

After the Long Dry Summer . . . And Soaked Spring – Water Quantity and Quality in the Metro

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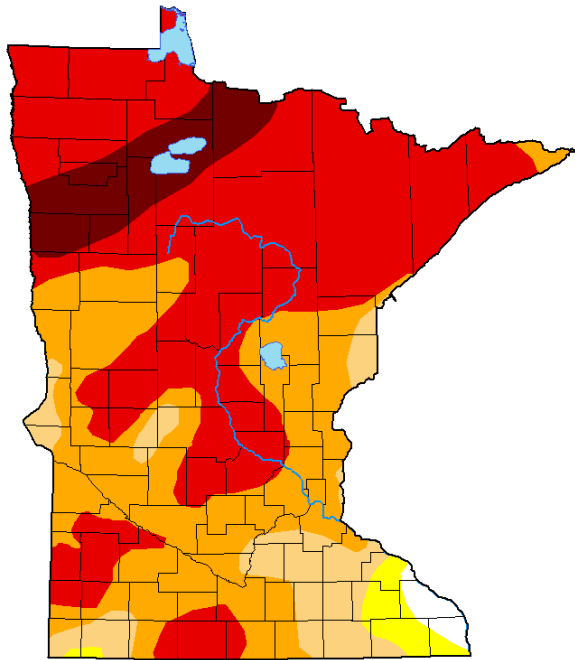
Overview

- **2021 Was First Significant Metropolitan Area Drought in a Decade**
- **Drought + Growth = Stress on Water Supplies**
- **2022 Has Been Very Wet**
- **Renewed Flood Concerns**
- **Emerging Contaminants are a Major Concern**
- **Protection of Downstream Water Quality**
- **All Water Sources Affected to Varying Degrees**

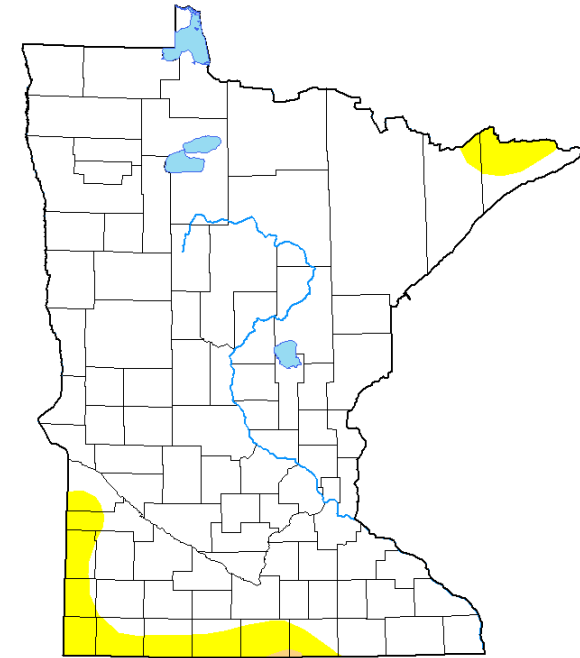
- **What may communities be required to do?**
- **What can forward-thinking communities do on their own?**

2021 Summer Drought and 2022 Spring Soaking

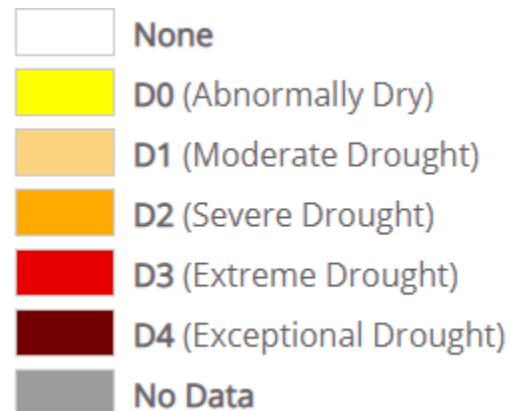
August 24, 2021



May 3, 2022



Drought Classification



Water Supply Concerns

- **Last couple of decades have been wet**
- **2021 revealed drought vulnerability**
 - **Surface supplies are not a panacea**
- **Climate change will increase variability**
- **Conservation planning will be necessary**
- **Flood/stormwater resiliency will be equally necessary**
- **Major projects will require long lead times**

Water Quality Concerns

- Improving detection capabilities
- PFAS everywhere
- Endocrine Disruptors
 - Pharmaceuticals
 - Personal care products
- Metals/minerals if groundwater transitioned to surface water
- Protection of downstream standards
 - E.g. phosphorus in Lake Pepin

The Players

- **Department of Natural Resources**
 - Water appropriations permits
- **Pollution Control Agency**
 - Project permitting, Water quality standards
- **Department of Health**
 - Health Risk Values
- **Legislature**
 - Principal source of major funding
 - Water appropriations priorities
- **Metropolitan Council**
 - Growth/density mandates
 - Consumption guidelines
- **Judiciary – NGOs**
 - *White Bear Lake* litigation
- *And most importantly, You*

A Word About the White Bear Lake Litigation

- **Suit brought by lakeshore homeowners' groups under the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act**
 - Against DNR
 - For allegedly failing to protect White Bear Lake
- **Largely upheld on appeal**
- **Provides a mechanism for advocacy groups to resort to the courts to manage water resources**
- **Template could be equally applicable to water quality issues**

Where is This Going, Supply Side?

- **Expect Active DNR Oversight and Collaboration**
 - Contingency Planning
 - Water Conservation Measures
 - Possible Permit Revisions
 - Limits on Appropriation Increases
 - Limits on New Permits
- **Potential Future *White Bear Lake*-type litigation**
- **Water Availability**
 - Could be a drag on future Metro growth, quality of life
 - Could be a major national competitive advantage

Where is This Going, Quality Side?

- **Major new drinking water investments may be needed to address emerging contaminants**
- **Community education will be a critical task**
 - To reduce contaminant contributions to water
 - To manage public concerns
- **Infrastructure projects will need to be designed to protect downstream water quality**

What Can Forward-Thinking Communities Do?

- **Self-diagnosis**
 - Test against Met. Council Goals
 - Identify upcoming needs
- **Contingency Planning**
 - Alternative supplies
 - Conservation measures
- **Early coordination with relevant agencies**
- **New Construction Standards**
- **Capital Projects**
 - Surface water, wastewater, stormwater management
- **Improved Monitoring Tools**
- **Targeted Restrictions and Enforcement**

Questions or Follow-up Info. Needed?

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