

CITY OF WAVERLY • PUBLIC WORKS

2026 Water Supply Update

More rain this summer — but our well levels are still falling

City Council Meeting | Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Prepared with the Waverly Public Works Department

The Bottom Line



24.35"

of rain so far in 2026 — our best year since 2019

GOOD NEWS ON RAINFALL



7 of 7

active wells still show a long-term decline in static water level

THE CHALLENGE CONTINUES



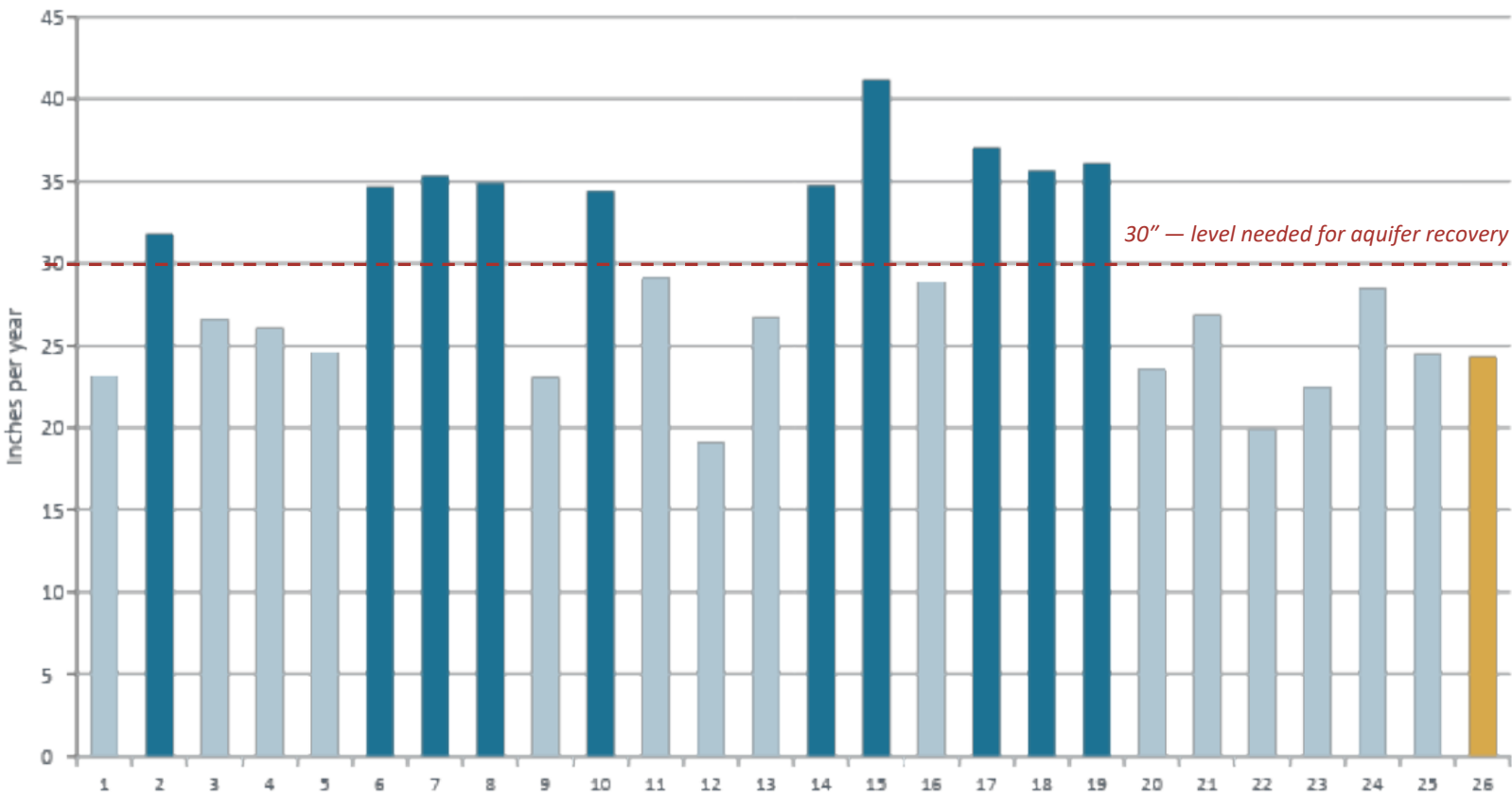
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conservation trigger levels currently in effect — the system is stable today

WHERE WE STAND NOW

Rain refills the topsoil quickly, but it takes years for that moisture to work down and recharge the deep aquifers our wells draw from. This presentation walks through what our data shows, what it means, and what we're doing about it.

More Rain This Summer, After Years of Drought



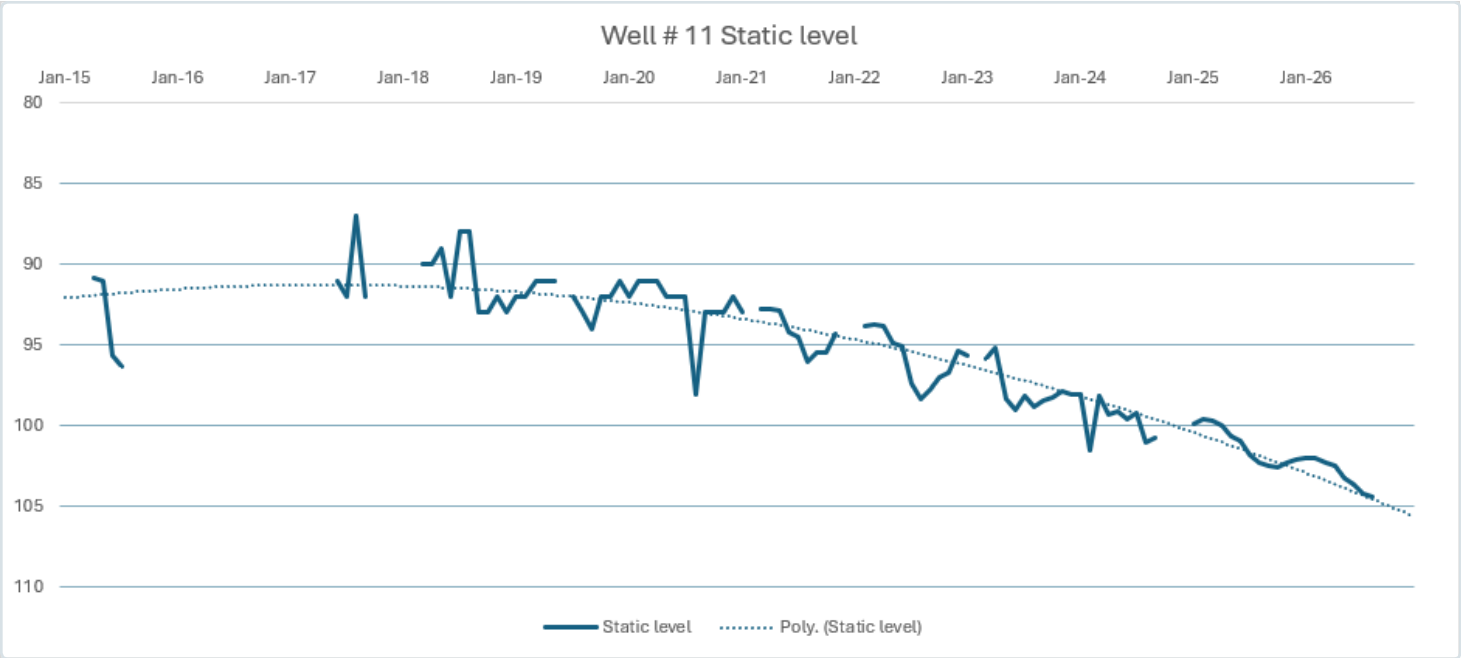
24.35"

recorded through August 2026 (Lincoln Airport gauge) — our wettest start to a year since 2019, with four months still to go.

Since 2020, only one year has topped 30 inches of annual rainfall. Public Works estimates it will take several consecutive wet years above 30" for the south wellfield aquifer to meaningfully recover.

*2026 total is partial-year (Jan–Aug). Source: precipitation recorded at the Lincoln Airport gauge, via Waverly Public Works.

Groundwater Reacts to Years, Not Storms



Well #11 static water level, 2015–2026 (feet below reference point)

87 ft → 104 ft

Well #11's water level has dropped 17 feet since 2017 — including 9 straight years of decline.

Rain soaks into shallow soil fast — but **it can take years for that water to work down through hundreds of feet of soil and rock to recharge the deep aquifer** our wells draw from.

That's why a good rainfall year in 2026 hasn't yet reversed a trend that's been building since 2017 — and why all 7 of our active wells are still showing a long-term decline (next slide).

All Seven Active Wells, Then vs. Now

Well	Tracking since	Level then	Level now	Total change	Change in 2026
Well #11	2017	87 ft	104.4 ft	-17 ft / 9 yrs	▼ -2.4 ft
Well #10	2018	69 ft	91.3 ft	-22 ft / 8 yrs	▼ -3.2 ft
Well #9	2018	87 ft	108.5 ft	-21 ft / 8 yrs	▼ -3.4 ft
Well #8	2018	62 ft	78.9 ft	-17 ft / 8 yrs	▼ -2.1 ft
Well #7	2024	64 ft	69.7 ft	-5 ft / 2 yrs	▼ -1.8 ft
Well #6	2017	67 ft	86.3 ft	-19 ft / 9 yrs	▼ -2.2 ft
Well #5	2017	9 ft	18.9 ft	-9.9 ft / 9 yrs	▲ +2.7 ft

Well #5 is the one exception: it sits in the shallower Wabaunsee aquifer, which reacts faster to rainfall — but that water also carries more iron, manganese, and dissolved solids than our main supply.

Our Year-Round Conservation Plan

In effect since May 1, 2024 — a permanent, common-sense watering schedule so every household does its part, every year, not just during emergencies.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
No watering	Odd addresses	Even addresses	No watering	No watering	Odd addresses	Even addresses

No watering or irrigation between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., any day of the week.

Still allowed anytime

Garden watering, washing vehicles or driveways, filling pools, and hauling in water from outside city limits (with notice).

New sod or seeding?

A \$50 permit from City Hall allows 14 days of unrestricted watering for areas larger than 25 sq. ft.

If the schedule isn't followed

1st–2nd violation: warning letter. 3rd: warning + disconnection, \$200 to reconnect. 4th+: \$400 to reconnect.

We're Not Alone — This Is a Statewide Trend

62%

of nearly 5,000 monitored wells across Nebraska showed declining groundwater levels in the state's 2026 report — after six straight years of drought statewide.

How Waverly compares

Statewide average decline: **about 0.3 ft in 2025.**

Waverly's wells this year alone: **1.8 to 3.4 ft.**

Our south wellfield aquifer is under more stress than the state as a whole — which is exactly why keeping up year-round conservation matters here, even in a wetter year.

What You Can Do

1

Follow the watering schedule

Odd addresses: Tue & Sat. Even addresses: Wed & Sun. Never 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

2

Fix leaks quickly

A single running toilet or dripping hose can waste thousands of gallons a month.

3

Water smart

Water lawns early morning or evening, and only as much as the grass actually needs.

4

Report water waste

Call Public Works if you see sprinklers running on off-days or during restricted hours.

5

Ask before big new water use

New sod, pools, or irrigation systems — check in with City Hall on permits and timing.

6

Stay informed

Watch citywaverly.com and city communications for any change in conservation status.

Questions?

We welcome your feedback as we continue to manage this together.

Tracey Whyman, Public Works Director

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citywaverly.com | Water Conservation Measures