

# Community Drought Action Plans

- Bloomington, Decatur, and Springfield have all developed action plans in preparation for drought
- All of these plans are similar in the sense that actions such as voluntary and mandatory water restrictions are all triggered by low water levels in their reservoirs
- However, the plans differ regarding how quickly such measures are implemented

# Community Drought Action Plans

- Decatur's plan provides the earliest implementation, as is appropriate given that the system is most susceptible to shorter droughts. Use of supplemental sources and voluntary restrictions may occur as soon as 6-8 weeks after the reservoir falls below full pool.
- Bloomington implements water restrictions in progressive stages. The most comprehensive restrictions may occur as soon as 6 months into an extreme multi-year drought. Because Illinois droughts normally begin in the summer, this means that restrictions would typically be initiated during the winter of the first year.

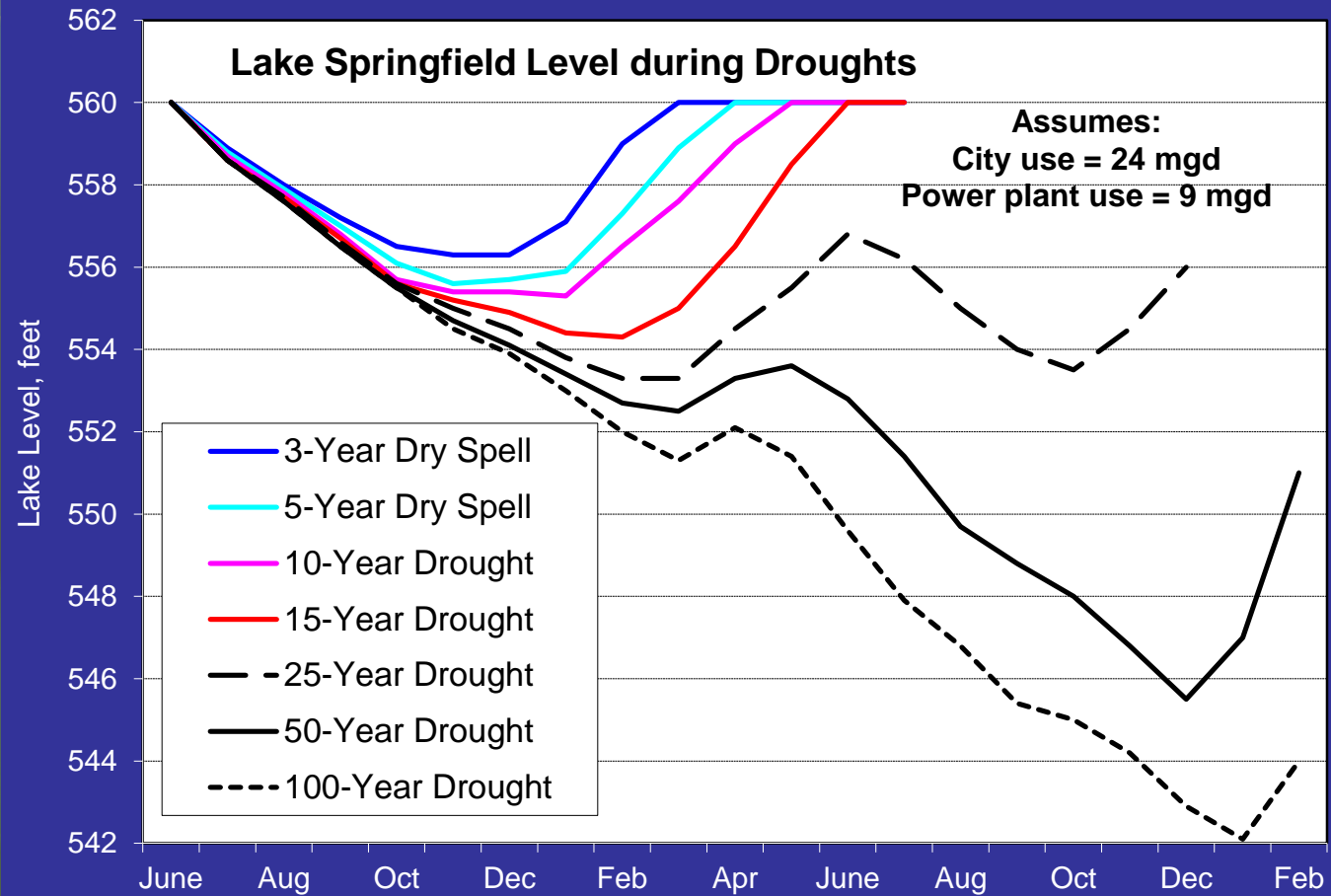
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- Although Springfield initiates the use of its supplement source quickly after their reservoir falls below full pool, water restrictions are not implemented until half-way through the multi-year drought (April-May of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year). Although this seems late, in reality restrictions implemented earlier in the winter/spring would likely do little to reduce total water use.
- Most restrictions mentioned in all 3 plans are focused on outdoor water uses. The plans tend to be less specific about what restrictions/rationing might be needed if supplies were to get very low.

# Community Drought Action Plans

- The worst droughts are long in duration, not necessarily more intense. We have very limited ability to forecast the onset of droughts; thus there is typically little or no perceived difference between an abnormally dry summer versus the onset of an extreme drought.
- For this reason, implementation of these drought plans may require restrictions in years that do not fully develop into severe droughts. This is particularly true for communities susceptible to short droughts such as Decatur.

# Springfield – onset of drought



# Community Drought Preparedness

- Every drought-vulnerable community should have a plan for addressing drought impacts.
- Implementation of community drought actions are useful in reducing the impacts of severe droughts. But simulations for these three communities indicate that the associated reductions in water use might delay but would not avoid shortages during a drought of record.
- For this reason, source development remains a neglected aspect of community drought preparedness.