

Immediate Release

November 21, 2011

For more information, contact:

Sherriene Jones-Sontag
Office of the Governor
785.368.7138
media@ks.gov

Katie Patterson-Ingels
Kansas Water Office
785.296.0877
katie.ingels@kwo.ks.gov

Ron Kaufman
Dept. of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism
785.296.2281
Ron.kaufman@ksoutdoors.com

Governor Updates Drought Emergency, Warnings and Watches in Kansas Counties

Topeka – Increasing drought conditions in the state have led Governor Sam Brownback to again update the Drought Declaration for Kansas counties with an Executive Order 11-48 today. The update includes moving eleven counties from warning status up to emergency status.

“Despite the recent rains, overall dry conditions require us to address moisture deficits and declining water,” Governor Brownback said. “Below normal soil moisture and poor pasture, range and hay supplies because of below normal precipitation patterns and drying conditions are affecting most of our state. Stream flows and lake levels also are low, showing just local improvement temporarily after the rains. The outlook is for drought conditions to persist or intensify in the majority of Kansas.”

The updated drought declaration also moves 14 counties into watch status, and upgrades four to warning status. Tracy Streeter, Director of the Kansas Water Office and Chair of the Governor’s Drought Response Team recommended the latest update.

“Water supply conditions continue to decline in many areas, Emergency stage triggers the Kansas Water Office (KWO) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) which allows emergency use of water from certain state fishing lakes,” Streeter said. “This would allow small communities and individuals within the emergency counties category to pump water from named state fishing lakes if they are in dire need of water”.

Individuals and communities need to contact the Kansas Water Office for a water supply request prior to any withdrawals from lakes. 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.

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: Allen, Barber, Barton, Butler, Chase, Clark, Coffey, Comanche, Cowley, Edwards, Finney, Ford, Grant, Gray, Greenwood, Harper, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Kingman, Kiowa, Lyon, Marion, McPherson, Meade, Morton, Neosho, Pawnee, Pratt, Reno, Rice, Sedgwick, Seward, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Sumner, Wilson, Woodson

Drought Warning: Anderson, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Crawford, Elk, Franklin, Gove, Greeley, Hamilton, Labette, Lane, Linn, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Morris, Ness, Osage, Scott, Trego, Wallace, Wichita

Drought Watch: Cheyenne, Clay, Cloud, Decatur, Dickinson, Douglas, Ellis, Ellsworth, Geary, Graham, Jefferson, Jewel, Johnson, Leavenworth, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Norton, Osborne, Ottawa, Phillips, Pottawatomie, Rawlins, Republic, Riley, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Saline, Shawnee, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Thomas, Wabaunsee, Washington, Wyandotte

Counties in red are new (upgrades) to that drought stage.

Counties in green were downgraded to the warning 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.