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### Eng: Water usage up, reservoirs on decline

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WAILUKU - Periodic but isolated showers on windward and mauka areas of the islands had little effect on the watersheds, Maui County Water Director Jeff Eng reported Friday.

In his weekly water use report, Eng said water use was up by 620,000 gallons a day in the Central Maui and Upcountry systems, while the water sources for the Upcountry system have continued to falter.

"I would like to remind our customers of our request for Upcountry customers to reduce water usage by 5 percent and our Central customers to reduce water usage by 10 percent," he said.

"It's been a dry week and the Upcountry reservoirs have been steadily dropping, going from 100.6 million gallons on October 2 to 81.4 million gallons on October 10. That is less than half of the total storage capacity of 180 million gallons."

The islands as a whole continue to dry out even with occasional trade-wind showers, with the Big Island suffering the worst of the abnormally dry conditions. The U.S. Drought Monitor expanded the area of North Kohala under extreme drought, increasing the area rated extreme drought from 10 percent to 12.3 percent of the islands.

Central Maui and West Molokai also are rated in extreme drought, with Upcountry rated in severe drought. Lanai and West Maui are rated in moderate drought, and most of the rest of the islands are abnormally dry. The ratings, based on rainfall, soil moisture, stream flows and related measures, are: abnormally dry, moderate drought, severe drought, extreme drought and exceptional drought.

The West Wailua Iki rain gauge in the East Maui watershed is recording significant amounts of rain, with nearly 4.5 inches measured between Oct. 1 and Saturday. But the showers have been sporadic and isolated, rather than spread across the watershed, and have had little effect on the water flows out of the watershed.

The rain gauge recorded more than an inch of rain between Thursday and Saturday, but there was only a slight response in the Wailoa Ditch - the irrigation ditch that provides up to 5 million gallons a day to the Upcountry system. There also was no apparent increase in inflow in the upper level diversions feeding the county's reservoirs.

Flows in the Wailoa Ditch have been fluctuating but trending down, Upcountry reservoir levels have been going steadily down:

- \* Oct. 2, Wailoa, 34.9 mgd; reservoirs, 100.5 million gallons.
- \* Oct. 3, Wailoa, 29.2 mgd; reservoirs, 99.1 mg.
- \* Oct. 4, Wailoa, 34.7 mgd; reservoirs, 96.6 mg.
- \* Oct. 5, Wailoa, 35.8 mgd; reservoirs, 96.6 mg.
- \* Oct. 6, Wailoa, 31.5 mgd; reservoirs, 94.1 mg.
- \* Tuesday, Wailoa, 27.5 mgd; reservoirs, 91.3 mg.
- \* Wednesday, Wailoa, 24.6 mgd; reservoirs 88 mg.
- \* Thursday, Wailoa, 23.1 mgd; reservoirs, 85 mg.
- \* Friday, Wailoa, 26.3 mgd; reservoirs, 81.4 mg.

"Check for leaks and reduce outdoor irrigation," Eng urged. "Most plants can handle one day less of watering and if they cannot, then it means they are not suited for the climate they are in. Maui Nui Botanical Gardens has a beautiful array of plants that grow best on Maui."

On the Net:

\* U.S. Drought Monitor, [www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html](http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html)