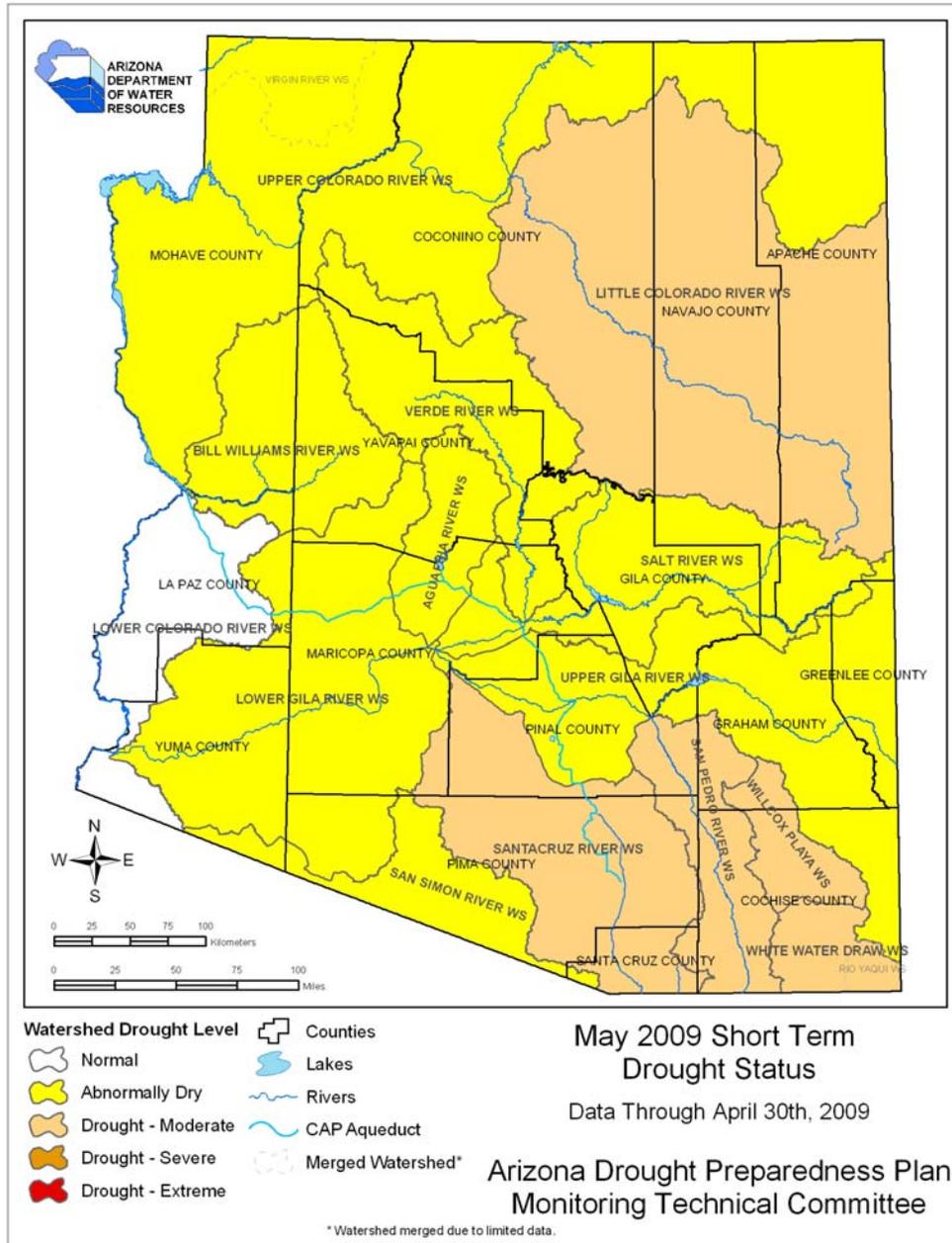


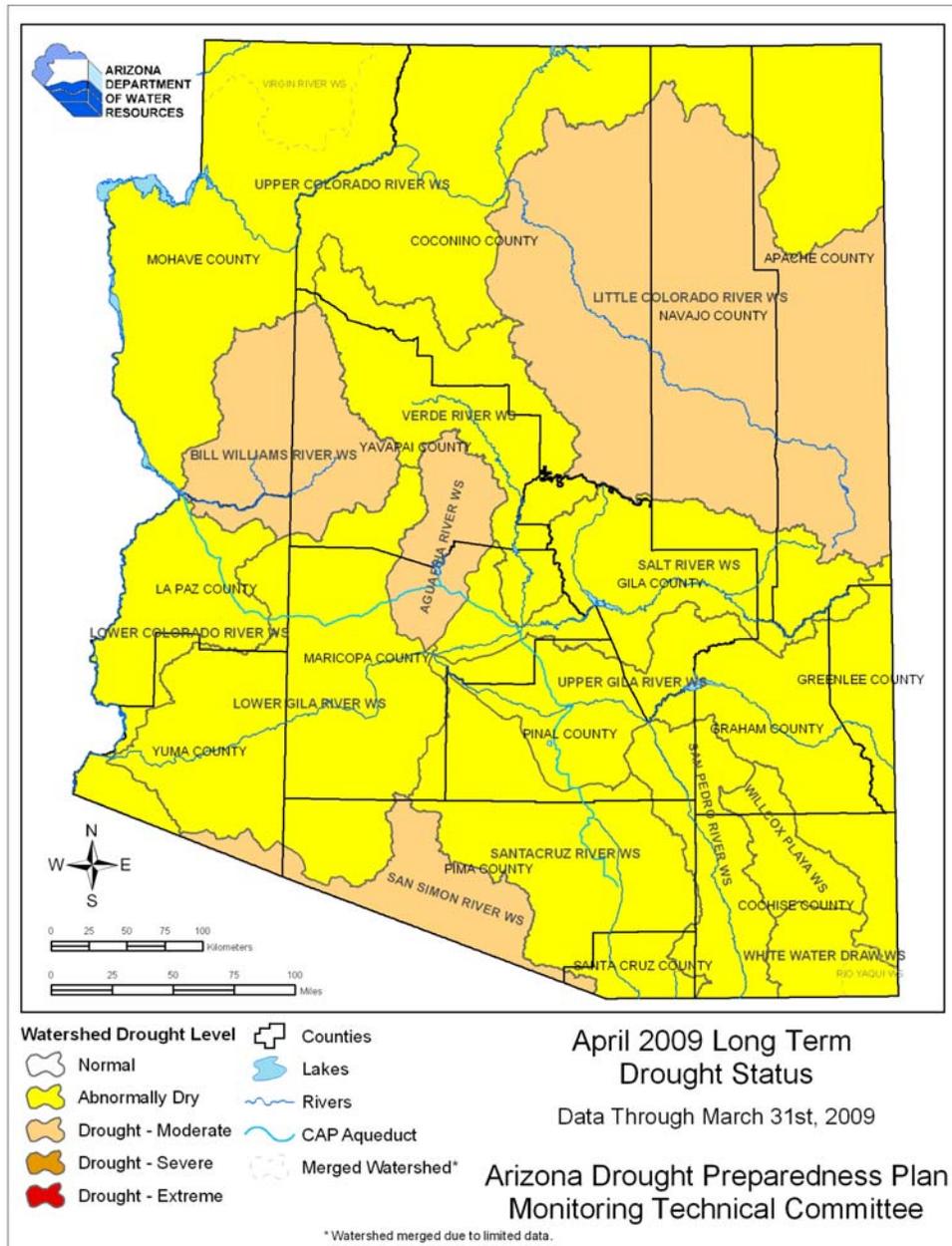
Drought Status Update

May 2009



Short-term Drought Status Update

Since April is the tail end of Arizona's winter precipitation season, it can either be very wet or very dry. This April was near average for the southern half of Arizona, which improved the 3-, 6- and 12-month precipitation indices, leading to a one category improvement of drought conditions on the Agua Fria, Upper Gila, Lower Colorado and San Simon watersheds. Conditions on the Colorado Plateau were drier than average dropping the Little Colorado watershed from abnormally dry to moderate drought. Grasslands on the Little Colorado and the southeast watersheds are very dry. Overall, the 2008 - 2009 winter was much drier than average in northern and southern Arizona, and near average in the central watersheds. This year, monsoon precipitation is predicted to begin early and produce more rainfall than average in June and July, which should improve short-term conditions in the southeast, if the forecast is realized. Already, as of late May, parts of the state have received substantial precipitation, so expect further short-term drought status changes in next month's report.



Long-term Drought Status

The long-term drought status map will not be updated until July, in the midst of Arizona's monsoon season. The map above includes data from the last four years, through March 2009.

Current long term conditions show improvement from a year ago. Much of this improvement since last year is due to the wet monsoon season last year, and to the early winter precipitation in November and December, which brought above average rain and snow. Although winter precipitation looked good at the beginning of the season, the winter of 2008 - 2009 turned out to be drier than average. Since the La Niña conditions that led to the dry winter often lead to wetter than average summers, Climate Prediction Center is forecasting an early start to monsoon activity and above-average precipitation for the first half of the monsoon this year.

