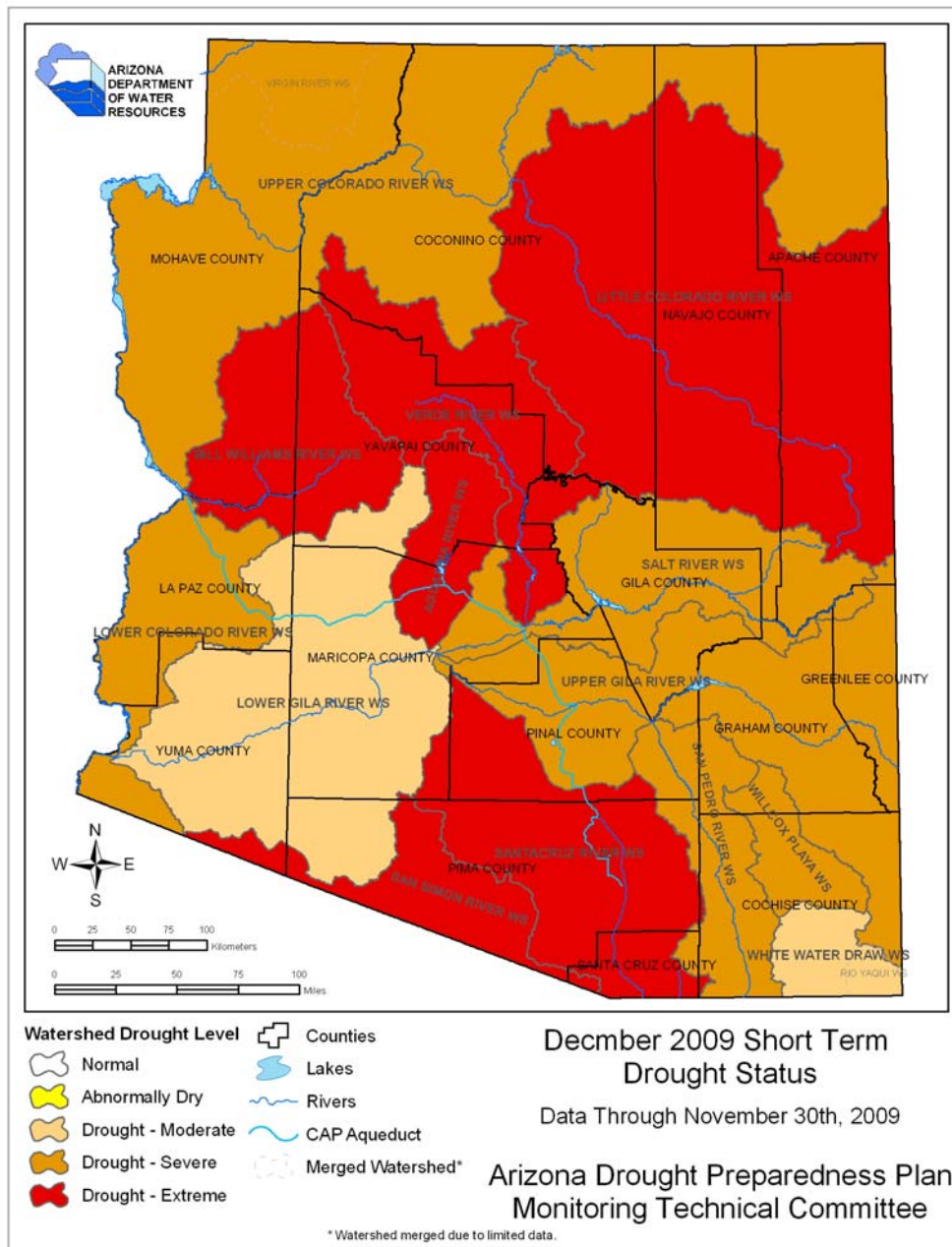


Drought Status Update

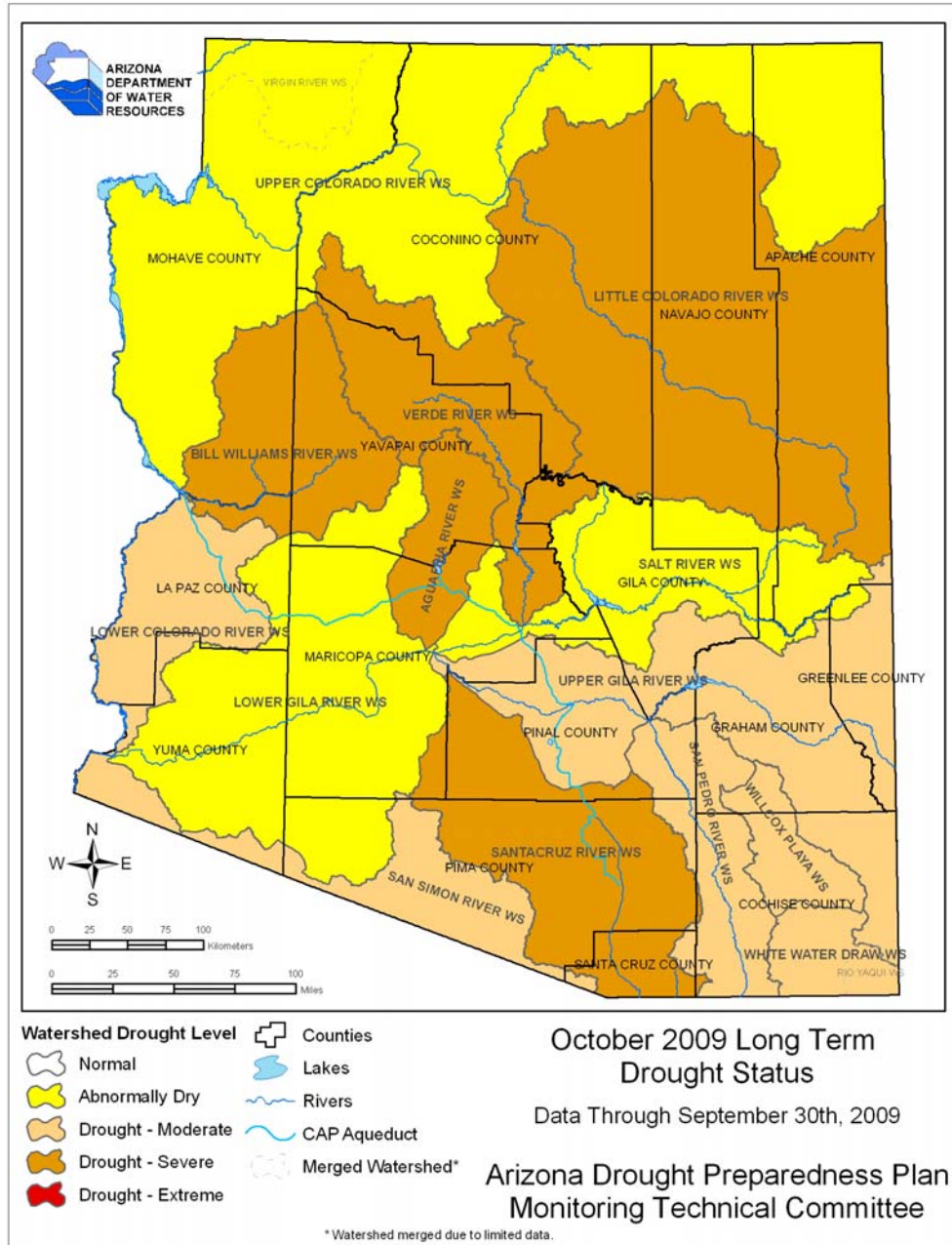
December 2009



Short-term Drought Status Update

Thirteen of the fifteen watersheds continue to be in severe or extreme drought, although three watersheds (Bill Williams, Agua Fria, and Verde) dropped from severe to extreme drought due to the dry November conditions. The lower Gila Watershed dropped from abnormally dry to moderate drought. Through November, six watersheds are in extreme drought, the worst possible condition. While early December had a very wet storm with significant rain and snowfall across central and northern Arizona, southern Arizona has remained quite dry, below 50% of average precipitation for the month. In the southeast and northwest, reports indicate that rangeland impacts from the summer “non-soon” are lingering with little growth and vegetation recovery this winter in the higher elevation range areas.

Storm tracks are predicted to favor the southern two thirds of the state during the next three months. If those storms materialize, short term conditions may show slow improvement.



Long-term Drought Status

The long-term drought status map above includes data from the last four years, through September 30, 2009. This map will be updated in January with data through December.

Currently, long-term conditions show five watersheds in severe drought, six watersheds in moderate drought, and three watersheds abnormally dry, as a result of dry conditions in three of the past four years. The current December precipitation reports show that northern Arizona was favored during the most recent winter storms. Based on stations reporting so far, calendar year 2009 was clearly in the top five driest across the southern half of Arizona, which does not bode well for long-term drought improvement.