

***When the drought status of adjacent watersheds differs by more than two drought categories...***

Occasionally, the drought status of adjacent watersheds on the long-term drought status map will differ as much as three drought categories, as seen in the southwestern corner of the sample map. This is because each watershed reflects the average for the precipitation stations within that watershed, and most of the watersheds have very few gages. The sharp boundaries are misleading, as the drought does not end at a watershed boundary. Rather, the impacts gradually transition from one watershed to another. Eventually, when we are able to use gridded data for calculating the Standardized Precipitation Index, the boundaries between drought categories will be more gradual and less stark.

--Arizona Drought Monitoring Technical Committee, 2011

