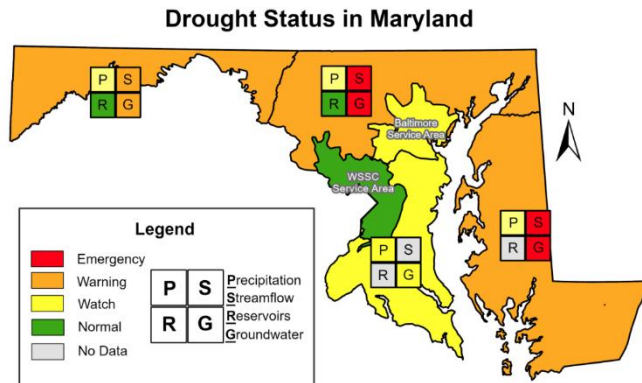


Maryland Department of the Environment Issues Drought Warning for Large Areas of the State Due to Persistent Rainfall Deficits

On May 14, 2026, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) announced that large areas of the state are under a drought warning. **While there are currently no water shortages or restrictions in St. Mary's County**, three consecutive years of dry weather and recent lower-than-average rainfall amounts mean voluntary water conservation by homeowners and businesses is encouraged.



Droughts are not unprecedented in Maryland history. Major events occurred in the 1930s and 1960s, and a statewide drought emergency with mandatory water use restrictions was declared in 1999.

[Maryland](#) uses a staged system to provide guidance to the public on water usage. A drought “watch” is an early-stage alert for the state to monitor conditions more frequently and suggest voluntary conservation. A “warning” means worsening conditions and increased coordination between the state and water suppliers. Western, central and eastern Maryland are under a drought warning, and southern Maryland is under a drought watch.

The principal cause for the worsening conditions now being seen is a deficit of rainfall over the past several months – about three inches per month on average compared to a normal average of four inches per month. This accumulating deficit leads to lower than normal groundwater levels and stream flows, causing impacts that recover slowly even with rain.

Why conserve water? Groundwater is the **sole source** of fresh drinking water in St. Mary's County. Because it takes so long for the aquifers to recharge, clean fresh water from these sources are a limited resource. Think about it this way: the water that you use to water your lawn could have fallen as precipitation thousands (or even millions) of years ago.

Many believe that our water supply is infinite. However, our supply is quite the opposite. Conserving water means using our water supply wisely and being responsible. As every individual depends on water for livelihood, we must learn how to keep our limited supply of water pure and free from pollution and protected for the generations to come. For more information and how you can help conserve, please visit [MetCom's website](#) under the Operations FAQs tab for more information regarding water conservation.