



Drought Status Report

Navajo Nation Water Management Branch
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March/April 2009

Climate Summary by CLIMAS March 24, 2009

Drought— Above-average precipitation in December–February helped improve short-term drought conditions across northwestern Arizona. In New Mexico, drought conditions worsened with 55 percent of the state experiencing some level of drought.

Temperature— The past 30 days have brought warmer-than-average temperatures. Most of Arizona and nearly all of New Mexico have been 2–8 degrees F warmer than average.

Precipitation— In the past 30 days, most of Arizona and New Mexico has had less than 50 percent of average precipitation, with areas receiving less than 25 percent of average.

ENSO— The weak La Niña event that developed in December 2008 appears to be winding down.

Snow— Above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation over the past 30 days has led to a dramatic reduction in snowpack levels across much of Arizona and New Mexico.

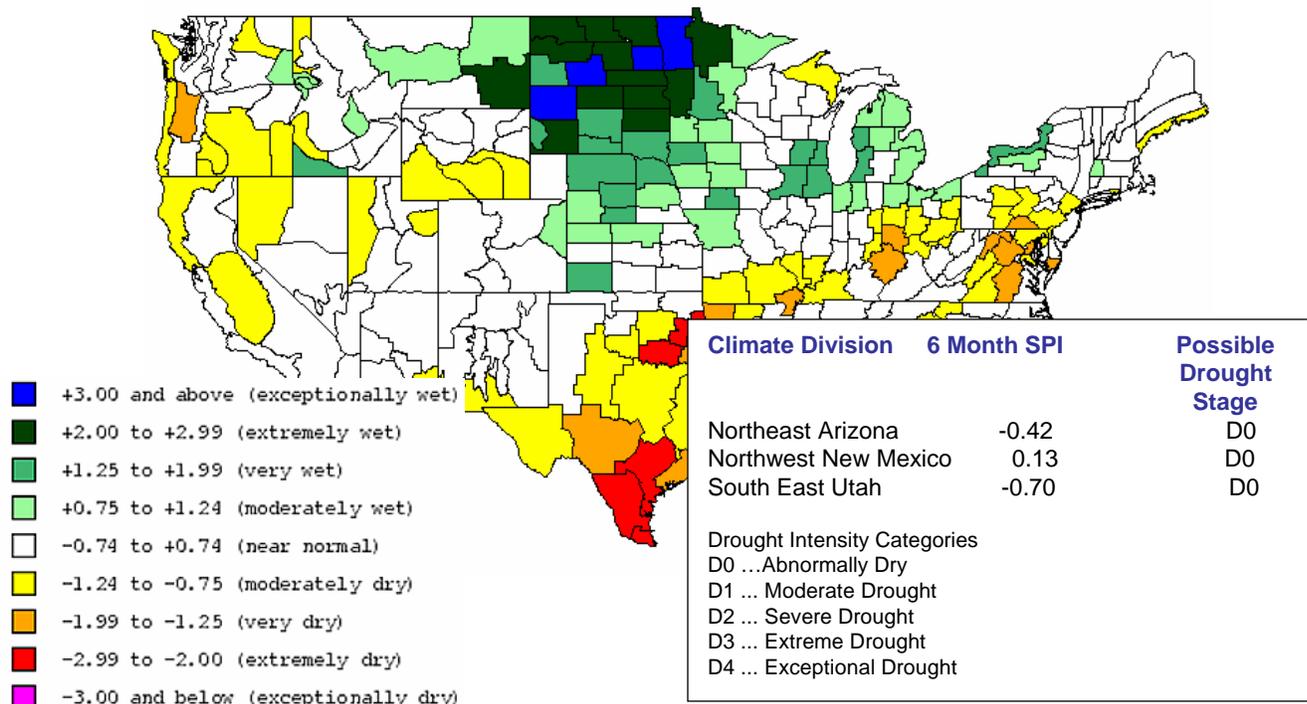
Climate Forecasts— Long-lead temperature forecasts show increasing chances that spring and summer temperatures in the Southwest will be similar to the warmest 10 years of the 1971–2000 period. Summer precipitation has higher chances of being similar to the wettest 10 years.

The Bottom Line— A warm and dry February has led to a dramatic reduction in snowpack. Arizona has experienced above-average precipitation since December, helping to improve short-term drought conditions across the northwestern part of the state. In New Mexico, drought conditions are worsening. While snowpack in Arizona and New Mexico are well below average, most snow monitoring stations in Colorado measure near-average or slightly below-average snow water content.

6-Month SPI by Western Regional

Climate Center

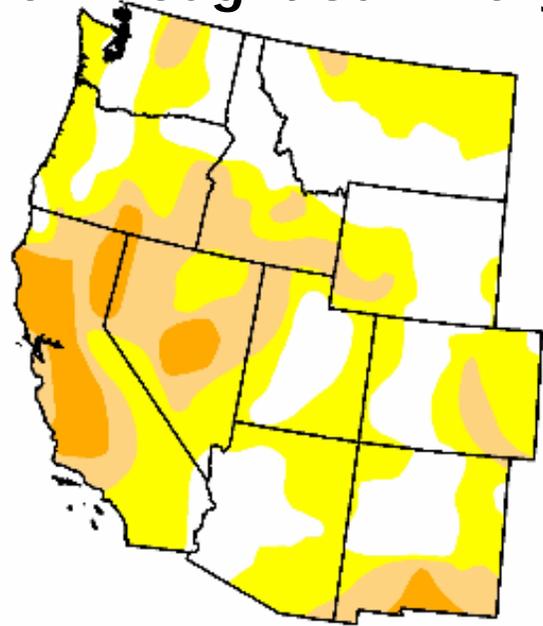
6-month Standardized Precipitation Index through the end of March 2009



April 14, 2009

by Nation Drought Mitigation Center
<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>

National Drought Summary



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional



Short Term

**Arizona Drought Status
(Released 4/16/2009)**

Short-term Drought Status Update

December through February brought near average or above average precipitation to most of Arizona. However, the southeastern watersheds have been very dry for the past six months. During February, winter storms that moved across northern and central Arizona did not dip southward into southern Arizona. This has adversely impacted short term drought conditions in the Upper Gila, San Simon and Santa Cruz watersheds. The Santa Cruz watershed has worsened from abnormally dry to moderate drought, while the Upper Gila and San Simon watersheds worsened from no drought to abnormally dry. In the Upper Gila, snowpack has dropped from 91% of average on February 1st to 54% of average on March 1st. Vegetation across southern Arizona also shows more stress than at the same time last year, so even though this winter began much like last winter, it has become much drier in the southern third of the



Long Term

Long-term Drought Status

The long-term drought status map will not be updated until April when the wet winter season is over. The map above includes data from the last four years, through December 2008. Although November and December were very wet, the La Niña storm track finally shifted to its historic pattern, which leads to dry winter conditions in much of Arizona. Most of January was drier than average across the entire state, as was February, so this may signal a shift back to dry winters. While the current high stream flows and full reservoirs within Arizona may seem to indicate the long-term drought is over, most of the state gets its water from the Colorado River system or groundwater. Colorado River basin reservoirs are still near 50% of capacity, and groundwater basins are generally slow to recharge, unless there is an exceptionally wet season, such as during 1982-1983.

Watershed Drought Level

- No Data
- Normal
- Abnormally Dry
- Drought - Moderate
- Drought - Severe
- Drought - Extreme