrial purposes, and the term of the contract may not exceed one year. To apply for a surplus water contract the Kansas Water Office at 785/296-3185.

State Revolving Fund: The Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund (State Revolving Fund) provides low interest loans to municipalities and rural water districts for the construction of public water supply system infrastructure. Applicants must adopt and implement a state-approved municipal water conservation plan. Projects are ranked by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and then placed on a funding priority list. Where urgent need or public health concerns are present, an expedited loan approval process that bypasses the funding priority list may be authorized by the Secretary of Health and Environment. Contact William Carr at KDHE at 785/296-0735) for additional information or to apply for a loan.

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Fire Protection: Always a hazard, the risk from wildfire increases during drought. The Cooperative Fire Protection Program of the Kansas Forest Service (KFS) provides assistance in the prevention and suppression of wildland fires. An increasing concern is the wildfire risk associated with home development along the wildland/urban interface. The KFS is a sponsor of Firewise Communities, a national program aimed at protecting homes in the event of wildfire. Firewise Communities is a multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers and others in protecting against the risk of wildfire. KFS has also started developing state wildland firefighting resources in the form of engines and aircraft with the goal of providing direct fire suppression support whenever possible. Contact Ross Hauck at the KFS at 785/532-3314.

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Multi-Year Flex Account Permits through KS Department of Agriculture: Participants in the Flex Account Program through KDA Division of Water Resources are provided a five-year allocation that includes the flexibility to exceed their annual authorized quantity of the water right. Participants can spread usage of their water allocation throughout the five years however they choose so long as the five-year total does not exceed the allocated amount. This option is available statewide and is an on-going program. For more information, contact DWR Water Appropriations Program Manager Lane Letourneau at 785/564- 6636.

Emergency Water Supply: Emergency water for domestic and livestock use may be available in counties declared in emergency. Water from some lakes may be obtained through a permit in counties in emergency. To determine eligibility and initiate the process contact the Kansas Water Office at 785/296-3185.

Emergency Haying and Grazing: Emergency haying and grazing of acreage enrolled in the USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program *may be authorized* to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by severe drought. Authorization is provided through either the national FSA office or by a state FSA committee determination. Contact your county FSA office or Rod Winkler at the Kansas FSA Office at 785/539-3531 for additional information.