Hampshire's Drought Response and How You Can Help

From Jonathan Lash

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Dear Friends,

As you can see from the dry lawns and wilting corn fields, we're in the midst of a drought. The Town of Amherst has issued mandatory water restrictions on residences. It's a historic drought that's creating real problems for people state-wide. At Hampshire we're committed to doing our part to reduce the impact on our community. We're working closely with town officials as well as with UMass and Amherst College to follow water-conservation measures until the ban is lifted. This will help the town safely supply all its water needs, even with the present influx of 30,000 students.

Hampshire's staff have taken steps to restrict use of water for campus operations and facilities, such as not watering grass beyond the minimum needed to maintain athletic fields and not washing vehicles.

We're asking all students and employees to contribute to this conservation effort as well:

- Please limit showers to less than 5 minutes.
- Limit clothes washing and wash only full loads set to cold water and single rinse.
- Don't run the faucet while brushing teeth, combing hair, washing face, shaving, or applying makeup.
- Wash dishes by the sinkful, not one by one. When using a dishwasher, run a full load.
- Conserve water in labs and throughout campus facilities.
- Report a water leak, running toilet, any broken plumbing fixture, and other water waste immediately to facilities and grounds (ext. 6614). After hours, call the campus police (ext. 5424).
- The woods are tinder-dry. Please exercise extreme caution, because a cigarette left lit or a spark from a campfire could set off a tragically destructive blaze.

On our farm, we've judiciously used water from our irrigation pond over the summer, although the pond is nearly dry. We'll continue to irrigate crops, when we have water, but the soil is extremely dry. We predict sufficient vegetable yields for the CSA and the dining hall, although many farmers in the region are facing reduced harvests.
Our college response team will keep the campus informed of any changes to this emergency and our response to it. If you have any questions, please call facilities and grounds (ext. 6614) or e-mail workorders@hampshire.edu.

For information and updates on the College's drought response, we're providing this webpage, http://hamp.it/drought.

For more information on the status of the drought across Massachusetts, visit the state's drought-management website at http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/water-res-protection/water-data-tracking/drought-status.html

Thank you,

Jonathan Lash