



Drought Status Report

Navajo Nation Water Management Branch
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April/May 2009

Climate Summary by CLIMAS April 24, 2009

Drought– Short-term drought conditions remained unchanged across northern Arizona, while worsening conditions were observed over the southeastern quarter of the state. For New Mexico, worsening drought conditions continued again this month; more than 60 percent of the state is experiencing some level of drought.

Temperature– The past 30 days brought a series of fairly dry cold fronts to the northern half of New Mexico and the northeast and northwest corners of Arizona, dropping temperatures as much as 3 degrees below average.

Precipitation– In the past 30 days, many parts of Arizona, and southern New Mexico had less than 25 percent of their average precipitation. Average precipitation since October 1 in many regions of both states has been less than 70 percent.

ENSO– The La Niña of 2008–2009 is almost over, and forecasts strongly support a quick move towards ENSO-neutral conditions over the next several months.

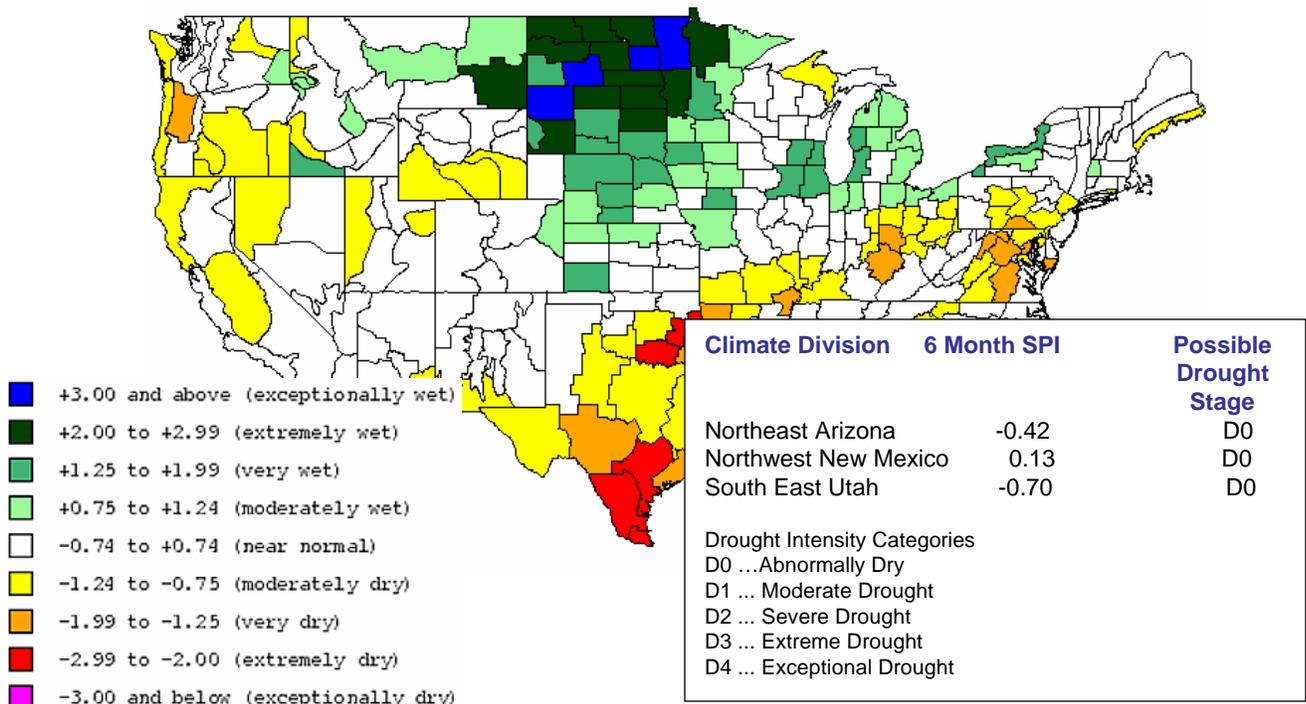
Climate Forecasts– The long-lead forecasts indicate the Southwest has increased chances for summer temperatures to be similar to the warmest 10 years of 1971–2000 and increased chances for precipitation through October to be similar to the wettest 10 years of 1971–2000.

The Bottom Line– Precipitation has been scant during the past 30 days. Mid-March to mid-April delivered less than 70 percent of average precipitation to most of the Southwest and only slightly more rainfall than mid-February to mid-March totals. As a result, drought conditions have expanded. Because April–June historically is very dry, the next sustained precipitation will likely not occur until the monsoon season Begins.

6-Month SPI by Western Regional

Climate Center

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



Navajo Nation Precipitation Collection Summary

Water Management Branch of Fort Defiance, AZ has a collection of rain cans placed in various areas across the Navajo Nation. On a monthly basis, these cans are checked for precipitation depths, manually. Collections are done during a 10 day window; the last 5 days of the month and the first 5 days of the following month. There are a total of 135 precipitation cans.

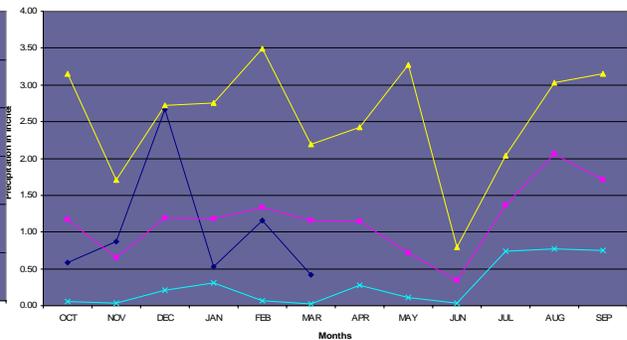
March 2009 Measurement

For the second month in a row, precipitation measurements are below average. All areas across the Navajo Nation reported significant winds and little rain fall for the month of March. The Navajo Nation itself still remains to be Abnormally Dry for April 2009 Long Term Drought Status according to the upcoming Arizona Drought Preparedness Plan by the Arizona Monitoring Technical Committee. Although we experienced relatively high precipitation averages for the month of December (above average), the Nation should still be on drought awareness for the upcoming season.

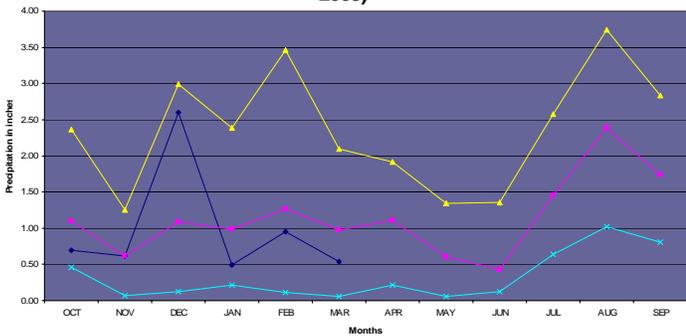
Average Precipitation for Eastern Agency (March 2009)



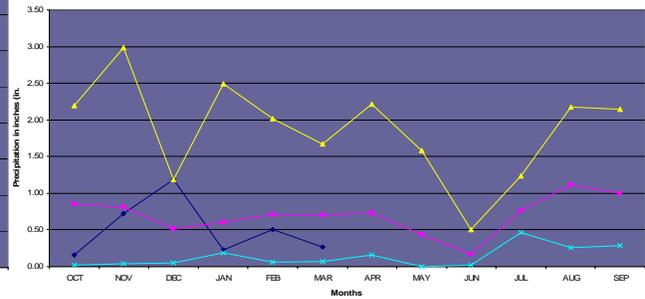
Average Precipitation for Chinle Agency (March 2009)



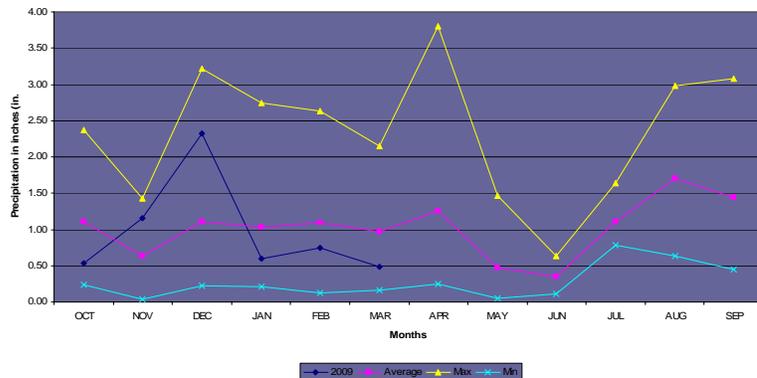
Average Precipitation for Fort Defiance Agency (March 2009)



Average Precipitation for Western Agency (March 2009)



Average Precipitation for Shiprock Agency (March 2009)



Legend: 2009 (dark blue), Average (magenta), Max (yellow), Min (cyan)