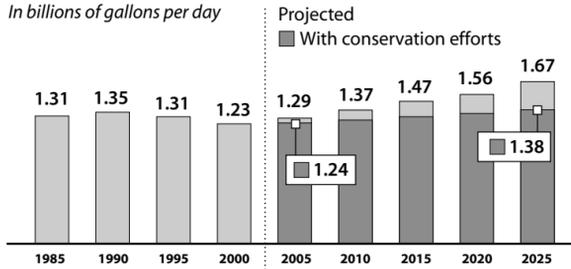


Growing use of water, shrinking supply

As the dry spell in Illinois continues, experts are urging people to use water more efficiently. A recent study shows the effect of conservation.

PUBLIC WATER USE FOR SIX-COUNTY AREA

In billions of gallons per day



Source: Southern Illinois University report "County-level Forecasts of Water Use in Illinois" Chicago Tribune

WATER: Area's usage to increase 28 percent

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

regular part of the landscape.

At the behest of Gov. Rod Blagojevich, state officials will gather Thursday for the first Drought Response Task Force meeting in Springfield, to identify the wide range of problems surfacing because of the dry spell.

The Department of Agriculture is worried about crops. The Department of Natural Resources is worried about wild-

life and habitat. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is worried about keeping drinking water free of contamination.

Chicago saw less than an inch of rain in June. Many hoped storms over the 4th of July weekend would ease this year's drought, but a meteorologist with the National Weather Service said the state needs much more rain.

"We only saw a couple hundredths of an inch in some areas," Nathan Marsili said. "It won't really help long-term conditions, and we're not looking for any rain in the next week."

Lessons from a dry spell

In a part of the country where water sometimes seems to be everywhere, the extraordinary spell of dry weather has given Illinois residents a taste of what it might be like to live under a more chronic water shortage.

"People generally tend to appreciate the water situation if they're under pressure," said Derek Winstanley, Illinois State Water Survey chief. "With expected population growth, we need to think about how much we need in the future."

And the first response, officials say, must be conservation. "We forget about these things and go back to our normal lifestyle," said Maggie Carson, spokeswoman for the Illinois EPA. "To me, it's something we should always be thinking about."

Officials don't know exactly how much water lies in the state's underground aquifers. Winstanley said the shallow aquifer system is thin and discontinuous, and the deep bedrock aquifer, which lies 1,000 to 1,500 feet below the surface, has a slow recharge rate.

"We already exceed a safe draw," he said. "We can't take any more."

The Fox and Kankakee Rivers provide some relief. But they won't be able to bear the full burden of 2025's expected increases without putting wildlife habitats at risk.

Even the seemingly vast supply from Lake Michigan has its limits. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled the state must prove people are conserving and reusing water before asking to take more out of the lake.

Since there is no untapped source for new water, people in Illinois must use less.

"It just makes good sense to meet the growing demand," said Dan Injerd, spokesman for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Office of Water Re-

Drought begins to take toll on fish

By Richard Wronski
Tribune staff reporter

How dry has it been this summer? So dry that fish are starting to bite the dust.

State wildlife officials say fish die-offs are being reported across the state after the third-driest March through June in recorded history.

While the dead fish don't pose a serious problem yet—they have mainly been showing up in shrinking shallow backwaters—state conservation officials are monitoring the situation, anxiously watching how events unfold in July, typically the most arid month.

A wide variety of dead fish, including carp, catfish and bullheads, has been reported in the Wilke Marsh in Palatine; in a section of the DuPage River near Naperville; in power plant cooling lakes; and along channels of the Kaskaskia River in southern Illinois.

"Fish are like anything else. They are stressed like a lot of people and plants," said Mike Conlin, director of resource conservation for the Illinois Department of Natural Re-

sources. "Everything is under a stress condition right now. If this persists, we'll start seeing some damage."

The fish are succumbing to depleted amounts of oxygen in ponds and other bodies of stagnant water because of high temperatures and low water levels, Conlin said.

"The hotter it gets, the less oxygen the water can hold, and the shallower the water gets, the hotter the fish get," he said.

Recreational fishermen are often the first to report mass fish kills, but they aren't the only ones affected. The effects ripple up the food chain, from mussels in the water to raccoons, minks and otters that feed on aquatic life.

"It's going to affect our entire ecosystem," Conlin said. The phenomenon was last widely noted during the drought of 1988, Conlin said. "We had a large number of fish kills occur."

Throughout the upper Midwest, waterfowl and game birds were deprived of fresh water and nesting cover. Fish trapped in shallow waters died by the thousands across the

central states.

Conservation officials are expected to discuss the problem Thursday when Gov. Rod Blagojevich's Drought Task Force convenes in Springfield.

The 7.3-acre Wilke Marsh is southwest of Illinois Highway 53 and Rand Road. Hundreds of dead carp were recently spotted there by residents after the drought lowered the water level significantly and exposed much of the shore.

"I looked out there and saw some white stuff floating in the pond," said Albert Moreno, who lives in the Clover Ridge East Apartments. "At first I shrugged it off. But as the water continued to recede and more and more of them showed up, I could tell they were dead carp."

Since then, rains have replenished much of the Wilke Marsh, an environmentally sensitive area.

"Common carp are very tolerant [of low oxygen] and can get a lot of air from the atmosphere," Conlin said. "But when carp die, you know things are getting pretty tough."

rwronski@tribune.com

sources. "The population forecast is very aggressive, and there's a fixed supply of water available."

Power plants use the most

Home and commercial water

use in Illinois breaks down into several broad categories: Power companies use the most—84 percent—to cool nuclear and coal plants. Municipal water consumers come in second, using 10 percent. The rest goes to

farmers, homeowners with private wells, and miners, according to a Southern Illinois University study.

Many people don't realize there is a problem. Under state law, water is considered a common good; anyone may tap into a water source, such as drilling a well, and take as much as he or she wants as long as it is reasonable. But "reasonable" isn't defined.

People in Illinois also pay little for their water, between \$2 and \$4 per thousand gallons. In Ft. Worth, where people know they lack water, they pay five times that amount.

It's been a long time since most state residents have had to think about water this way. Winstanley said that before this year, Illinois hadn't had a major drought since 1988. Droughts came more frequently during the first half of the 20th Century.

"Most people running our water systems weren't alive then," Winstanley said. "Illinois is generally a water-rich state. We tend to take water for granted."

That doesn't mean people do not conserve water. Chicago recently saved water by replacing its old water main. New apartment complexes use low-flush toilets, and new appliances are more water-efficient.

Chicago workers began installing water meters in all city homes in 2003. Most Illinois cities, though not Chicago, have rules to regulate lawn sprinkling.

"Our conservation requirements are not what I would call extreme," Injerd said. "But for a lot of people, it makes economic sense. If they go nuts sprinkling, their water bill will go up."

There are some examples of good use on a larger scale too, Winstanley said. In Kane County, officials created a 30-year water-use plan based on economic development, population growth and land-use changes. By making water one of the criteria used to evaluate new development proposals, they hope not to exceed the sustainable supply.

"That is the way we have to go," Winstanley said. "We need comprehensive, long-range planning, but a framework does not exist."

He would like to see one organization managing the lake or a watershed and allocating water to cities, rather than local municipalities managing resources, he said.

Household strategies

Meanwhile, he and the others planning to attend Thursday's meeting said people must conserve at home. The average American uses 166 gallons of water a day. In Switzerland, the number is 77 gallons of water a day.

Some conservation strategies are easy: For example, if one person turns off the water while brushing his or her teeth every day for a year, 3,942 gallons of water will be saved. If a person showers for one minute less a day, 2,400 gallons could be saved each year.

And if a person smashes spiders rather than flushing them, 4.6 gallons of water could be saved for every arachnid.

"Anytime anybody uses water, if they're conscious about it, they can reduce it," Winstanley said. "If you implemented conservation practices, we could reduce the amount we're using many, many times."

kkennedy@tribune.com



No huge overages.

Announcing: The Sprint PCS Fair & Flexible Area-wideSM Plan.

1000 Anytime Minutes/**\$45** a month. Other monthly charges apply. See below.**

Plus, Sprint automatically adds Anytime Minutes as you need them.

Every 100 extra Anytime Minutes with Sprint costs \$5. (With the other guys, you'd pay at least \$35.)

With this Sprint PCS Fair & Flexible Area-wideSM Plan, you can call to anywhere in the US from anywhere in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Missouri while on the Sprint Nationwide PCS Network.

- Adjustable Anytime Minutes.
- Nationwide Long Distance. Every minute. Every day.
- Unlimited Night & Weekend Minutes for \$5 a month.

Available with a two-year Sprint PCS[®] Advantage Agreement. Preferred credit required.

Come in for Sprint Store summer savings.



Sprint PCS Voice Phone
\$19.99
Save \$150 instantly

- Full-color display.
- SMS Text Messaging capable.

Reg \$169.99 Sprint PCS Voice Phone 200 by Sanyo[®]



Sprint PCS VisionSM Picture Phone
\$49.99
Save \$180 instantly

- Built-in camera and flash.
- SMS Text Messaging capable.

Reg \$229.99 Sprint PCS Vision Picture Phone PM-A740 by Samsung[®]

Requires activation on a new line of service with a two-year Sprint PCS Advantage Agreement. Sprint PCS VisionSM Picture Phone offer requires activation of Sprint PCS Vision.

30-Day Phone Price Match Guarantee. If you find a lower price on an identical new Sprint PCS Phone, just show us the lower price within 30 days of your original purchase date at a Sprint Store, and we'll give you a service credit for the difference.*

Sprint has been awarded:



Sprint PCS. Now, that's better.SM

800-480-4PCS Visit a Sprint Store. www.sprintpcs.com

For complete demonstrations and customer service:



For free delivery with phone purchase and activation:
www.sprintpcs.com
1-800-480-4PCS

CHICAGO
Downtown
180 N. La Salle
Gold Coast
1 W. Division
Hyde Park
5234 S. Blackstone
Lincoln & Devon
3513 W. Devon
The Broadway
2850 N. Broadway
Scottsdale
8071 S. Cicero Ave.
Hartford Plaza
100 S. Wacker

State Street
107 S. State
Wicker Park
1600 N. Milwaukee Ave.
AURORA
Chicago Premium Outlets
1650 Premium Outlet Blvd.
Yorkshire Plaza
1076 IL Rte. 59
BOLINGBROOK
Country Aire Plaza
137 S. Webber Rd.
CICERO
2625 Cicero Ave.

CRESTWOOD
13618 S. Cicero Ave.
CRYSTAL LAKE
6107 Northwest Hwy.
DEERFIELD
775 Waukegan Rd.
DEKALB
2333 Sycamore Rd.
DOWNS GROVE
The Grove Plaza
1546 75th St.
ELMWOOD PARK
Rose Plaza
7404 W. North Ave.
EVANSTON
1735 Maple Ave.

EVERGREEN PARK
★ New Open
2525 W. 95th St.
GENEVA
Geneva Commons
1318 Commons Dr.
GLENVIEW
Willow Creek Shopping Ctr.
2311 Willow Rd.
GURNEE
Grand Hunt Center
6557 Grand Ave.
HARWOOD HEIGHTS
4630 N. Harlem Ave.
JOLIET
2049 Rte. 59

LAGRANGE
18 W. Burlington St.
LANSING
Lansing Square
17545 Torrence Ave.
LOMBARD
418 E. Roosevelt Rd.
MACHESNEY PARK
1307 West Lane Rd.
MATTESON
4832 W. 211th St.
MERRILLVILLE
1772 E. 80th Ave.
ORLAND PARK
Ravinia Plaza
15246 S. La Grange Rd.

PALATINE
DeerGrove Crossing
1590 N. Rand Rd.
PLAINFIELD
13327 S. Rte. 59
ROCKFORD
6602 E. State St.
ROLLING MEADOWS
1100 W. Golf Rd.
SCHAUMBURG
Prairie Town Center
2592 Schaumburg

SKOKIE
9406 Skokie Blvd.
SOUTH ELGIN
552 Randall Rd.
VERNON HILLS
325 N. Milwaukee Rd.
WEST DUNDEE
220 N. 8th St.
WHEATON
212 Dana Square W.

Exclusive Dealers:

AURORA
Chicago PCS
1330 Orchard Rd.
(630) 907-1441
BUFFALO GROVE
Sprint Store
Wireless Center
714 S. Buffalo Grove Rd.
(847) 656-1424
CHICAGO
Chicago PCS
4017 N. Lincoln
(773) 472-3770
VALPARAISO, IN
Direct Cellular
2310 LaPorte Ave.
(219) 548-2882

**Taxes and surcharges (including a USF charge of 2.54%, which may change monthly, cost-recovery fees of \$0.65 and other surcharges that vary by market) not included. Surcharges are not taxes or government-required charges.

Nationwide network reaches over 250 million people. Coverage not available everywhere. Offers not available everywhere and subject to change. Terms and conditions apply. Offers end 7/10/05. **Phone Savings:** Instant savings only available at participating Sprint Stores with in-store purchase and activation. **Service Plan:** Includes 1,000 monthly Anytime Minutes adjustable in 100-minute increments (for use between 1,001 and 1,200 minutes), with \$0.05 per minute for usage above 1,200 minutes. A \$36 phone activation fee and \$150 early termination fee apply. A deposit may be required. Night & Weekend Hours are Monday–Thursday 9pm–7am and Friday 9pm–Monday 7am. Domestic (off-network) roaming calls are \$0.50 per minute and additional \$0.25 per minute for long distance. Calls are rounded up to the next whole minute. **Sprint PCS Vision:** Sprint PCS Vision is an additional charge and, except with data-usage-only service, is not available with any device used as a modem. **Price Match Guarantee:** Available at Sprint Stores only and not available at Exclusive Dealers. Service credit amount is the difference between the original net price and the new net price, including instant and mail-in rebates. Taxes excluded. Service credit will appear within the first two billing cycles. Gift cards, gift with purchase, giveaways, online offers and telesales are not eligible. Photocopies, computer printouts, Web or partial advertisements are not eligible. Valid only on identical phone. Accessories, other products and services are not eligible. ©2005 Sprint. All rights reserved. Sprint and the diamond logo are trademarks of Sprint Communications Company L.P.