

Dry winter bad sign for N.C.

by UPI

RALEIGH, N.C. - A dry winter suggests a bad spring and summer lie ahead for central North Carolina, U.S. weather officials said. The U.S. Drought Monitor listed 70 of the state's 100 counties as being in exceptional drought this week, the Raleigh News & Sentinel reported. That is the most severe category. Normally, the winter is the wet season, when reservoirs recharge, but precipitation in January was one-quarter of the normal level. Jeff Orrock, warning coordination meteorologist in Raleigh for the National Weather Service, said the few heavy rains this season have done little to refill reservoirs because they have occurred days apart. Michael Money Penny, another NWS meteorologist, said 95 percent of the streams in the state are at less than 25 percent of median levels, with 67 percent at less than 10 percent. In central North Carolina, 80 percent of streams are at less than 5 percent of median. The Raleigh City Council is considering ordering testing of city water connections in new buildings and imposing restrictions on outdoor irrigation and pressure washing of cars.

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