

Immediate Release

August 4, 2011

For more information, contact:

Sherriene Jones-Sontag

785.368.7138

media@ks.gov

Katie Patterson-Ingels

785.296.0877

katie.ingels@kwo.ks.gov

Ron Kaufman

785-296-2281

Ron.kaufman@ksoutdoors.com

Governor Orders Update of Drought Emergency, Warnings and Watches

Agreement allows use of state fishing lake water

Topeka – Worsening drought conditions for much of Kansas have led Governor Sam Brownback to update the Drought Declaration for Kansas counties he previously issued. Executive Order 11-27 signed by the Governor today includes moving 15 counties from warning status up to emergency status.

“Continued dry and hot conditions have led to a Drought Emergency declaration for 12 additional counties,” Governor Brownback said. “Below normal precipitation patterns continue in more than half of Kansas counties which are not only depleting available soil moisture, but have resulted in the decline of stream flow conditions.”

The updated drought declaration also moves two counties from watch status to warning and adds an additional 15 counties to watch status. This action was recommended by Tracy Streeter, Director of the Kansas Water Office (KWO) and Chair of the Governor’s Drought Response Team.

“Surface water conditions continue to decline which has triggered the KWO to work with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) to issue a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for emergency use of state fishing lake water under conditions of drought emergency declared by the Governor,” Streeter said. “This will allow small communities and individuals within the emergency counties category to pump water from named state fishing lakes to provide some relief if they are in dire need of water”.

Individuals and communities need to contact the KWO for a water supply request and they will in turn be referred to the appropriate KDWPT office to obtain the necessary permit to withdraw the water. The MOU limits the types of water use and a fee may be set for use of the state fishing lakes’ water supply.

“We are glad to be able to offer this as an option to Kansans in desperate need for water,” KDWPT Secretary Robin Jennison said. “The priority order established for this MOU is domestic, municipal and then livestock uses, while also protecting the lake’s fish population.”

The State Fishing Lakes available for withdrawals for Emergency Declared counties include Atchison, Barber, Brown, Bourbon, Butler, Chase, Clark, Crawford, Goodman, Jewell, Kingman, Leavenworth, Lyon, Pott#1, Pott#2, McPherson, Miami, Mined Lands (Pits), Neosho, Osage, Ottawa, Saline, Scott, Shawnee, Sheridan, Washington, Wilson, and Woodson Lakes.

This Executive Order shall remain in effect for those counties so identified until rescinded by Executive Order or superseded by a subsequent Executive Order revising the drought stage status of the affected counties. Effective immediately:

- Declare a Drought Emergency, Warning or Drought Watch for the counties identified below;
- Authorize and direct all agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor to implement the appropriate watch or warning level-drought response actions assigned in the Operations Plan of the Governor's Drought Response Team.

The Governor's Drought Response Team will continue to watch the situation closely and work to minimize the effects the drought has on Kansans.

For more detailed information about current conditions, see the Kansas Climate Summary and Drought Report on the Kansas Water Office website at: www.kwo.org

#

County Drought Stage Declarations:

Drought Emergency: Barber, Clark, Comanche, Harper, Kingman, Kiowa, Meade, Morton, Pratt, Reno, Seward, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Sumner

Drought Warning: Barton, Butler, Cowley, Edwards, Finney, Ford, Gove, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Lane, Logan, McPherson, Ness, Pawnee, Rice, Scott, Sedgwick, Trego, Wallace, Wichita

Drought Watch: Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chase, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Coffey, Crawford, Decatur, Dickinson, Elk, Ellis, Ellsworth, Graham, Greenwood, Labette, Lincoln, Linn, Lyon, Marion, Montgomery, Neosho, Norton, Ottawa, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Saline, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, Wilson, Woodson

Counties in green are new to the emergency list.

Counties in red had their status move from watch to warning.

Counties highlighted in yellow are new to the watch list.

As the state's water office, KWO conducts water planning, policy coordination and water marketing as well as facilitates public input throughout the state.

The agency prepares the KANSAS WATER PLAN, a plan for water resources development, management and conservation. KWO also reviews all water laws and makes recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for needed legislation.