

Drought Status Update

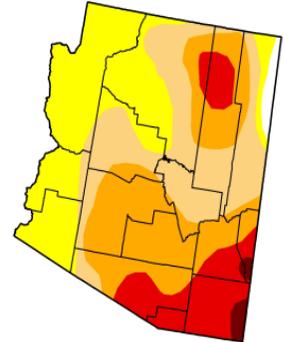
Short-term Drought Status Update

There has been little change in the short-term drought status for Arizona in the past month. The northeastern border between Arizona and New Mexico saw some recovery from abnormally dry to no drought due to some heavy rainfall in the Four Corners area. The rest of the state has received only enough rainfall to prevent conditions from getting worse, but not enough to improve the situation. Several early fall-winter storm systems passed through in October, bringing precipitation to northern Arizona. If the storm tracks continue to brush across the northern half of our state, there will be some relief for the northern watersheds and possible further improvement to the Colorado Reservoir system. However, a repeat of last year's dry winter will lead to further degradation in the southeast.

U.S. Drought Monitor Arizona

October 25, 2011
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	1.43	98.57	68.57	42.81	15.12	1.24
Last Week (10/19/2011 msa)	1.43	98.57	68.57	42.81	15.12	1.24
3 Months Ago (07/26/2011 msa)	11.15	88.85	60.35	37.15	14.02	4.83
Start of Calendar Year (12/29/2010 msa)	31.40	68.60	32.45	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 msa)	0.02	99.98	69.76	42.81	15.34	1.67
One Year Ago (10/19/2010 msa)	39.75	60.25	8.75	3.23	0.00	0.00



Intensity:

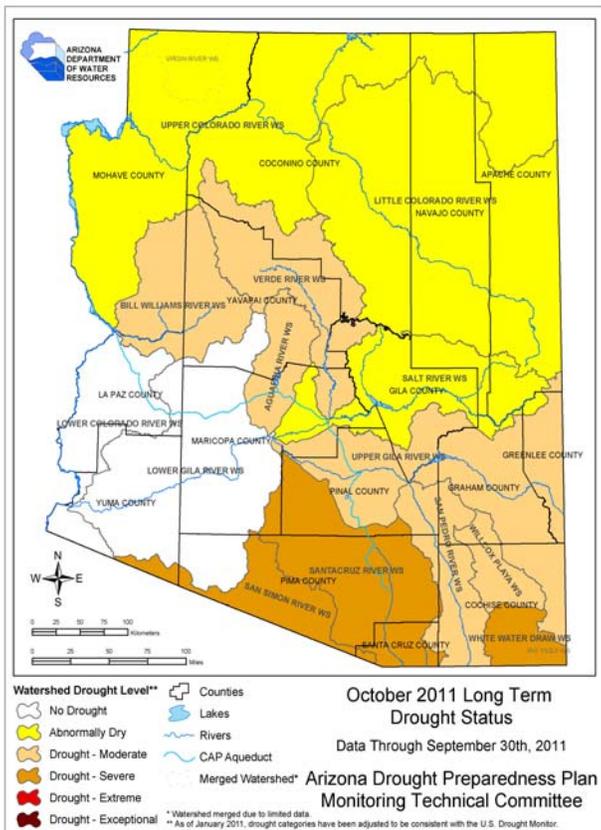
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

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

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, October 27, 2011
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Long-term Drought Status Update

Over the past year, the southeastern watersheds have become even drier by one or two drought categories as a result of the very dry La Niña winter and a very spotty monsoon. Currently, three watersheds are in severe drought for the long-term. In the southeast, stream flow is low and groundwater levels have been dropping over the past year, even as pumping has been reduced. The southwestern watersheds, however, have no drought condition. With another La Niña winter forecast, we don't anticipate improvement in the long-term conditions in the near future.

Why is there a change of three drought categories between the Lower Gila watershed and the Santa Cruz and San Simon watersheds? The sharp boundary between no drought and severe drought is misleading because the drought does not end at a watershed boundary. Each watershed reflects the average for the precipitation stations within that watershed, and most of the watersheds have very few gages. The reality is that the western side of the Santa Cruz and San Simon watersheds has a less severe drought condition than severe drought, and the eastern side of the lower Gila watershed does actually have some drought, though not as severe as the western San Simon watershed. When we finally transition to gridded data, the boundaries between drought categories will be more gradual and less stark.

Summaries produced by the State Drought Monitoring Technical Committee - November 1, 2011.