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### Rainy weather eases water demand

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WAILUKU - Rainy weather earlier this month slackened Maui residents' demand for water, Maui County water officials reported.

But it remains to be seen whether that will be a trend or a brief deviation in the island's long spell of dry weather.

In Central and South Maui, average daily water consumption dropped 4.37 million gallons per day from 22.38 mgd for the week of Dec. 4-10 to 18.01 mgd for the week of Dec. 11-17, according to the Department of Water Supply's weekly report. In Upcountry, water demand fell an average of 1.77 mgd per day from 6.31 mgd to 4.54 mgd for the two reporting periods.

Water Director Jeff Eng attributed the falloff in demand to a combination of mild temperatures and heavy rain earlier this month.

"The low production demands we saw this past week seem to represent our baseline water usage," Eng said. "However, since last Saturday, we have had almost no rainfall, particularly in the East Maui watershed."

He pointed out that the Wailoa Ditch, which has a capacity of nearly 200 million gallons per day, dropped from 119 mgd on Dec. 12 to only 26 mgd on Friday.

Upcountry reservoirs held on to their supplies of water.

On Dec. 12, the reservoirs had 132.4 million gallons available, the water department reported. Since then, the reservoirs' supply has remained above that amount, ranging from a high of 142.4 mg on Dec. 15 to a low of 135.2 on Friday.

The prospect for more winter rains and relief from the county's ongoing drought did not look promising Sunday.

The National Weather Service reported that "a drier and more stable weather pattern will continue across the state as the persistent low pressure that was northwest of Kauai moves away.

"As a result, expect mainly light showers to occur over windward and mauka areas," the service said.

Maui County's weather forecast called for partly cloudy skies with windward and mauka isolated showers during the day and scattered showers at night through Christmas Day. Highs were expected to be from 79 to 84 degrees, lows 65 to 70. Winds should blow out of the east at 15 to 20 mph.

#### Article Photos



The Maui News / MATTHEW THAYER photo  
A Kihei wetland bears testament to recent rains, but Saturday's blue skies and light clouds brought no relief to Maui's continuing drought conditions. Mild temperatures and rainfall earlier this month contributed to a drop in demand for water on Maui last week, county water officials reported.

#### Fact Box

Average daily water use in Maui County	
District Dec. 11-17	Dec. 4-10
December 2007	
Central Maui	18.01 mgd
22.38 mgd	20.01 mgd
Upcountry	4.54 mgd
6.31 mgd	5.48 mgd
Lahaina	4.05 mgd
4.49 mgd	5.37 mgd
Hana	0.35 mgd
0.35 mgd	0.30 mgd
Molokai	0.80 mgd
0.94 mgd	0.96 mgd
Total	27.76 mgd
34.47 mgd	32.21 mgd

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