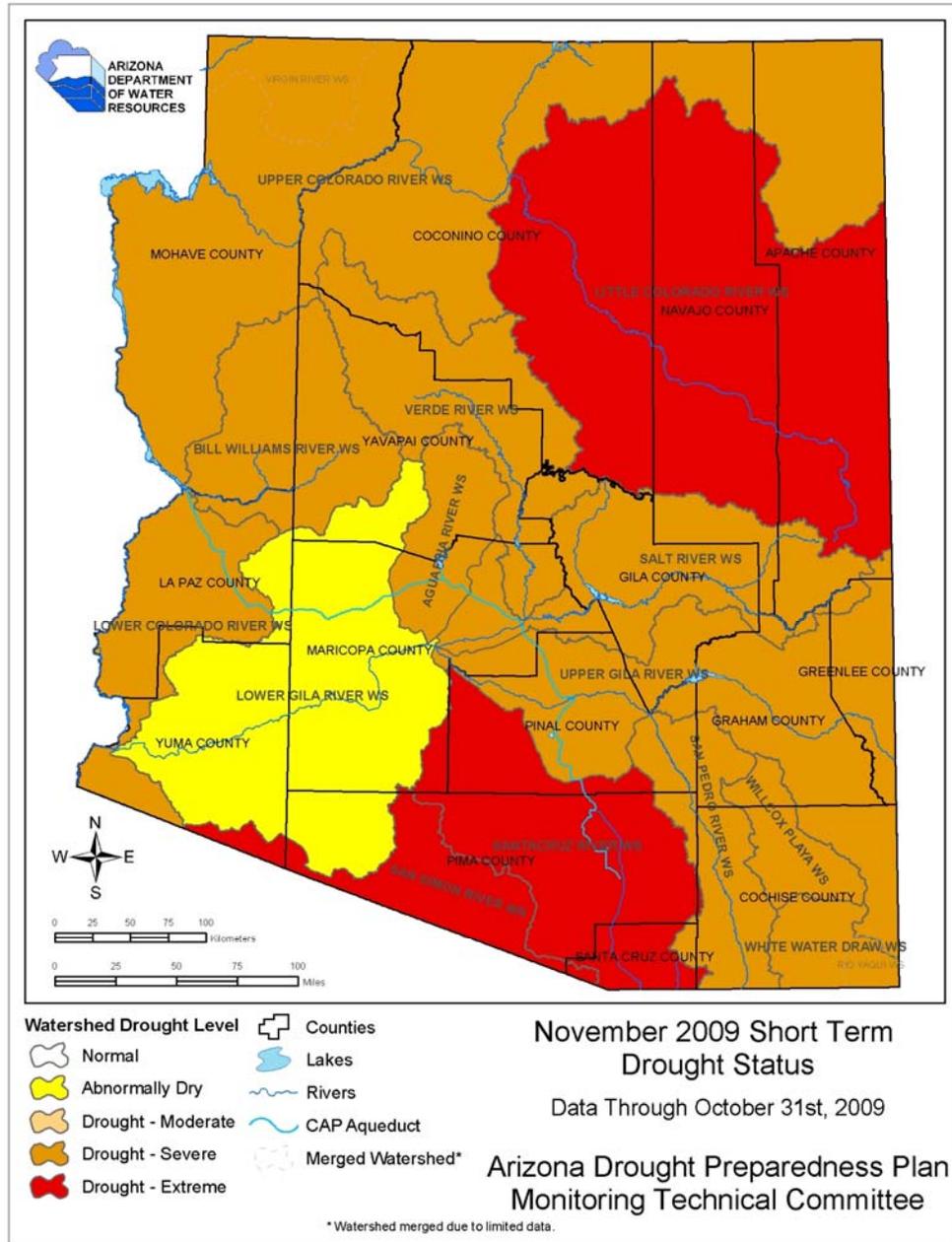


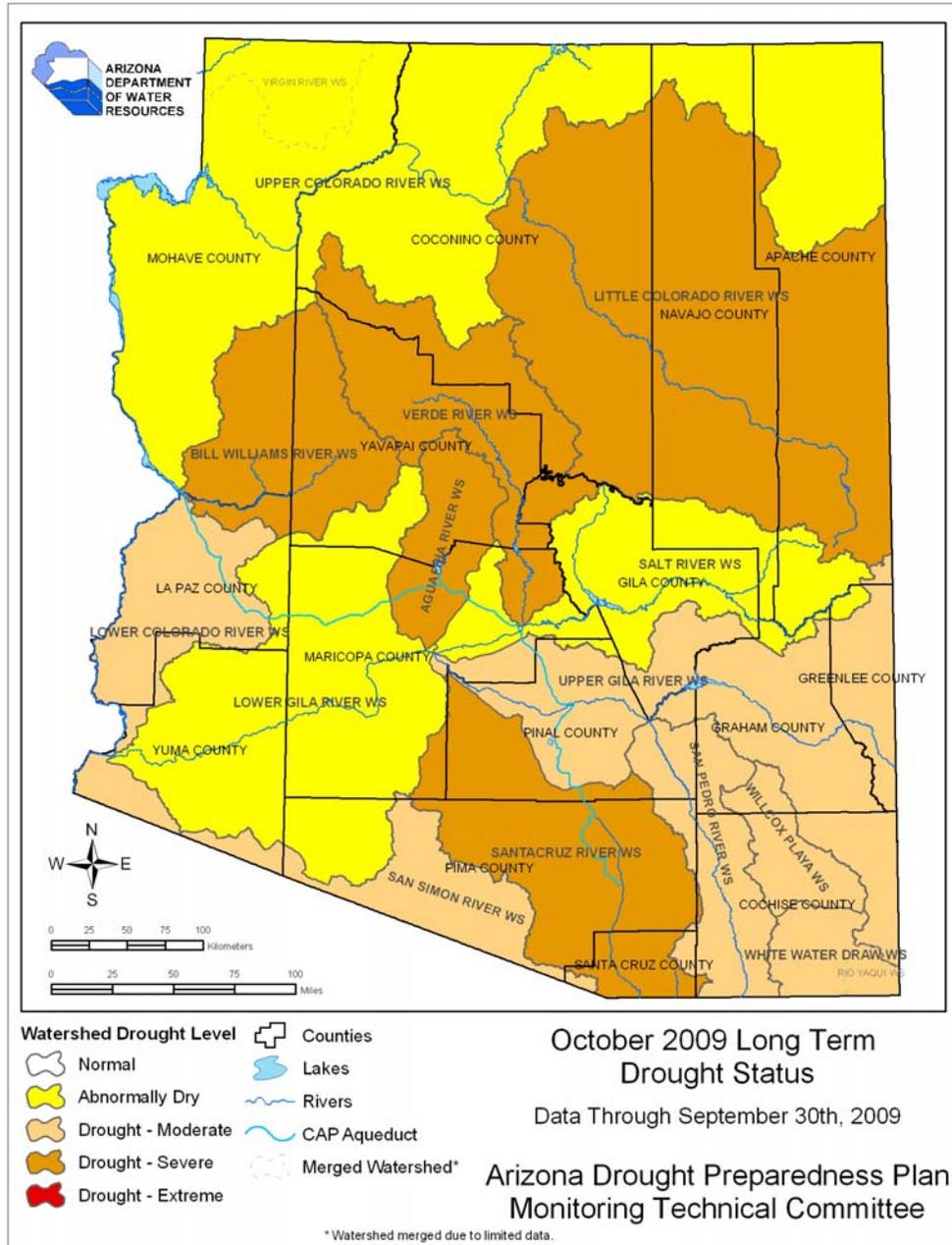
Drought Status Update

November 2009



Short-term Drought Status Update

Fourteen of the fifteen watersheds are in severe or extreme drought, and the lower Gila watershed is abnormally dry. Three watersheds, the Little Colorado River, San Simon, and Santa Cruz River are in extreme drought. Precipitation over the past 12 months has been well below average, decimating forage, weakening forests, reducing streamflow, and leaving stockponds and small natural lakes dry. The northeast plateau and southern watersheds were especially hard hit as the monsoon was dry, followed by relatively dry conditions in October. A few storms moved across the state in October, but they brought very localized precipitation, which was well below average values for this time of year. Reservoir storage along the Salt River has dropped, but remains adequate due to significant runoff from the White Mountains last spring, and in 2008.



Long-term Drought Status

The long-term drought status map above includes data from the last four years, through September 30, 2009. This map will be updated in January with data through December.

As a result of dry conditions in three of the past four years (only the winter and summer of 2008 were wetter than normal) and a significantly drier than average summer season, nearly half of the state is in severe drought. Investments to import and store water, such as the Salt River Project and Central Arizona Project, substantially buffer urban areas from water shortages. Although urban water supplies are not threatened by drought currently, the impacts to rural areas of the state are more significant. Many parts of the state are still suffering from long-term precipitation deficits, which affect vegetation health, wildlife and livestock, water supplies and range and pasture conditions. The effects of the past 12 months of drier than normal conditions are unlikely to be reversed unless precipitation statewide during the next year is significantly above the long term average.

