

## Drought scorches Tennessee



PATRICK ARMSTRONG/SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The same stretch of grass (pictured on right) that was so green a short time ago has been destroyed by the drought this summer. Tennessee is now under a burn ban until the state government decides that sufficient rain has fallen to revive the near-dead plant life.



PATRICK ARMSTRONG/SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Five months ago, APSU student J Grammer took time to enjoy the lush green grass that spread throughout the campus grounds. The drought plaguing the state has since dried out most of the campus greenery.

### While over the top temperatures persist, the rain continues to elude Montgomery County

By JARED COMBS  
Guest Writer

Water is an essential part of every day life. We drink it, we bathe in it, we water our flowers and wash our cars with it. This summer Mother Nature has proven, however, that we cannot control the circulation of it.

According to the National Weather Service's U.S. Drought Monitor, Montgomery County, is classified as being in extreme drought.

Extreme drought is a classification often accompanied by severe agricultural losses, extreme fire danger, water shortages and water restrictions.

Less than 25 inches of rain have fallen since Dec. 1. That's 12 inches less than is average for the eight month time span.

"Basically, it sucks," said Justin Felts, an Austin Peay State University sophomore, "I wasn't able to cut grass almost all summer."

Felts is not alone in his discontent with the weather. The drought has impacted everyone from landscaper to fire fighter.

"Certainly crops have been effected," said Professor Don Sudbrink of APSU's School of Agriculture and Geosciences. "Some of the local farmers are getting half yield, or even less."

Sudbrink described a farm field day he attended recently north of Fort Campbell. The soy bean crops he saw there were so adversely effected by the current drought that it is unlikely they will produce beans this year. "The farmers may just bail up the soy beans as hay," Sudbrink said.

Commercial crops are not the only plant life being devastated by the high temperatures and lack of rain. Clarksville may not be painted with the orange and golds that are typical to fall this year. "After the extreme freeze in April and the current drought, some trees are already dropping their leaves," Sudbrink said.

"We won't have the same color display as last year," said Lindsay Jackson, APSU's landscaping manager. "We've lost about fourteen trees on campus," Jackson said.

According to Jackson, the Red Sunset Maples that are predominant on campus are drought resistant and her department has gone to great lengths to keep the campus landscaping green.

"We've added about 42 soaker hoses on campus," Jackson said. "That's as many as our budget would allow for."

Other measures being taken to preserve the landscaping include time-released watering

bags around some of the larger trees and periodic watering of almost everything else.

"Trees are being forced to tap into the reserve stores of water in their roots," said Jeremy Myer, Montgomery County forester. "If this happens again next year, they'll have no reserves left and many of them may die."

"Even the birds will be affected," Myer said. "There won't be as many nuts and berries for the competing wildlife this winter."

Myer explained that while some trees may "self-amputate" limbs to conserve water, most should live. "It's the younger trees that are more susceptible," Myer said.

"We water the trees we planted this year," Myer said. "But the water we put on the trees isn't enough, we could really use some rain."

"A burn ban is currently in effect for the city," said Bob Hansford, Clarksville's Fire Chief. The dying landscape is not only an aesthetic problem, it also creates a generally flammable environment.

"We've been very fortunate," Hansford said. "There is always the chance of fire in wooded areas when it's so dry."

The fire department has not seen a dramatic increase in calls over the past few months, but Chief Hansford does admit the situation has potential to get worse.

"We have had some mulch fires in the shrubs around houses," Hansford said. "It only takes a cigarette butt."

Another wide-spread effect of the drought comes in the form of a peculiar smell in Clarksville's tap water. "All the drinking water that the city consumes comes out of the Cumberland River," said Tommy Williams, assistant superintendent of Clarksville's Waste Water Treatment Plant.

"The Cumberland's had less current in the drought," Williams said.

Williams explained that the drought, in combination with the extreme heat, has deprived the river of both oxygen and current. "It's like a pond, if the waters not moving then you get a thin film of algae on top," Williams said. "The quality of the water is still good!"

Clarksville's Water Plant superintendent Kenny Vaughn, described the problem in the same way.

"The chemical we use to kill the smell just isn't enough when the water [in the river] is this bad," Vaughn said. "Quite honestly the problem won't get better until we get some rain and cooler weather."

The problem with the water is only odor, and both Williams and Vaughn insist that it is still perfectly safe to drink.

"It's just more expensive to make drinking water in a drought," Williams said.

For more information about the continuing drought in Clarksville, visit: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ohx/drought.php> ♦

## Wolf Creek Dam: repairs continue through 2014

By ELIZABETH BRUCE  
Assistant Online Editor

Wolf Creek Dam, a well-known sight for Tennessee and Kentucky residents, began to look like it would turn into a big worry as well last year, when small crevices were observed in the concrete wall.

In the last year, however, new engineering projects have been put into place to add stability to the structure.

According to the Army Corps of Engineers the dam, which is located on Lake Cumberland, is currently holding back 101 miles of the Cumberland River. Should anything cause the dam to rupture, everything from Russell County, Ky. to Nashville would be completely flooded in a matter of days (<http://www.Irn.usace.army.mil/WolfCreek>).

In 2007, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began the Wolf Creek Dam Seepage Rehabilitation Project.

According to Bill Peoples, a representative for the project, the Corps are working on two critical areas: the large wrap-around concrete piece of the dam and the end of the original dam cut-off wall.

Wet spots from the dam's water seepage have been spotted at these two points, and a grouting program is taking place in order to prevent the seepage paths from worsening.

The grouting process will apply a great deal of

pressure to force the concrete into the dam's foundation.

The grouting of these two critical areas will be completed by the end of September, with the first stage of the program ending some time in February.

The second part of the project will be the building of a new wall into the dam's foundation that will stand behind the current wall.

It will go 275 feet down into the foundation of the dam, which has most of its current wall above the foundation, standing at an elevation of 550 feet.

This second wall will only have an elevation of 475 feet. According to Peoples, "Going longer and deeper should cut off [the] seepage paths."

The Corps is currently speaking with contractors to build the wall, which is expected to be completed by 2014.

"We will work with them to develop the best technologies to improve the wall," Peoples said.

So although the approximate date is 2014, the exact time period will be determined by the speed of the contractor.

"So we could actually shorten the time period," said Peoples. The Corps announced at the end of July, that during the construction, the lake's currently lowered level of 680 feet will be maintained.



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Wolf Creek Dam, in southern Kentucky, was authorized for construction in 1938. Today, it is one of the highest risk dams in the U.S. Similar problems occurred with the dam in 1968.

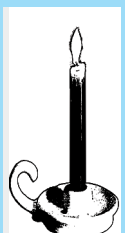
Until the new wall is completed, however, safety is still their primary concern.

A continuous monitoring system is in place to quickly and efficiently alert officials in case of collapse. To date, they have held 27 public meetings to inform downstream residents of the

risks associated with dam rupture and to organize an emergency.

The Corps of Engineers is working with both state and local agencies in Tennessee and Kentucky to ensure that evacuations and emergency procedure plans are in place. ♦

**Perspectives**



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**Features**

Michael Myers is back in new "old" Halloween movie.



**Sports**

New electronic scoreboard debuts. Football season starts this week.



**Online**

Be sure to drop by and see our site's new design



**FYI**

- ♦ Last day to drop classes online is Sept. 9
- ♦ Last day to register for fall graduation is Sept. 7