



United States Department of Agriculture

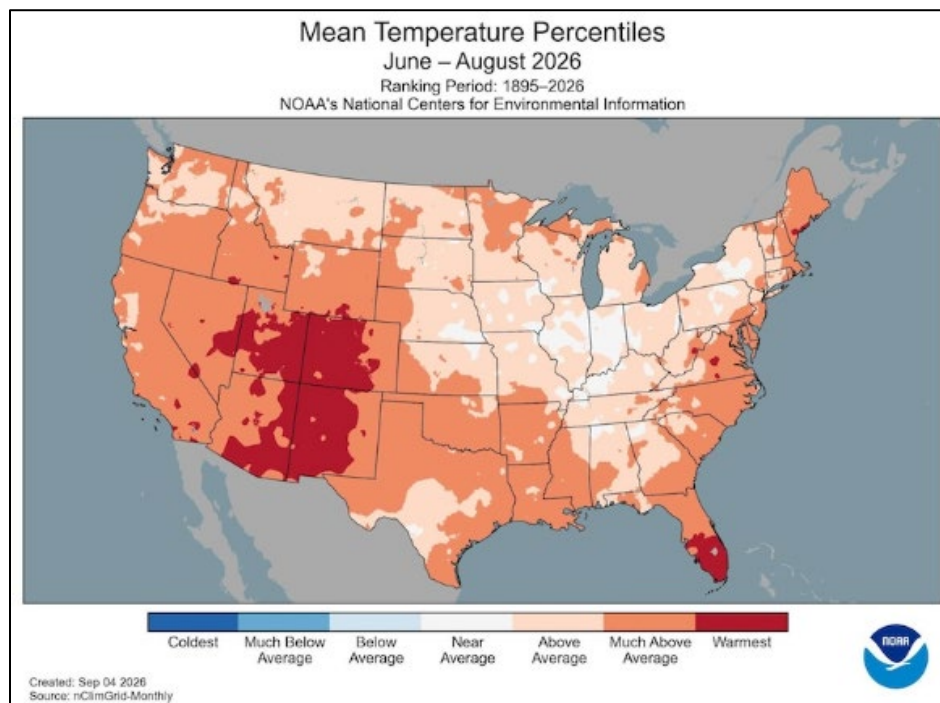
Water and Climate Update

September 24, 2026

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) produces this weekly report using data and products from the [National Water and Climate Center](#) and other agencies. The report focuses on seasonal snowpack, precipitation, temperature, and drought conditions in the U.S.

Precipitation	2	Other Climatic and Water Supply Indicators	12
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U.S. experiences hottest summer on record



The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) released a report summarizing the U.S. summer drought for 2026, and a contributing factor for the drought severity was the record-breaking heat in the U.S. According to the report, the average June through August temperatures were the hottest ever recorded in 132 years of measurement. The summer period was also dry overall, with precipitation amounts ranking third lowest on record for the contiguous U.S., though Alaska and Hawaii recorded above average precipitation. Other metrics shaping the severity of the drought included high evaporation rates, record and near-record low streamflow, and some instances of record low reservoir levels following the record low snowpack measured throughout most of the mountains in the western U.S. in 2026.

Related:

[Drought in Summer 2026 in 12 Maps and Graphs](#) – NIDIS

[Monitoring the U.S. Temperature and Precipitation in August 2026](#) – NOAA

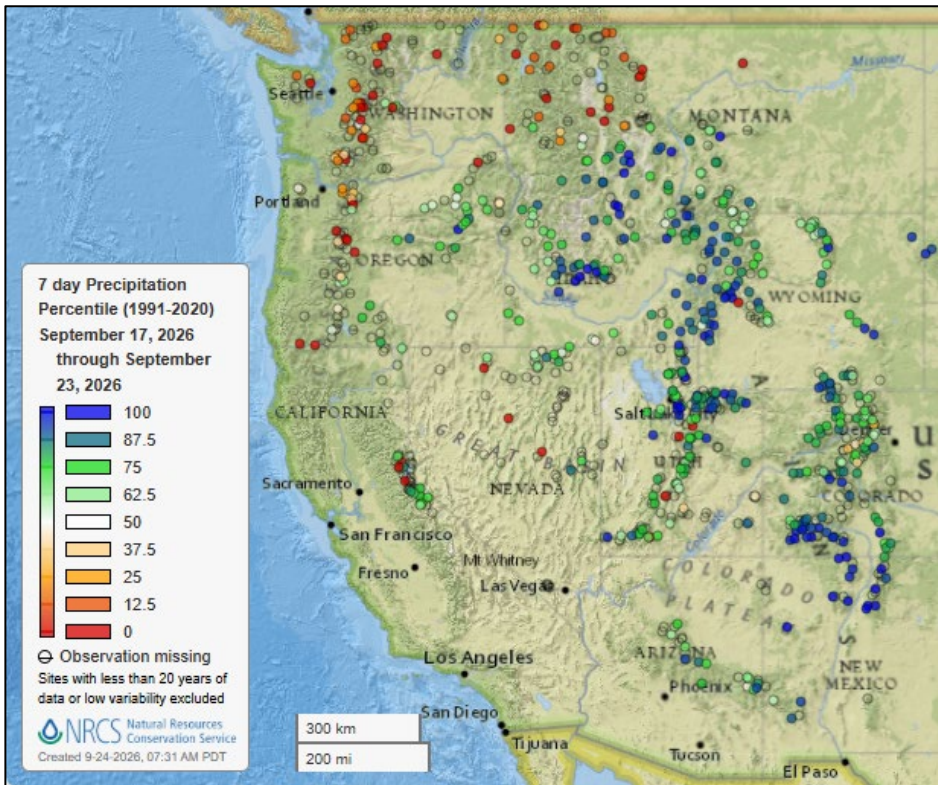
[Notable weather and climate events: August 2026](#) – NOAA

[Seasonal 2026 snowpack peak percentiles](#) – Interactive Map, NRCS Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program

The NRCS delivers practical, voluntary, and locally led conservation solutions that help producers conserve natural resources, strengthen agricultural production, and keep working lands productive for generations to come.

Precipitation

Last 7 Days, NRCS SNOTEL Network



[7-day precipitation percentile map](#)

See also:
[7-day total precipitation values \(inches\) map](#)

[Alaska 7-day precipitation percentile map](#)

See also:
[Alaska 7-day total precipitation values \(inches\) map](#)



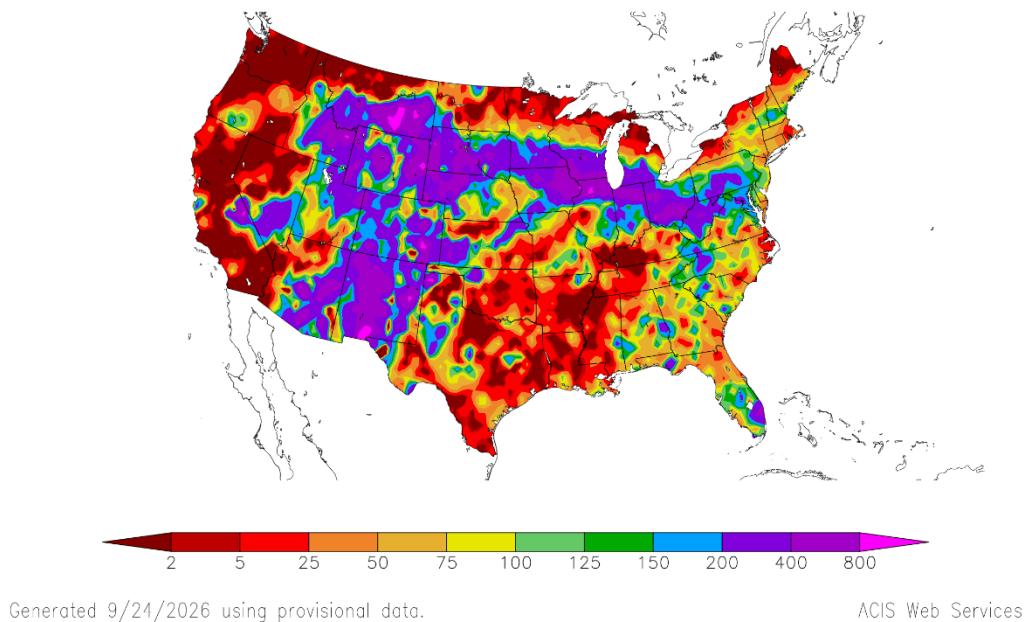
Last 7 Days, National Weather Service (NWS) Networks

Source: Regional Climate Centers

[7-day precipitation percent of normal map](#) for the continental U.S.

See also: [7-day total precipitation values \(inches\) map](#)

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
9/17/2026 – 9/23/2026



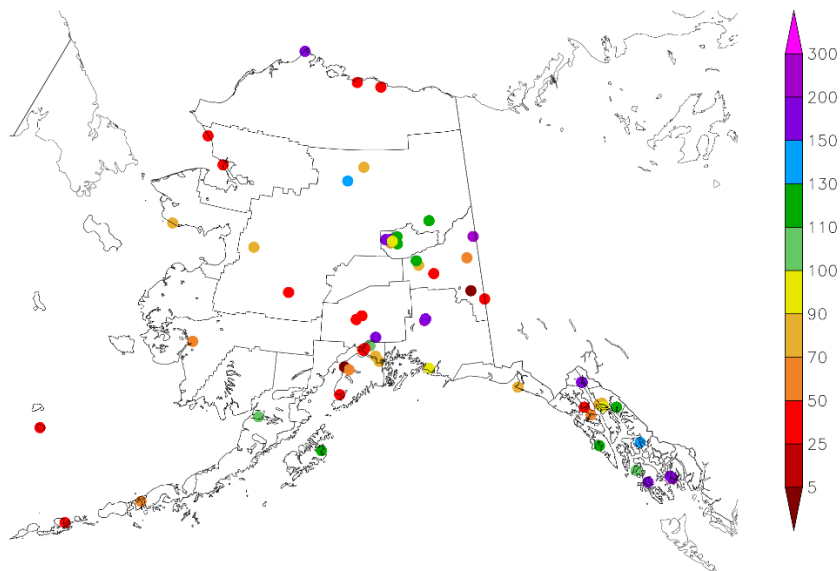
Last 7 Days, National Weather Service (NWS) Networks

Source: Regional Climate Centers

[7-day precipitation percent of normal map](#) for Alaska.

See also: [7-day total precipitation values \(inches\) map](#)

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
9/17/2026 – 9/23/2026



Month-to-Date, All Available Data Including SNOTEL and NWS Networks

Source: PRISM

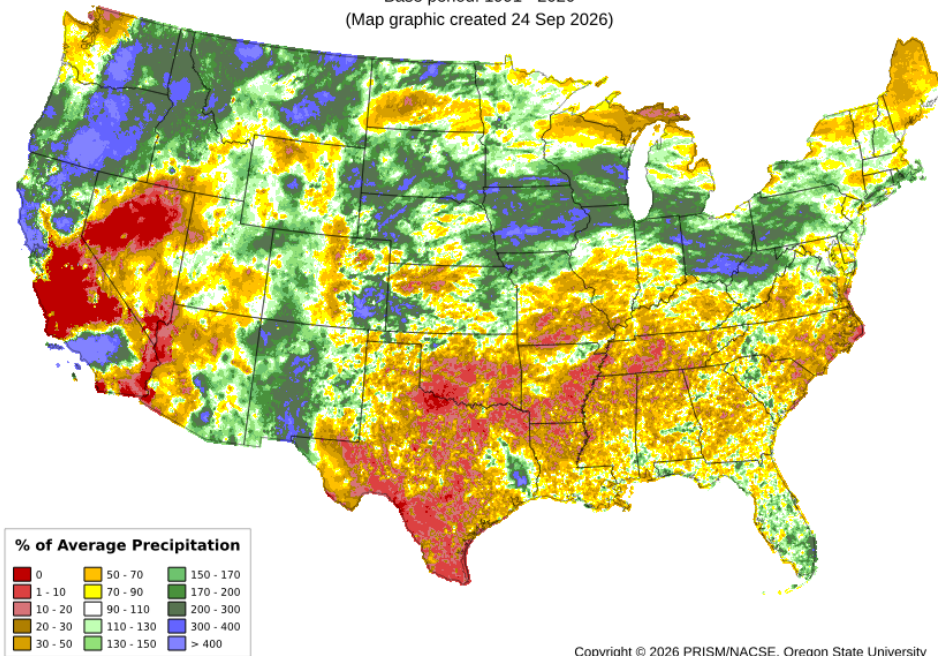
Total Precipitation Anomaly: 01 Sep 2026 - 23 Sep 2026

Period ending 7 AM EST 23 Sep 2026

Base period: 1991 - 2020

(Map graphic created 24 Sep 2026)

[Month-to-date national
total precipitation
anomaly map](#)



Last 3 Months, All Available Data Including SNOTEL and NWS Networks

Source: PRISM

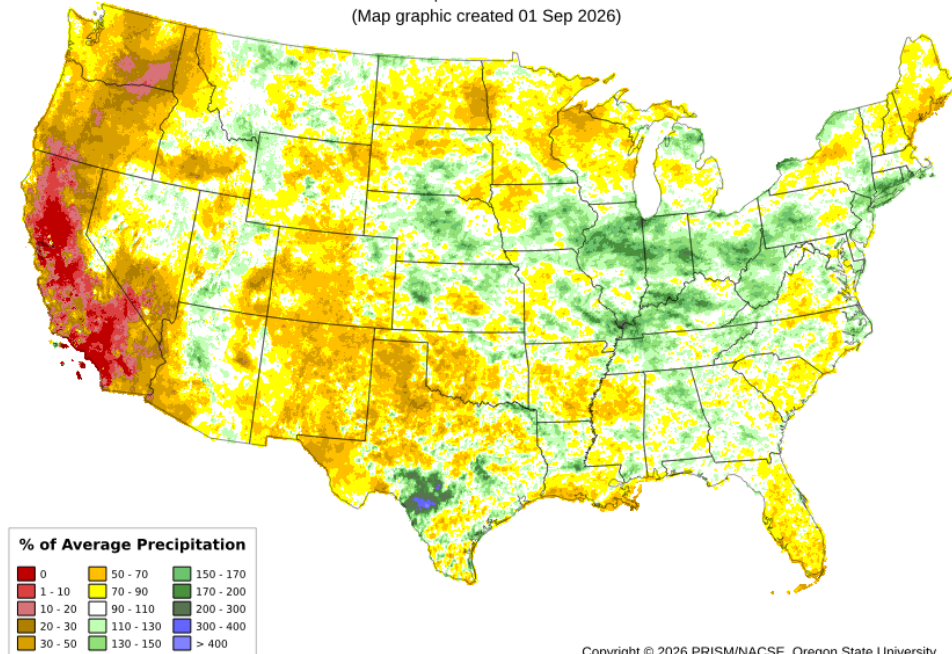
[June through
August 2026
precipitation
anomaly map](#)

Total Precipitation Anomaly: Jun 2026 - Aug 2026

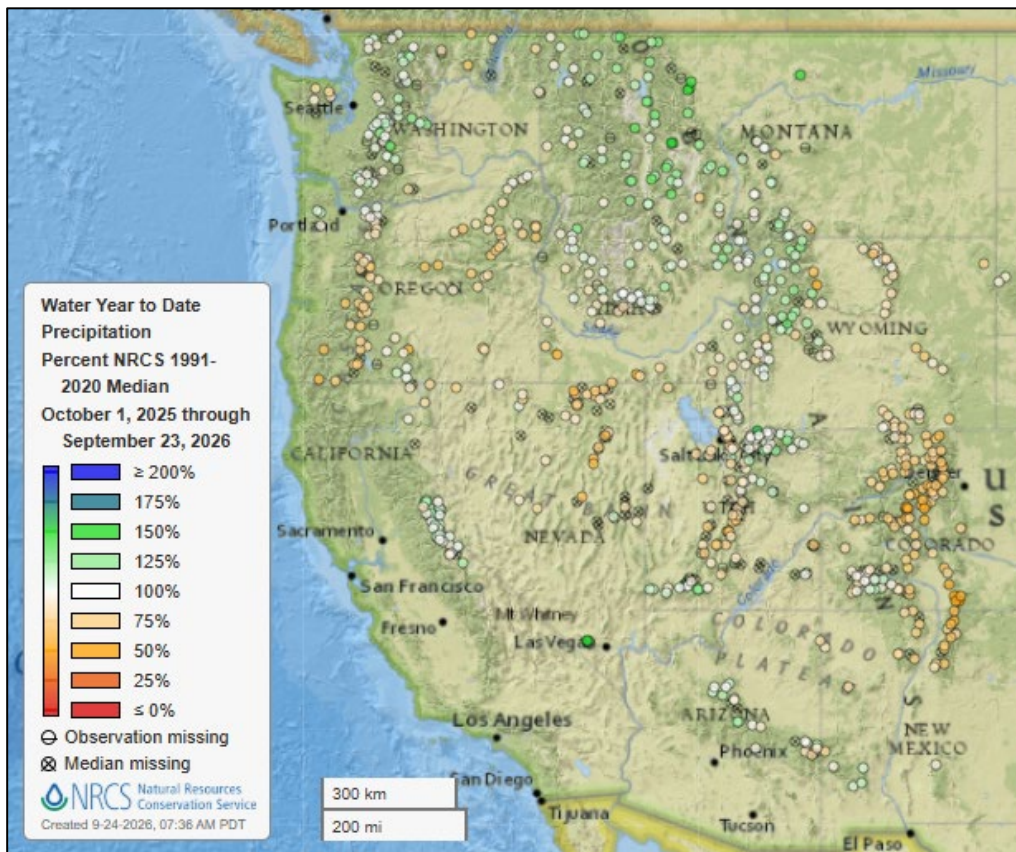
Period ending 7 AM EST 31 Aug 2026

Base period: 1991 - 2020

(Map graphic created 01 Sep 2026)



Water Year-to-Date, NRCS SNOTEL Network

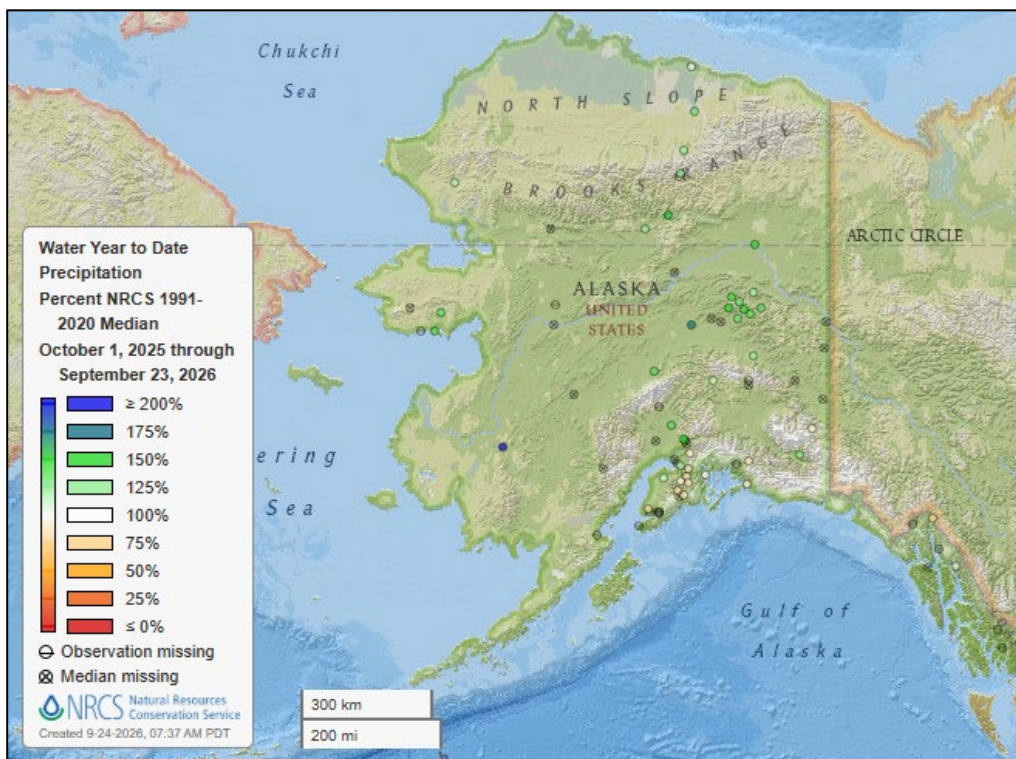


[2026 water year-to-date precipitation percent of median map](#)

See also:

[2026 water year-to-date precipitation percent of average map](#)

[2026 water year-to-date precipitation values \(inches\) map](#)



[Alaska 2026 water year-to-date precipitation percent of median map](#)

See also:

[Alaska 2026 water year-to-date precipitation percent of average map](#)

[Alaska 2026 water year-to-date precipitation values \(inches\) map](#)

Temperature

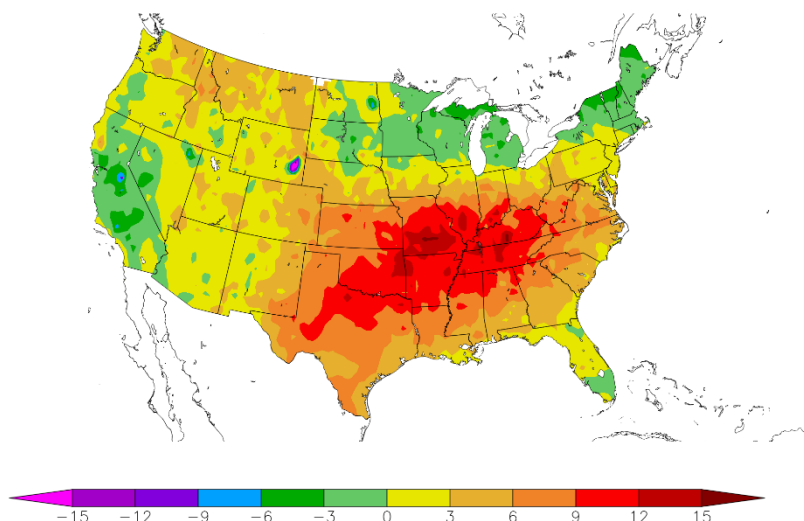
Last 7 Days, National Weather Service (NWS) Networks

Source: Regional Climate Centers

[7-day temperature anomaly map](#) for the contiguous U.S.

See also: [7-day temperature \(° F\) map](#)

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
9/17/2026 – 9/23/2026



ACIS Web Services

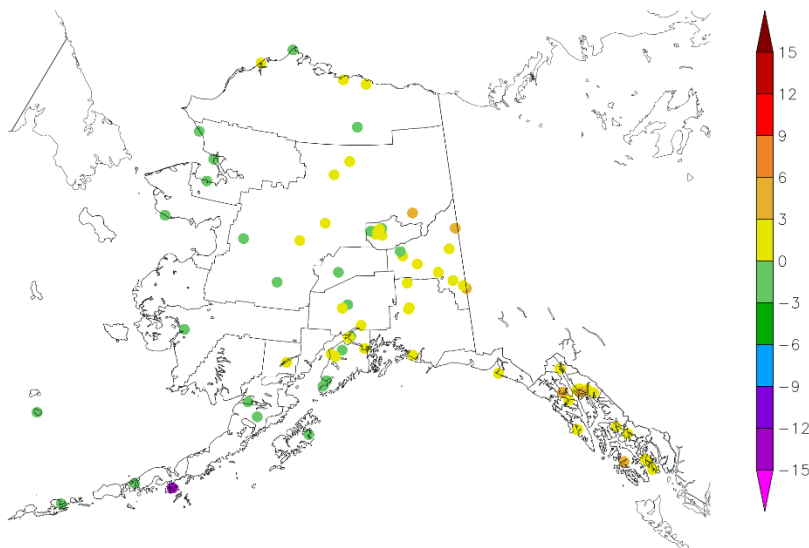
Last 7 Days, National Weather Service (NWS) Networks

Source: Regional Climate Centers

[7-day temperature anomaly map](#) for Alaska.

See also: [7-day temperature \(° F\) map](#)

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
9/17/2026 – 9/23/2026

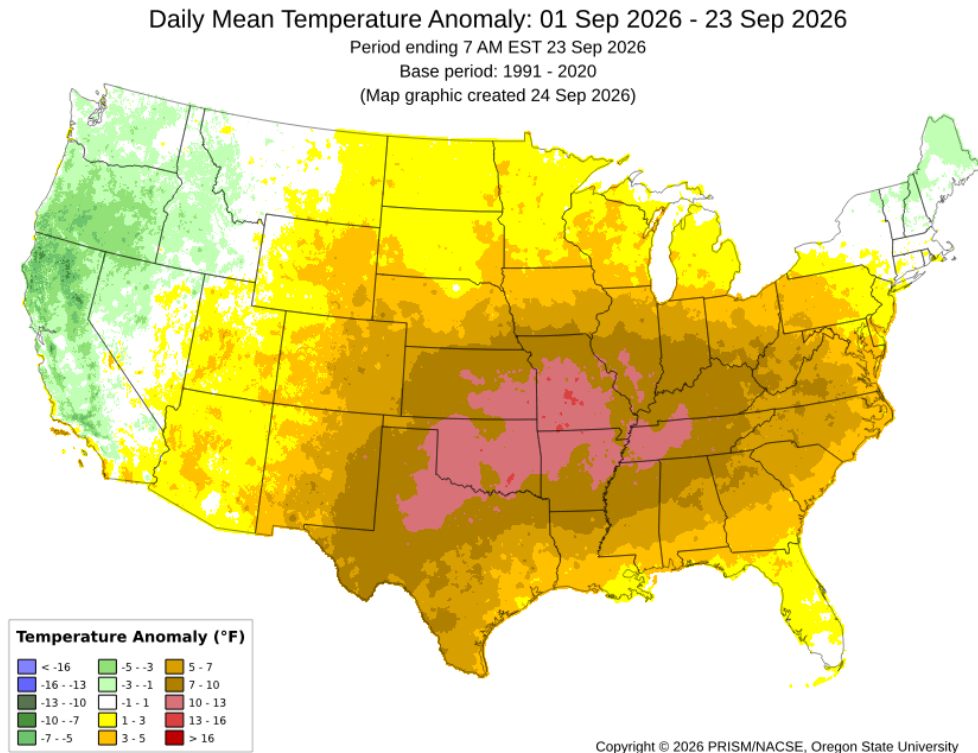


ACIS Web Services

Month-to-Date, All Available Data Including SNOTEL and NWS Networks

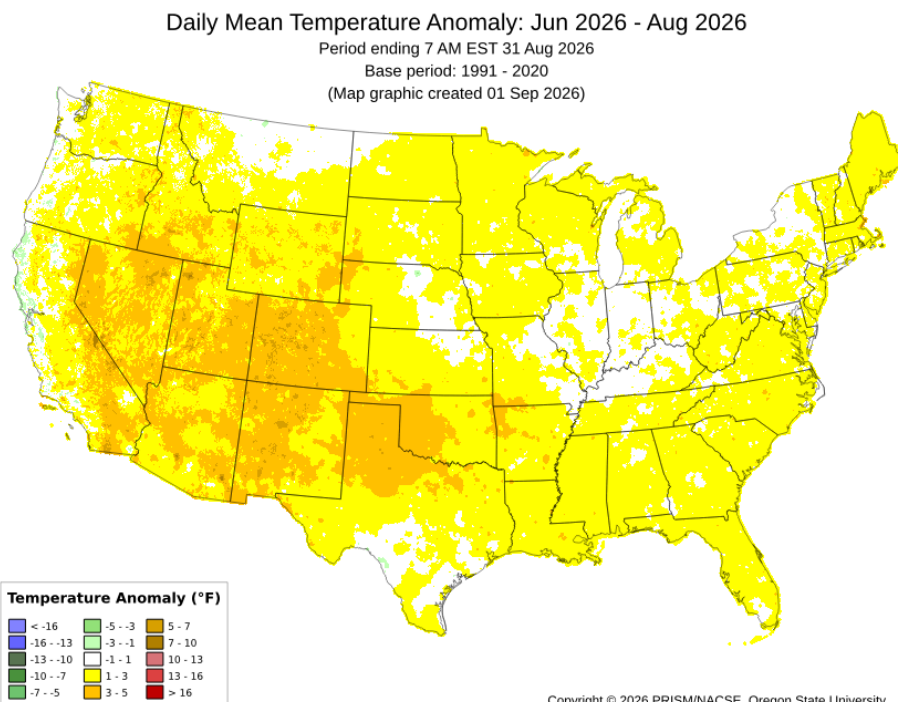
Source: PRISM

[Month-to-date
national daily
mean
temperature
anomaly map](#)



Last 3 Months, All Available Data Including SNOTEL and NWS Networks

Source: PRISM



[June through August
2026 daily mean
temperature anomaly
map](#)

Drought

[U.S. Drought Monitor](#)

Source: National Drought Mitigation Center

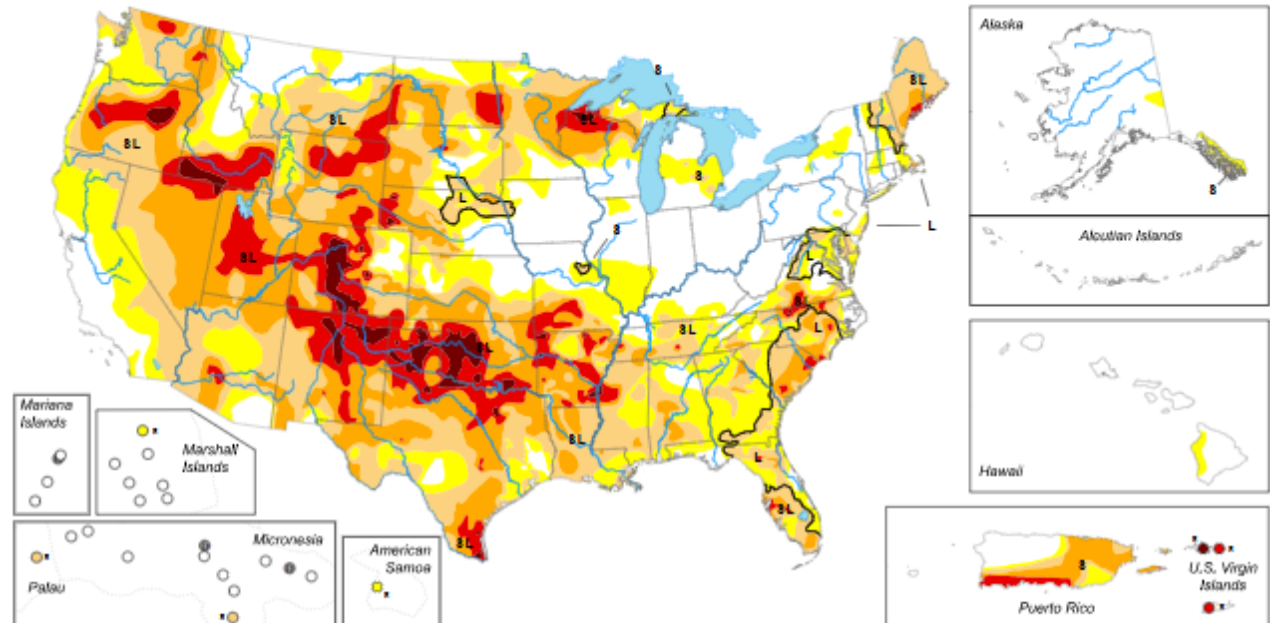
[U.S. Drought Portal](#)

Source: NOAA

Map released: September 24, 2026

Data valid: September 22, 2026

☐ View grayscale version of the map



United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):

[David Mocko](#), NASA/GSFC/SSAI

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):

[Lindsay Johnson](#), National Drought Mitigation Center

More maps and statistics:

[U.S. States and Puerto Rico](#)

[Continental U.S.](#)

[Regions -](#)

The data cutoff for Drought Monitor maps is each Tuesday at 8 a.m. EDT. The maps, which are based on analysis of the data, are released each Thursday at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

Intensity and Impacts

☐ None	☐ D1 (Moderate Drought)	☐ D3 (Extreme Drought)	☐ No Data
☐ D0 (Abnormally Dry)	☐ D2 (Severe Drought)	☐ D4 (Exceptional Drought)	
- Delineates dominant impacts	S - Short-term impacts, typically less than 6 months (agriculture, grasslands)	L - Long-term impacts, typically greater than 6 months (hydrology, ecology)	SL - Short- and long-term impacts

Current [National Drought Summary](#), September 22, 2026

Source: National Drought Mitigation Center

"The pattern of hot and dry in the south with heavy rainfall to the north of the high-pressure system continued over this past week. The highest precipitation amounts were from eastern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota to the east through southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois, to Ohio and West Virginia. Localized areas in this region received 6 to 8 inches of rainfall. Northeastern Kansas and northern Missouri received 3 to 5 inches, with western Nebraska to southeastern Montana picking up 2 to 3 inches. Monsoonal rain also fell in eastern Arizona to central New Mexico. Southern Florida also received several inches of rain over the week. Precipitation was very spotty and generally light, however, in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, southern Missouri, and western Tennessee and Kentucky. Most of the west coast states had little rain.

Most of the south was again 5 to 10F above normal last week, peaking at over 15F above normal in parts of southern Missouri. Several states are setting records for continued warmth during this late summer to early fall period. The rest of the continental U.S. had generally near-normal temperatures."

National Drought Summary – Looking Ahead

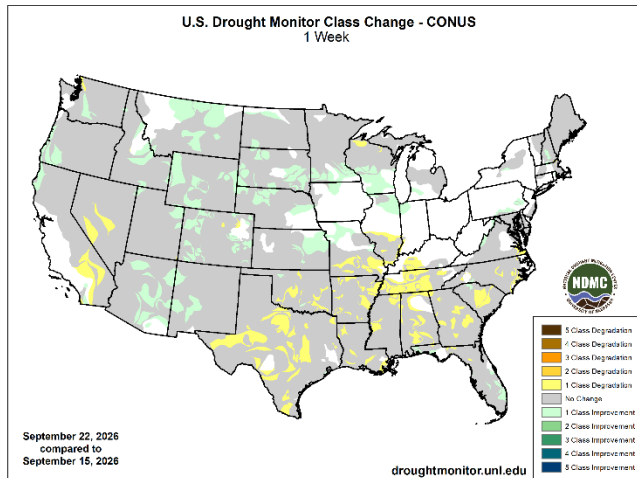
"The next five days are forecast to be wet along the northeastern coast from a nor'easter. The northwest is also predicted to receive needed precipitation. Remnants of a tropical system will provide significant moisture into the Four Corners states and the western Great Plains with heavy rainfall in the forecast. Parts of the northern Great Plains are also forecast to receive welcome precipitation. Areas with little rain in the forecast over the next five days are much of Texas and Louisiana, around the Great Lakes, and California and Nevada. The south and southwest should continue to have above normal temperatures, with cooler temperatures in the northeast and the northwest.

The 6- to 10-day outlook (September 29 to October 3) favors above normal temperatures over the southern half of the continental U.S. as well as the northeast. Hawaii is also likely to have above normal temperatures. The Great Basin area could have below normal rainfall, while above normal is possible over much of the central U.S. Both Hawaii and eastern Alaska are also favored to have above normal precipitation during this period."

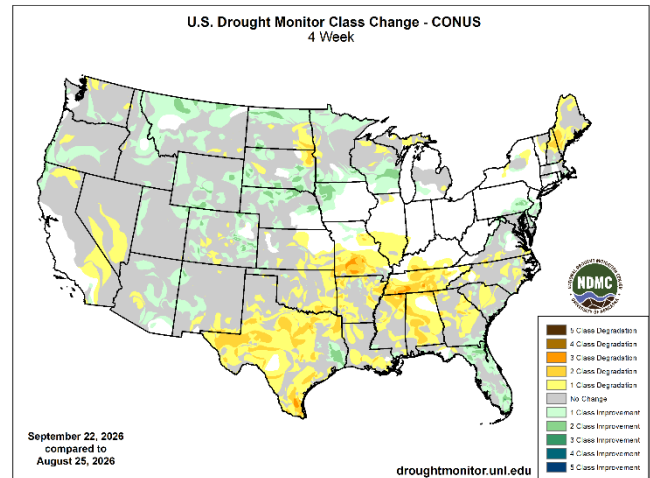
Changes in Drought Monitor Categories over Time

Source: National Drought Mitigation Center

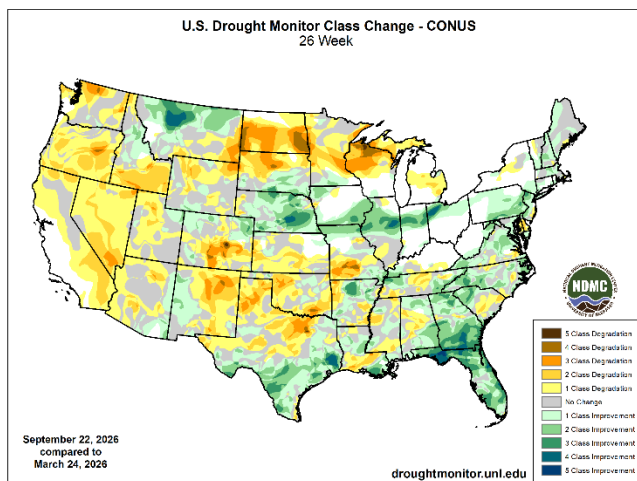
1 Week



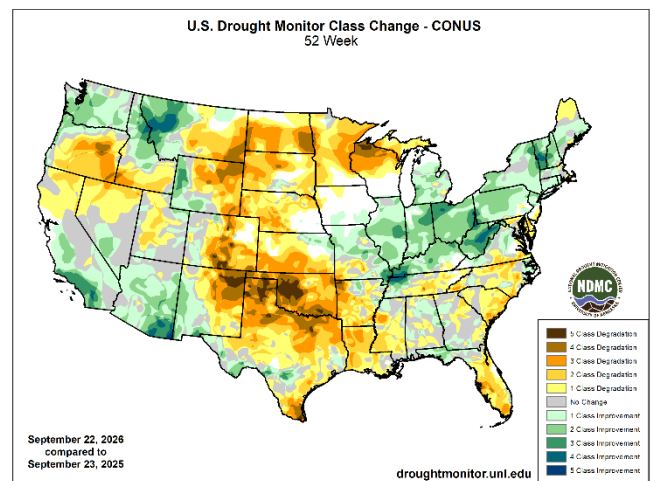
1 Month



6 Months



1 Year



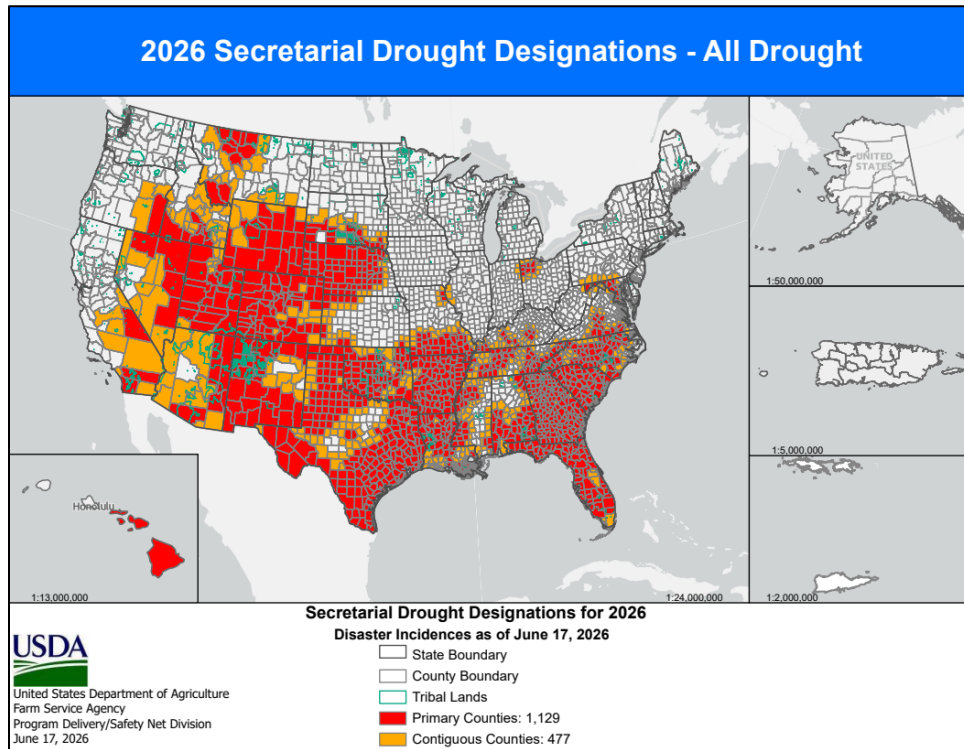
[Changes in drought conditions over the last 12 months for the contiguous U.S.](#)

Highlighted Drought Resources

- [Drought Impact Reporter](#)
- [Quarterly Regional Climate Impacts and Outlook](#)
- [U.S. Drought Portal Indicators and Monitoring](#)
- [U.S. Population in Drought, Weekly Comparison](#)
- [USDA Disaster and Drought Information](#)

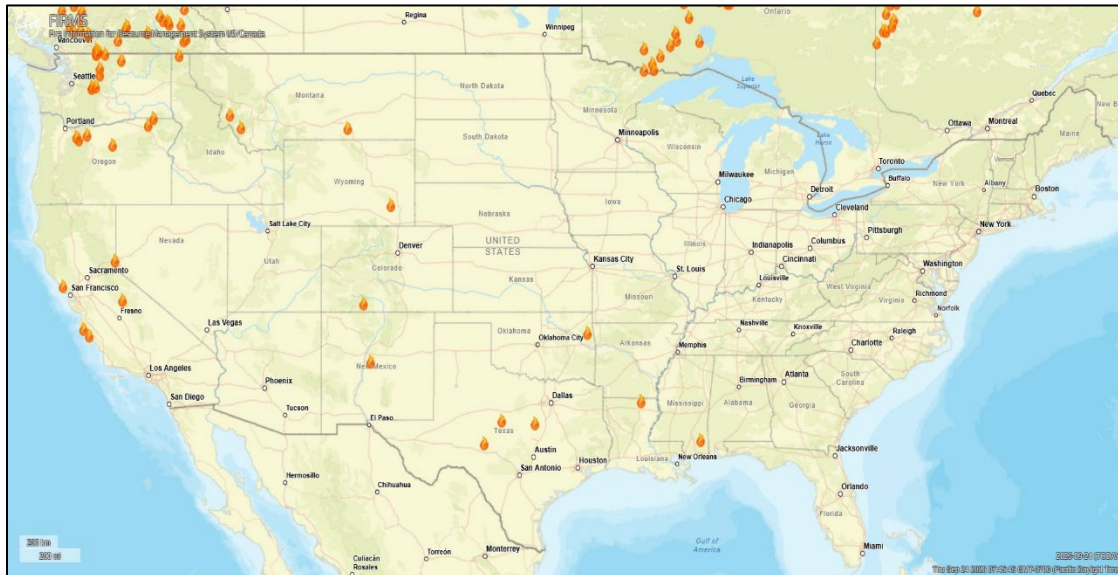
USDA Secretarial [Drought Designations](#)

Source: USDA Farm Service Agency



Wildfires: [Fire Information for Resource Management System US/Canada](#)

Source: NASA/USDA Forest Service



Current large wildland fires, as classified by the National Interagency Coordination Center

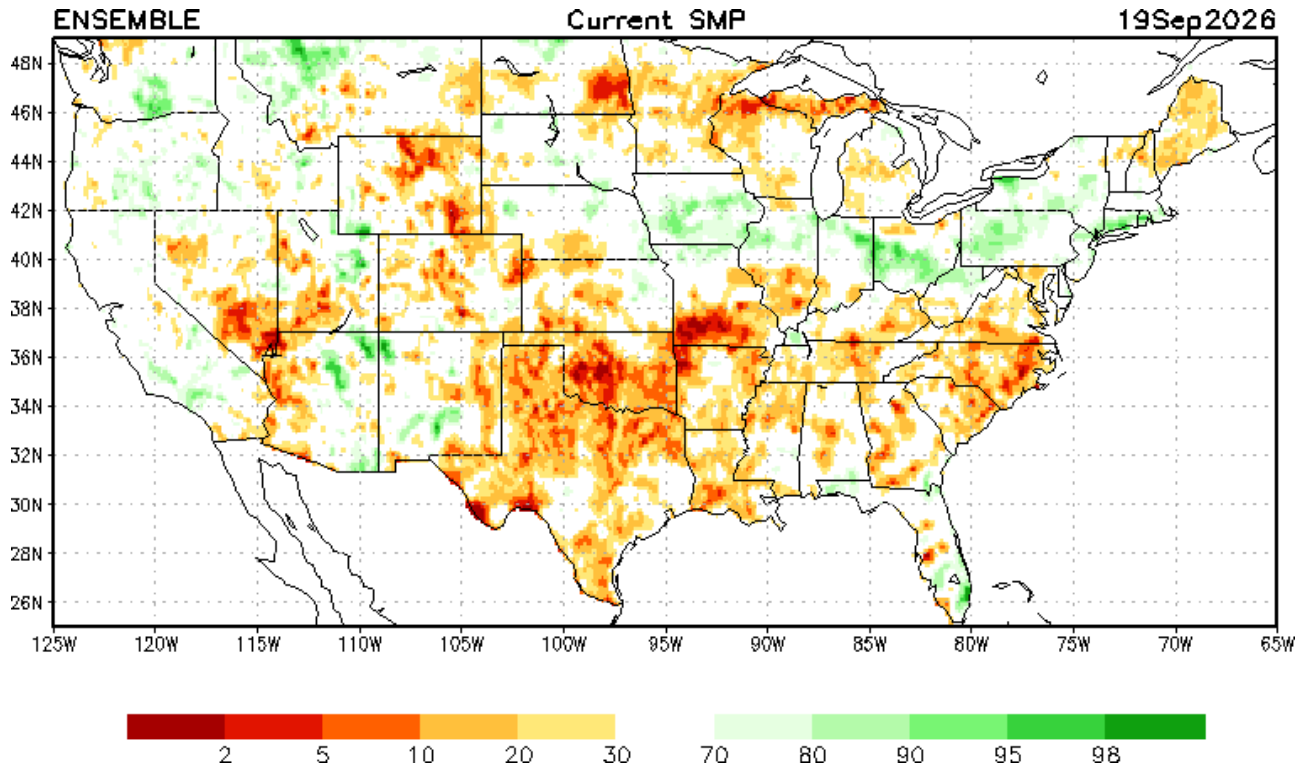
Highlighted Wildfire Resources

- [National Interagency Fire Center](#)
- [InciWeb Incident Information System](#)
- [Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook](#)

Other Climatic and Water Supply Indicators

Soil Moisture

Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Prediction

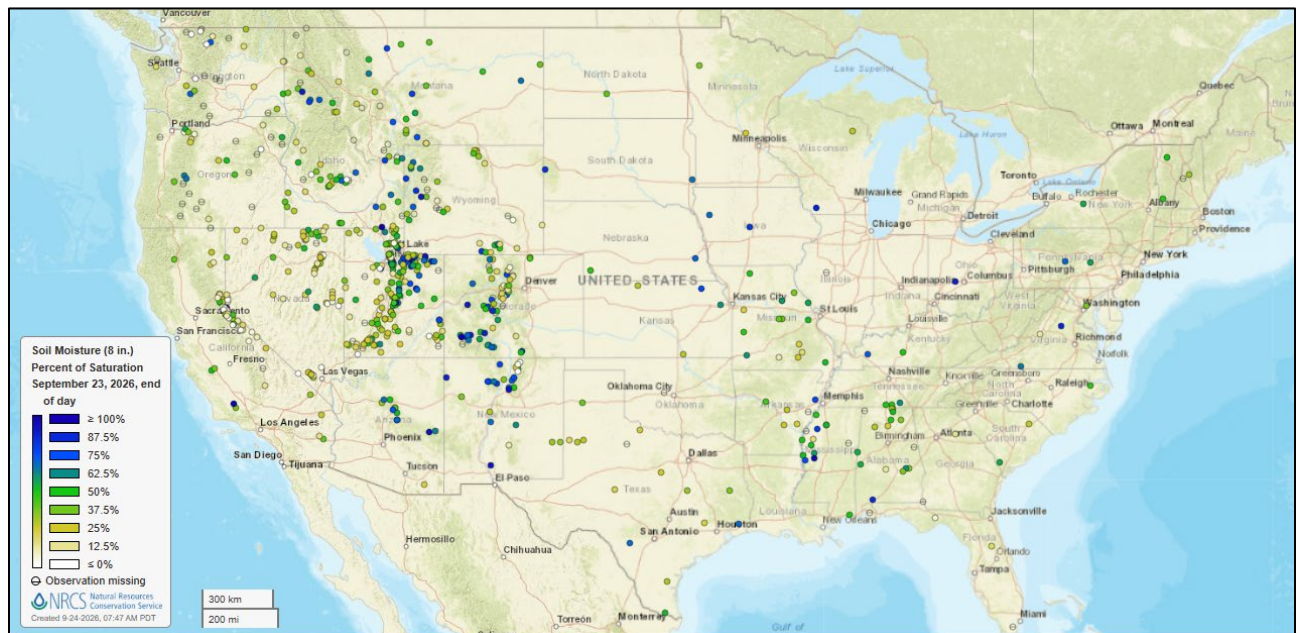


[Modeled soil moisture percentiles](#) as of September 19, 2026

Soil Moisture Percent of Saturation

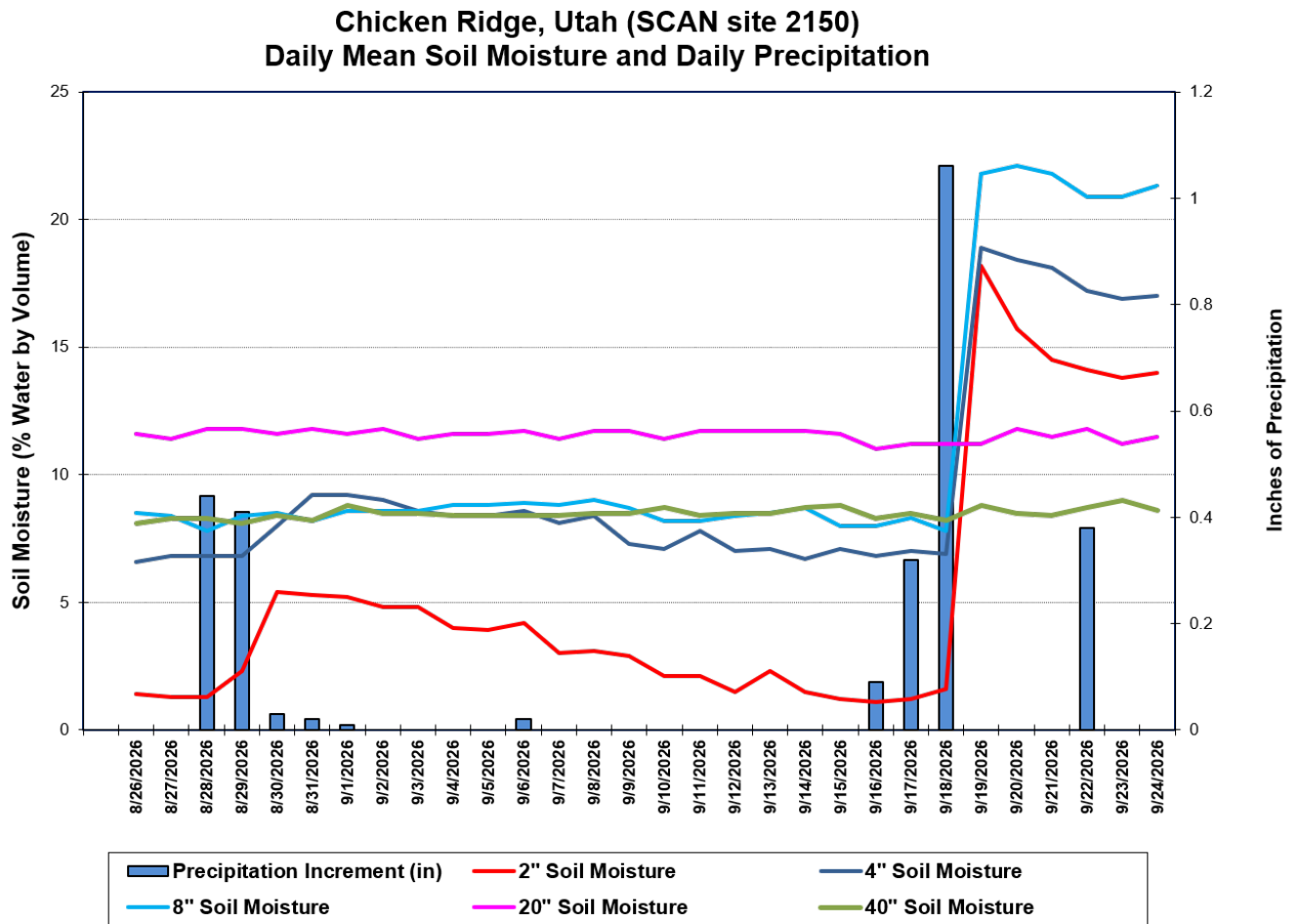
Source: NRCS SNOTEL and [Soil Climate Analysis Network](#) (SCAN)

[U.S. soil moisture map at 8-inch depth:](#)



Soil Moisture

Source: NRCS [Soil Climate Analysis Network](#) (SCAN)



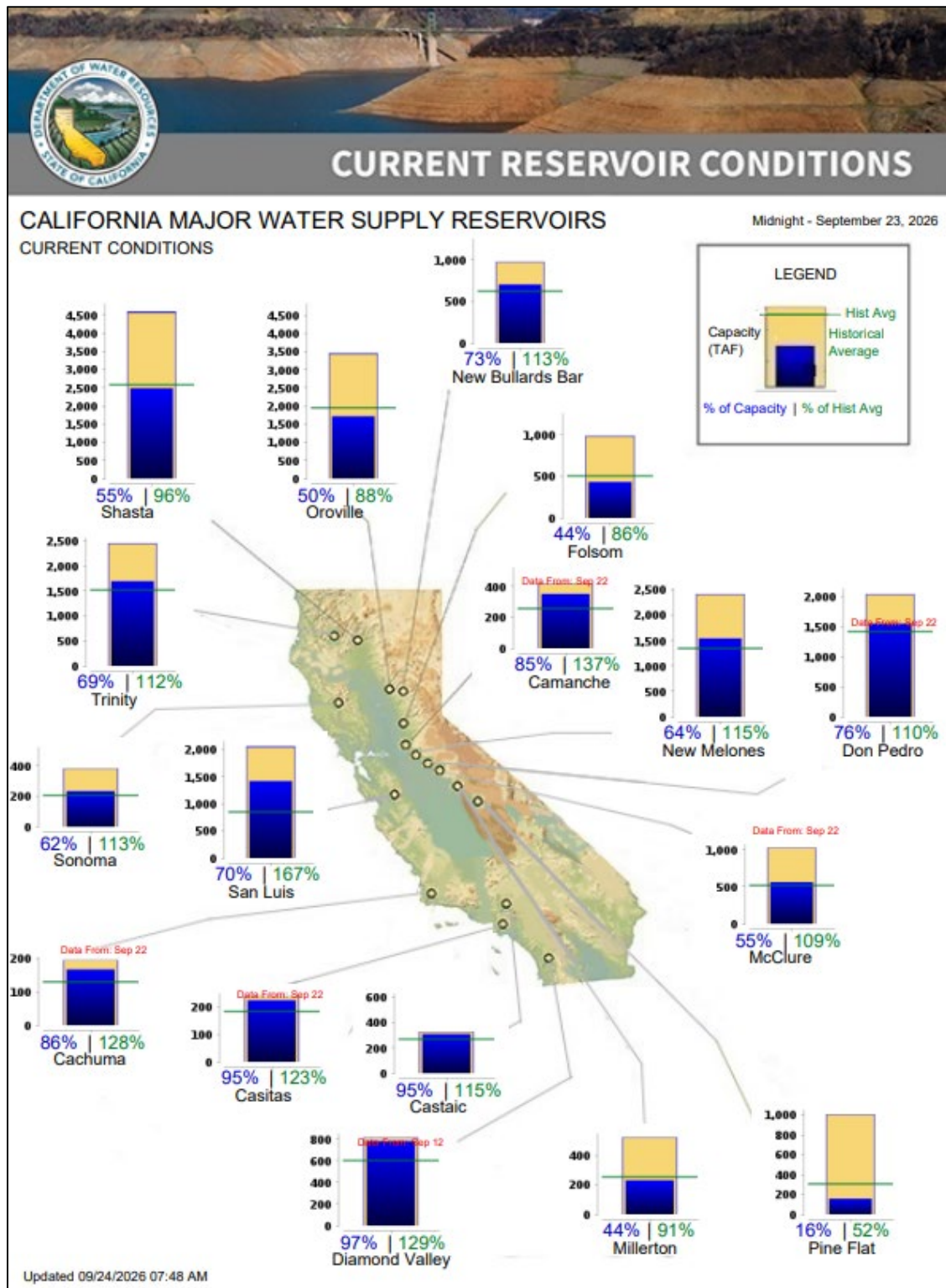
This chart shows the precipitation and soil moisture for the last 30 days at the [Chicken Ridge](#) SCAN site in Utah. Soil sensors two, four, and eight inches beneath land surface recorded pronounced increases in soil moisture after the site received 1.47 inches of precipitation between September 16-18. Total precipitation for the 30-day period was 2.78 inches.

Soil Moisture Data Portals

- [USCRN Soil Moisture](#)
- [National Soil Moisture Network](#)
- [NOAA Climate Prediction Center Soil Moisture](#)
- [NASA Grace](#)

Current California Reservoir Conditions

Source: California Department of Water Resources



[Current California Reservoir Conditions](#)

Agricultural Weather Highlights

Author: Brad Rippey, Agricultural Meteorologist, USDA/OCE/WAOB

National Outlook, Thursday September 24, 2026: “In Hawaii, the approach of Tropical Storm Nolo—soon expected to become a hurricane—may cause catastrophic flooding and debris flows on the Big Island, just over 2 months after Hurricane Lala resulted in major flooding. Nolo should lead to widespread rainfall totals of 15 to 30 inches on the Big Island and 5 to 10 inches or more on parts of Maui. Meanwhile, a storm system near the Atlantic Seaboard will induce high winds, heavy surf, and coastal flooding. Additionally, the storm will be close enough to the northern Atlantic Coast to spark weekend rainfall totals of 2 to 4 inches or more. Meanwhile, a separate area of unsettled weather will stretch from the Southwest into the upper Midwest, as tropical moisture originating from over the eastern Pacific Ocean interacts with a frontal boundary. Five-day rainfall totals should reach 1 to 3 inches from the southern Rockies into the far upper Midwest, including the western Corn Belt. Elsewhere, mostly dry weather will prevail during the next 5 days across the Deep South and east of the Mississippi River, except along portions of the Atlantic Coast. Mostly dry weather will also stretch from California to the northern Rockies. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for September 29 – October 3 calls for near- or above-normal temperatures nationwide, with the Gulf Coast region and the eastern U.S. having the greatest likelihood of experiencing unusual warmth. Meanwhile, near- or above-normal precipitation across most of the U.S. should contrast with drier-than-normal weather in an area stretching from the Great Basin to the northern Rockies.”

Weather Hazards Outlook: [September 26 – 30, 2026](#)

Source: NOAA Weather Prediction Center

U.S. Day 3-7 Hazards Outlook

About the Hazards Outlook

Created September 23, 2026

Precipitation	☒
Temperature	☒
Wildfires	☒
Soils	☐
Flooding	☒

Legend	
	Flooding Likely
	Flooding Occurring or Imminent
	Flooding Possible
	Freezing Rain
	Heavy Precipitation
	Heavy Rain
	Heavy Snow
	Hazardous Heat
	Hazardous Cold
	Frost/Freeze
	High Winds
	Significant Waves
	Critical Wildfire Risk
	Severe Weather

Valid September 26, 2026 - September 30, 2026

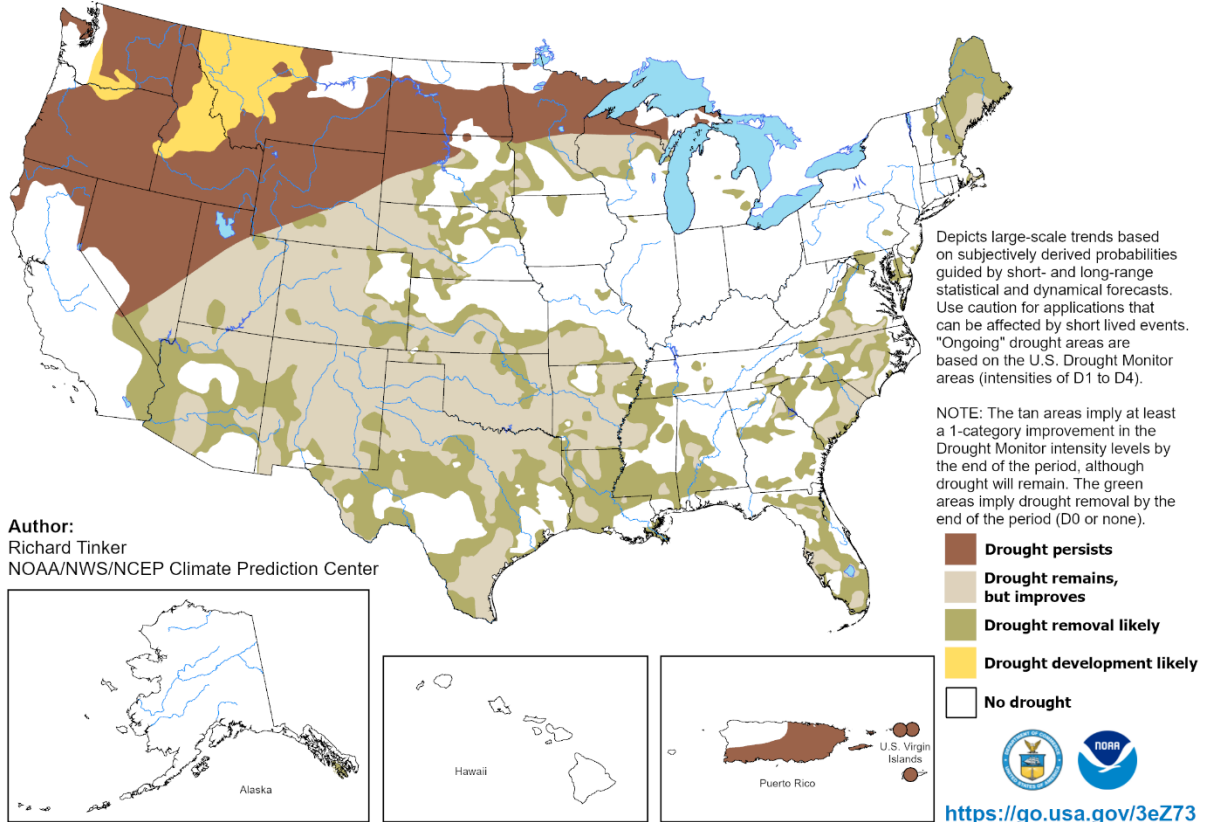


Seasonal Drought Outlook: [September 17 – December 31, 2026](#)

Source: National Weather Service

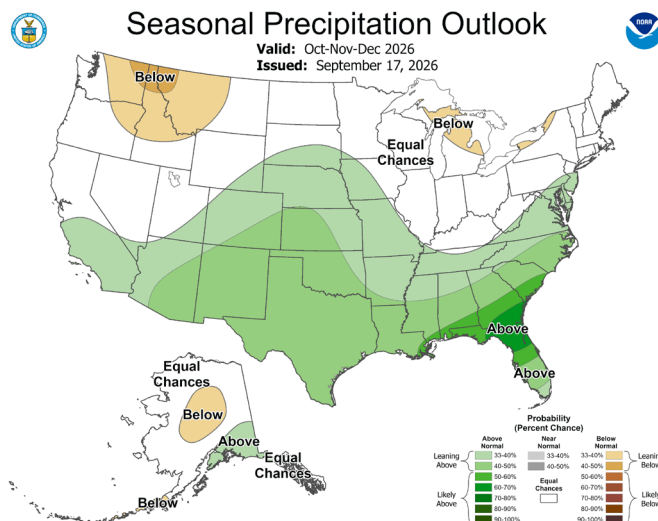
U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for September 17 - December 31, 2026
Released September 17, 2026

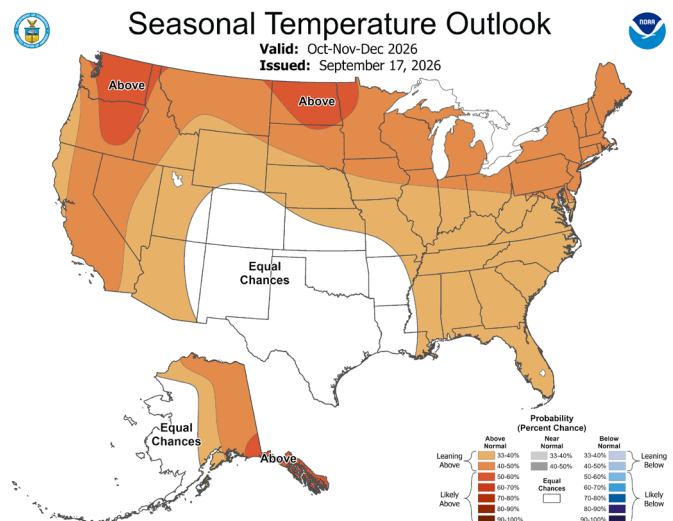


Climate Prediction Center Three-month Outlook

[Precipitation](#)



[Temperature](#)



[October-November-December 2026 precipitation and temperature outlook summaries](#)

More Information

The NRCS [National Water and Climate Center](#) publishes this weekly report. We welcome your feedback. If you have questions or comments, please [contact us](#).