

Update on Drought Conditions and Impacts for Oregon as of November 10th, 2015

Drought conditions across Oregon range from moderate and severe in western and central Oregon, and extreme in north-central, south-central and eastern Oregon, as identified by the U.S. Drought Monitor. Drought conditions intensified and expanded across the state through the spring and summer of 2015. Drought conditions in northwest Oregon have eased slightly due to rainfall in October and early November 2015, but severe drought persists elsewhere in the state. The main drivers for the ongoing drought are:

- 1 - A winter with record-low or near-record-low snowpack caused by a combination of below-average precipitation and much-above-average temperatures.
- 2 - A dry and hot spring and summer, with periods of record-high temperatures in May through August, especially in western and north-east Oregon. Overall it was the hottest June on record for most of Oregon and one of the hottest Julys on record. The meteorological summer (June through August) was also the hottest on record for many locations of Oregon.

Visit drought.gov for more details on drought conditions and categories in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest.

State drought declarations remain in effect for many counties, too many to list here. For details, visit the Oregon Water Resources Drought Watch at www.oregon.gov/owrd/pages/wr/drought.aspx.

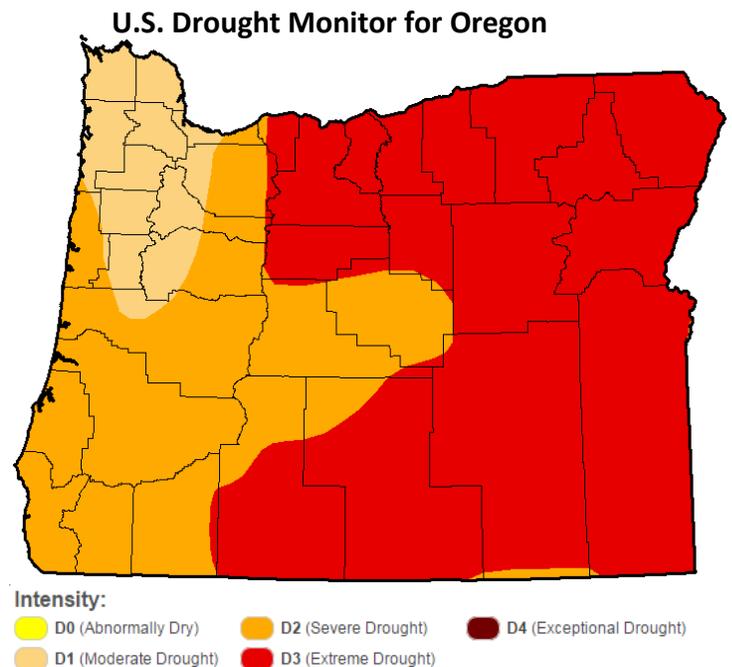
U.S. Department of Agriculture drought disaster declarations are also in effect for all Oregon counties. Visit usda.gov for more information on disaster declarations and assistance programs for drought-impacted areas.

For much of southern Oregon, this is the second or third year of drought, and drought impacts continue to intensify. However, the areal extent and severity of this year's drought exceed the two previous years for the state as a whole.

The much-publicized onset of a strong El Niño in the tropical Pacific Ocean may provide some drought relief for Oregon this winter, especially for the coast and portions of inland southern Oregon.

Drought impacts seen in 2015 include, destructive wildfires across various parts of Oregon, major die-offs for sturgeon and migrating salmon due to the low streamflow and very warm water temperatures, drastically-reduced water allocations for irrigators in some basins, reduced water supply for communities especially where dependent on natural streamflow only, reduced acreage and overall production for many field crops, poor range conditions and water availability for cattle and other animals, and reduced recreation access for many Oregon reservoirs.

Note, this product will be issued on at least a monthly basis as long as widespread drought conditions persist in Oregon. The next update will be issued by December 11th.

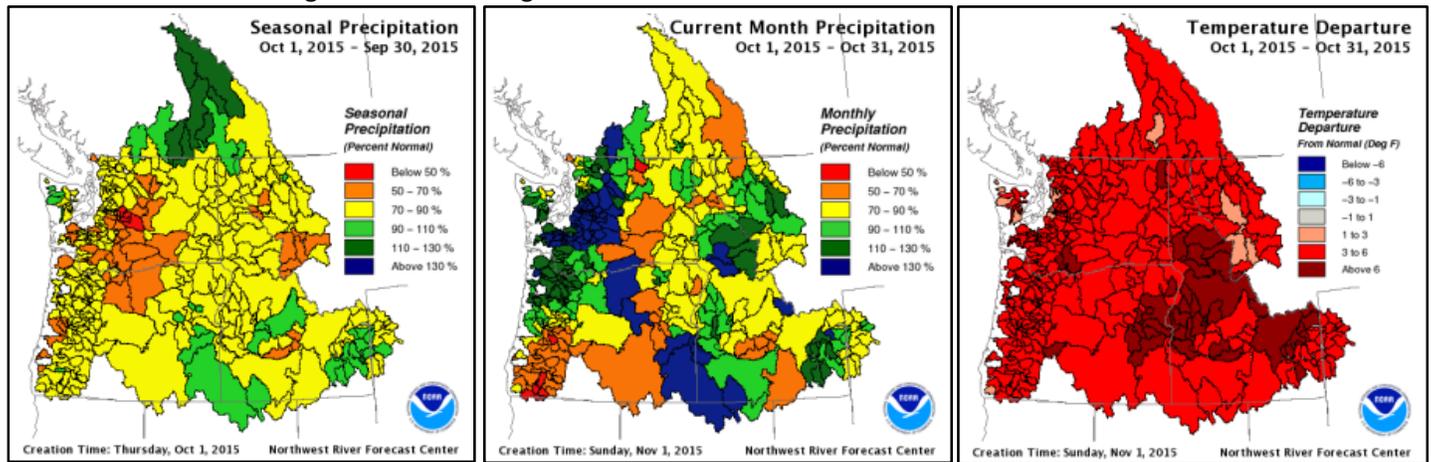


Observed Precipitation and Temperatures

Water-year precipitation (October 2014 - September 2015) was generally 60 to 80 percent of average, except 80 to 100 percent in far-southeast Oregon.

October 2015 precipitation was generally 90 to 120 percent of average for the northern half of Oregon and 60 to 90 percent of average for the southern half of Oregon.

Temperatures for the past several months have been notably above-average. In fact, it was among the warmest water years (Oct 2014 - Sep 2015) on record. The trend of above-average temperatures continued in October, with most climate stations 4 to 6 degrees above average for the month.

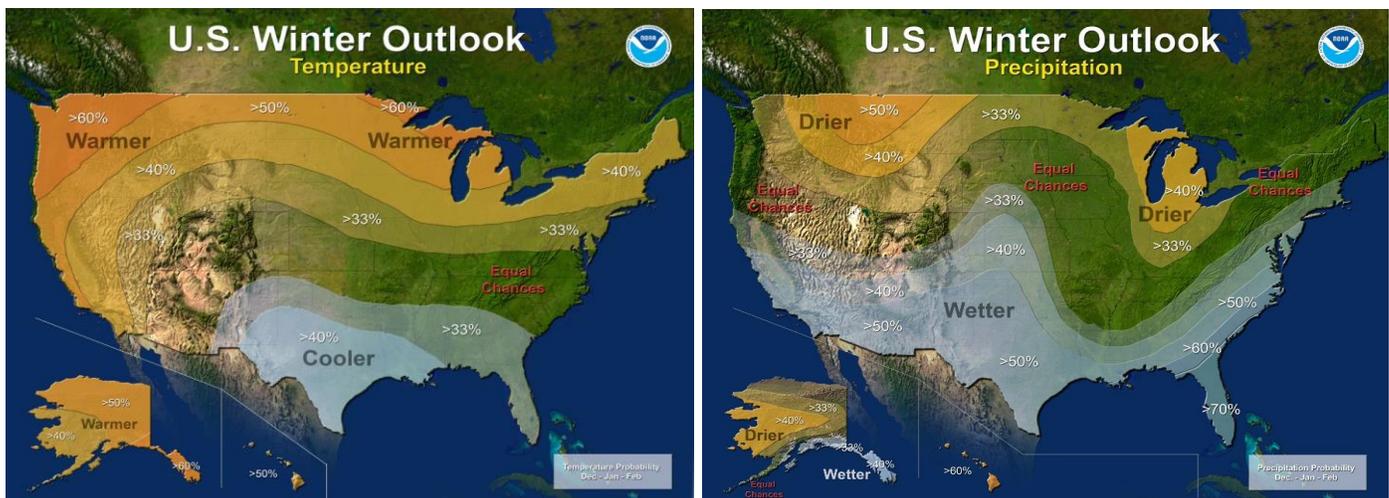


Visit www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/water_supply/wy_summary/wy_summary.php for more details on observed precipitation and temperatures in Oregon.

Precipitation and Temperature Outlook for the Next Several Months

With the continued influence of a strong El Niño in the tropical pacific, above-average temperatures are likely through the fall and winter. The outlook for precipitation for the winter is more uncertain but leans below-average, especially for northeast Oregon.

The impact of above-average temperatures is likely to be most strongly felt in the Cascades and eastern Oregon mountains, which may result in below-average winter snowpack.



Visit www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov for more information on seasonal outlooks and evolving El Niño conditions.

Reservoir Conditions

Reservoir storage remains very low in most of central and eastern Oregon. The irrigation season has ended for most agricultural uses, so eyes are now on how the coming winter and spring plays out for statewide precipitation and mountain snowpack.

Several reservoirs in south-central and southeast Oregon still have little or no remaining storage as of early November. In other parts of the state, reservoir storage is generally 10 to 50 percent of average.

For more information on reservoir conditions, visit www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/resv_rpt.pl?state=Oregon, www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nwp/teacup/willamette/ and www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/select.html.

Streamflow and Water Supply Volumes

Streamflow in October and early November was below average for most Oregon rivers, except for many in northwest Oregon that now have near or a little above-average streamflow with the rainfall in late October and early November.

The observed spring and summer runoff volumes seen for April-September 2015 were the lowest on record for most northwest Oregon rivers and among the lowest five on record for other basins around the state. Many rivers in northwest Oregon approached their all-time lowest streamflow on record in August or early September before fall rainfall brought slight flow increases in late September.

Visit waterwatch.usgs.gov for details about individual basins and river gages and www.nwrfc.noaa.gov for seasonal runoff volumes.

Drought Impacts in Oregon

Dry and hot conditions this spring and summer set the stage for a prolonged and intense fire season. Thunderstorms in July and August provided the ignition for many of the large fires that dominated news headlines across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest in late summer. Many fire-scarred areas will be susceptible to flooding and debris flows if impacted by heavy rain this winter.

Another tangible impact of the drought is that many rivers were at or near record low streamflow in late summer, leading to restrictions and reductions in water use for many irrigation districts and some communities.

High fish mortality was seen in many Oregon rivers due to the low flows and warm river temperatures.

All eyes are on the coming winter, with hopes that near-normal precipitation and mountain snowpack will at least partially alleviate drought impacts for the spring and summer of 2016.

If you have questions or comments about this drought information statement please contact:

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