



Drought Status Update

April 2010

Short-term Drought Status Update

Short-term conditions continued to improve through the winter, as frequent winter storms brought rainfall to the lower elevations and snowfall to the higher elevations. The storm activity decreased in late March and through April, but widely scattered shower activity has continued to improve rangeland conditions in western, central, and parts of southern Arizona. Over the past month, southwestern Pima, southern Maricopa and central Mohave counties have improved from abnormally dry to no drought. Only the central Colorado Plateau has remained in moderate to severe drought due to a rain shadow effect of the storms moving up the Mogollon Rim. The higher elevations near the Four Corners, Flagstaff, and the top of the rim itself have received the bulk of the precipitation on the Plateau. While the winter precipitation has improved rangeland vegetation and filled stock ponds, conditions will quickly deteriorate if the monsoon season is drier than normal. At this time, the summer forecast indicates we have equal chances of a wet, normal, or dry monsoon.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Arizona

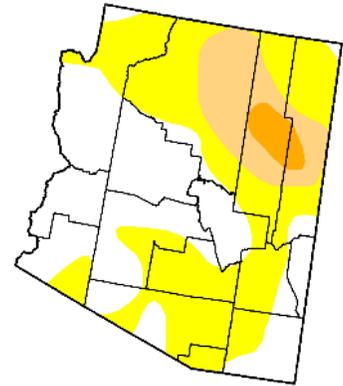
May 4, 2010
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	43.1	56.9	14.4	2.7	0.0	0.0
Last Week (04/27/2010 map)	43.1	56.9	14.4	2.7	0.0	0.0
3 Months Ago (02/09/2010 map)	15.2	84.8	53.4	14.5	0.0	0.0
Start of Calendar Year (01/05/2010 map)	0.0	100.0	97.2	71.1	5.1	0.0
Start of Water Year (11/06/2009 map)	1.4	98.6	80.3	10.7	0.0	0.0
One Year Ago (05/05/2009 map)	18.7	81.3	19.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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://drought.unl.edu/dm>



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Long-term Drought Status Update

The long-term (hydrologic) drought depends on accumulated precipitation over multiple years. Last year brought both a dry summer and a dry winter, but this winter has been much wetter than average, due to the moderate to strong El Niño circulation bringing subtropical moisture together with a relatively continuous series of cold fronts. The winter storms lasted well into March with significant snowfall in the higher elevations, resulting in above average run-off. The streamflow throughout the state is recharging groundwater basins, reducing the water deficit we have accumulated over the past decade or more. The Salt-Verde reservoir system is now at 100% of capacity going into the high demand summer season, but many other reservoirs within the state are below their capacity. Unfortunately, the lower Colorado Basin reservoir system, Lakes Powell and Mead, remains near 50% of capacity. This means that areas of the state that depend on groundwater and Colorado River water through the Central Arizona Project system are still very much in a long-term drought. If we have a drier than normal summer, the water supply gains we achieved over the winter will be consumed by summer water demands.

Summaries produced by the State Drought Monitoring Technical Committee—May 11, 2010

