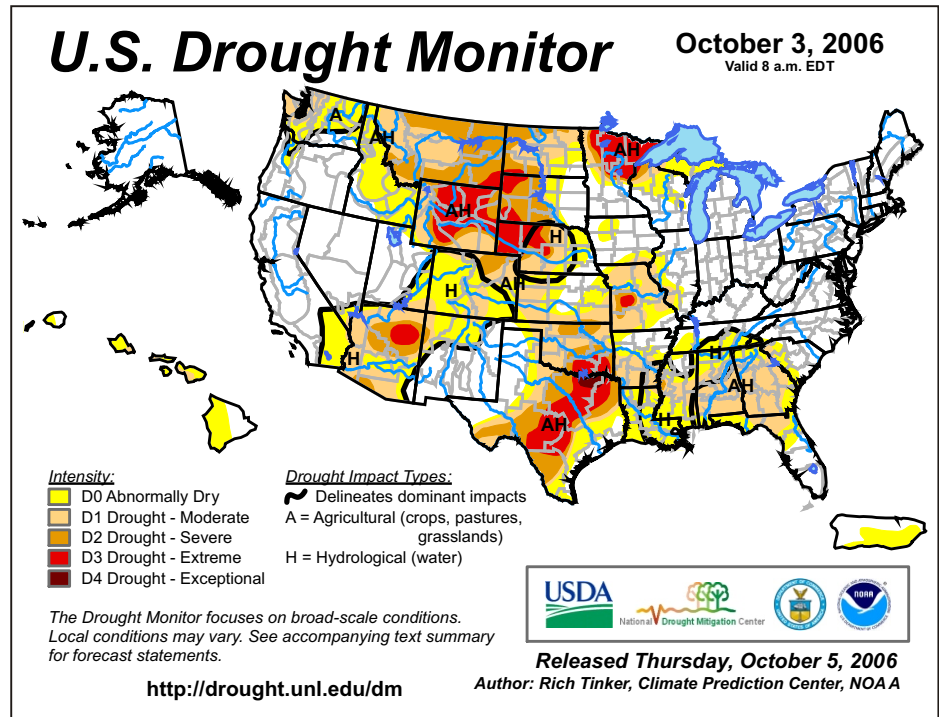


# The U.S. Drought Monitor Map

## About the Map

The Drought Monitor was unveiled August 11, 1999, at a White House press conference. The Monitor is the product of a partnership between the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Commerce and the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Commerce Secretary William Daley introduced the Monitor in the midst of the worst drought to affect the eastern United States in several years, hailing it as an advance in drought monitoring and forecasting. Drought Monitor maps, produced weekly, summarize information from several different measurement systems onto a single, easy-to-read colored map.

The Drought Monitor provides a general, up-to-date summary of current drought across the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Pacific possessions. Its “big picture” gives the general public, media, officials, and others a common starting point for decision making. The map is not designed to depict local conditions or to replace drought warnings and watches issued by local or regional government entities. Local or state entities may—and should!—be monitoring indicators different from those used in the Drought Monitor to meet specific needs or to address local problems.



## Interpreting the Map

**D0–D4:** The Drought Monitor summary map identifies general drought areas, labeling droughts by intensity, with D1 being the least intense and D4 being the most intense. D0 drought watch areas are either drying out and possibly heading into drought, or are recovering from drought but are not yet back to normal, suffering long-term impacts such as low reservoir levels.

**A and H:** Since *drought* means a moisture deficit severe enough to

have social, environmental, or economic effects, we generally include a description of what the primary physical effects are:

A = agricultural (crops, pastures, and grassland)  
 H = water supplies (rivers, ground-water, and reservoirs)

### Map Key

**D0, Abnormally Dry**—Going into drought: short-term dryness slowing planting and growing crops or pastures. Coming out of drought: lingering water deficits; pastures or crops not fully recovered.

**D1, First-Stage Drought**—Some damage to crops, pastures; streams, reservoirs, or wells low; some water shortages developing or imminent; voluntary water use restrictions requested.

**D2, Severe Drought**—Crop or pasture losses likely; water shortages common; water restrictions imposed.

**D3, Extreme Drought**—Major crop/pasture losses; widespread water shortages or restrictions.

**D4, Exceptional Drought**—Exceptional and widespread crop/pasture losses; shortages of water in reservoirs, streams, and wells, creating water emergencies.

### How We Make the Map

Drought intensity categories are based on five key indicators and numerous supplementary indicators. The accompanying drought severity classification table shows the range of indicators for each dryness level. Because the ranges of the various indicators often don't coincide, the final drought category tends to be based on what the majority of the indicators show. The analysts producing the map also weight the indices according to how well they perform in various parts of the country during different times of the year. Also, additional indicators are often needed in the West, where winter snowfall has a strong bearing on water supplies.

Although the maps are based on the key indices and other measures of moisture, the final maps are adjusted to reflect real-world conditions as reported by numerous experts throughout the country.

### This Map Does Not Replace Local Information

To keep the map from becoming too complex, the drought categories shown represent typical drought intensities, not every drought intensity, within the area. The map is not designed to depict local conditions or to replace drought warnings and watches issued by local or regional government entities. Local or state entities may be monitoring indicators different from those used in the Drought Monitor to meet specific needs or to address local problems. As a consequence, there could be water shortages or crop failures within an area not designated as being in drought, just as there could be locations with adequate water supplies in an area designated as D3 or D4 (extreme or exceptional) drought.

Drought Category	Palmer Drought Index	CPC Soil Moisture Model	USGS Weekly Streamflow	Standardized Precipitation Index	Short- & Long-Term Drought Indicator Blends
D0	-1.0 to -1.9	21-30	21-30	-0.5 to -0.7	21-30
D1	-2.0 to -2.9	11-20	11-20	-0.8 to -1.2	11-20
D2	-3.0 to -3.9	6-10	6-10	-1.3 to -1.5	6-10
D3	-4.0 to -4.9	3-5	3-5	-1.6 to -1.9	3-5
D4	-5.0 or less	0-2	0-2	-2.0 or less	0-2