

Drought Status Update

Short-term Drought Status Update

Despite the relatively wet conditions of November and December in many parts of the state, the upper Colorado River basin and the southern watersheds are well below their average precipitation over the past 12 months.

The rainfall deficit has resulted in the expansion of moderate drought (D1) into northern Mohave County and along the western side of the lower Colorado River valley. Although some areas of Mohave County had rainfall over the last month, the distribution was quite localized, and the drought in Mohave County has caused a significant loss of cattle.

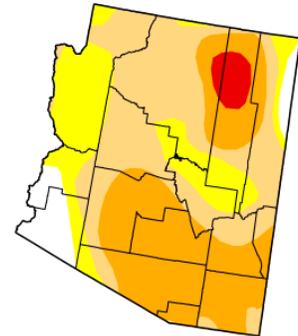
The outlook for the rest of the winter is for below average precipitation. If the weather matches the forecast, there may be further expansion of moderate drought (D1) and severe drought (D2) in the next several months.

U.S. Drought Monitor

January 31, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Arizona

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	6.39	93.61	73.48	36.56	2.78	0.00
Last Week (01/24/2012 map)	7.23	92.77	60.34	36.56	2.78	0.00
3 Months Ago (11/01/2011 map)	1.50	98.50	72.03	48.37	29.83	1.24
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	16.70	83.30	60.34	36.56	2.78	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	0.02	99.98	69.76	42.81	15.34	1.67
One Year Ago (01/25/2011 map)	40.46	59.54	32.00	3.94	0.00	0.00



Intensity:

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

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



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Eric Luebbehusen, USDA

Long-term Drought Status Update

In the long-term, based on the two, three, and four-year precipitation patterns, some improvement has been recorded in the Santa Cruz and upper Gila watersheds, with Santa Cruz moving from severe drought to moderate drought, and the upper Gila moving from moderate drought to abnormally dry. The relatively wet conditions during November and December of 2011 in these watersheds have replaced the relatively dry conditions of November and December 2007 in the four-year period. Due to the continued La Niña pattern, further long-term improvement is not anticipated over the next three months.

The early snow pack that the state enjoyed is rapidly melting, resulting in early run-off. If the snow pack does not increase over the next two months, water resources in many areas of the state will be significantly reduced.

