



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

Weekly Report - Snowpack / Drought Monitor Update

Date: 23 August 2012

SNOTEL SNOWPACK AND PRECIPITATION SUMMARY

Temperature: [SNOTEL](#) and ACIS 7-day temperature anomaly ending 23 August shows a strong west to east gradient (i.e. warmer to cooler pattern) across the West. The Southwest Monsoon over southern Arizona has kept temperatures below average (Fig. 1). ACIS [7-day](#) average temperature anomalies show the greatest positive temperature departures over north-central Washington ($>+10^{\circ}\text{F}$). The greatest negative departures occurred over the northwestern High plains ($<-8^{\circ}\text{F}$) (Fig. 1a).

Precipitation: [ACIS](#) 7-day average precipitation amounts for the period ending yesterday shows the bulk of moisture over the Southwest and Southern Great Basin (Fig. 2). In terms of percent of normal, this depiction follows suit although some isolated storms extended northward into the Northern Rockies and California mountain ranges (Fig. 2a). Since the start of the [2012 Water-Year](#) that began on 1 October 2011, the seasonal moisture has continued to favor the Northern Tier States. Over much of the southern half of the West, drier conditions dominate. However, values are moderately higher over parts of New Mexico in response to the Summer Monsoon. Values are not expected to change much for the remainder of this Water Year. With three weeks of [August](#) complete, Utah appears to be making up some lost moisture from earlier this spring and summer. The Southwest Monsoon has been only partially active over Arizona and New Mexico thus far in August. Another area with fortunate rainfall has been over the westernmost Great Basin near Reno, NV. However, the lack of moisture over much of the Northern Tier States is perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the precipitation pattern this month over the West (Fig. 2c).

This U.S. Drought Monitor week saw a few notable improvements and some serious degradation. Temperatures have generally been below normal this week from the east side of the Rockies to the East Coast, with the exception of Texas, the Southeast Coast, and northern New England. This has helped ease drought impacts, particularly in those areas where beneficial precipitation fell. One such area is in the Ohio Valley where parts of Indiana saw more than five inches of rain. This is the second straight week of beneficial precipitation for some of these areas and this precipitation has largely alleviated Exceptional Drought (D4) from the state, despite lingering impacts still being felt. Last week, drought gripped slightly less of the agricultural land in the country with 85% of the U.S. corn crop, 83% of soybeans, 63% of hay, and 71% of cattle areas experiencing drought. Nearly half of the corn (49%) and soybean (46%) areas are experiencing Extreme (D3) to Exceptional (D4) Drought. This has led to both reduced yields and earlier harvests. Additional impacts this week include closing of an 11-mile stretch of the Mississippi River near Greenville, MS to barge traffic because of low water levels and wildfires expanding from northern California to Idaho.

The West: The drought in southeast California, Arizona, and New Mexico has begun to respond to the recent monsoon rains. Areas of Extreme (D3) and Moderate (D2) Drought were alleviated, largely across the southern part of the states. A slight expansion of Exceptional Drought (D4) took place in eastern Colorado while in Idaho, Moderate Drought (D1) and

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Abnormal Dryness (D0) continues to expand and contribute to wildfires. Author: Michael Brewer, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

A comprehensive narrative describing drought conditions for the nation can be found at the end of this document.

Drought Impacts Definitions

The possible impacts associated with **D4 (S, L)** drought include widespread crop/pasture losses and shortages of water in reservoirs, streams, and wells creating water emergencies. The possible impacts associated with **D3 (S, L)** drought include major crop/pasture losses and widespread water shortages or restrictions. Possible impacts from **D2 (S, L)** drought are focused on water shortages common and water restrictions imposed and crop or pasture losses likely. The possible impacts associated with **D1 (S, L)** drought are focused on water shortages developing in streams, reservoirs, or wells, and some damage to crops and pastures (Figs. 3 through 3e).

Soil Moisture

Soil moisture (Fig. 4), is simulated by the [VIC macroscale hydrologic model](#). The detailed, physically-based VIC model is driven by observed daily precipitation and temperature maxima and minima from approximately 2130 stations, selected for reporting reliably in real-time and for having records of longer than 45 years (and various other criteria). Another good resource can be found at: <http://www.emc.ncep.noaa.gov/mmb/nldas/drought/>.

Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN)

Figure 5 provides supplemental data on soil conditions (moisture and temperatures at various depths from 2 inches to 80 inches. For more information about SCAN see ([brochure](#)).

U.S. Historical Streamflow

This map, (Fig. 6) shows the 7-day average streamflow conditions in hydrologic units of the United States and Puerto Rico for the day of year. The colors represent 7-day average streamflow percentiles based on historical streamflow for the day of the year. Thus, the map shows conditions adjusted for this time of the year. Only stations having at least 30 years of record are used. Sub-regions shaded gray indicate that insufficient data were available to compute a reliable 7-day average streamflow value. During winter months, this situation frequently arises due to ice effects. The data used to produce this map are provisional and have not been reviewed or edited. They may be subject to significant change.

Fire Conditions

Fig. 7 comes from the [Predictive Services](#) (USFS) facilitates integration of comprehensive climate, weather, situation and fuels information in geospatial format.

State Activities

State government drought activities can be tracked at the following URL: <http://drought.unl.edu/mitigate/mitigate.htm>. NRCS SS/WSF State Office personnel are participating in state drought committee meetings and providing the committees and media with appropriate SS/WSF information - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/bor.pl>. Additional information describing the products available from the Drought Monitor can be found at the following URL: <http://drought.unl.edu/dm/> and <http://www.drought.gov>.

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For More Information

The National Water and Climate Center Homepage provide the latest available snowpack and water supply information. Please visit us at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>. This document is available from the following location on the NWCC homepage - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/water/drought/wdr.pl>. Reports from 2007 are available on-line while ones from 2001-2006 can be acquired upon request.

This report uses data and products provided by the Interagency Drought Monitor Consortium members and the National Interagency Fire Center.

/s/

Micheal L. Golden

Deputy Chief, Soil Survey and Resource Assessment

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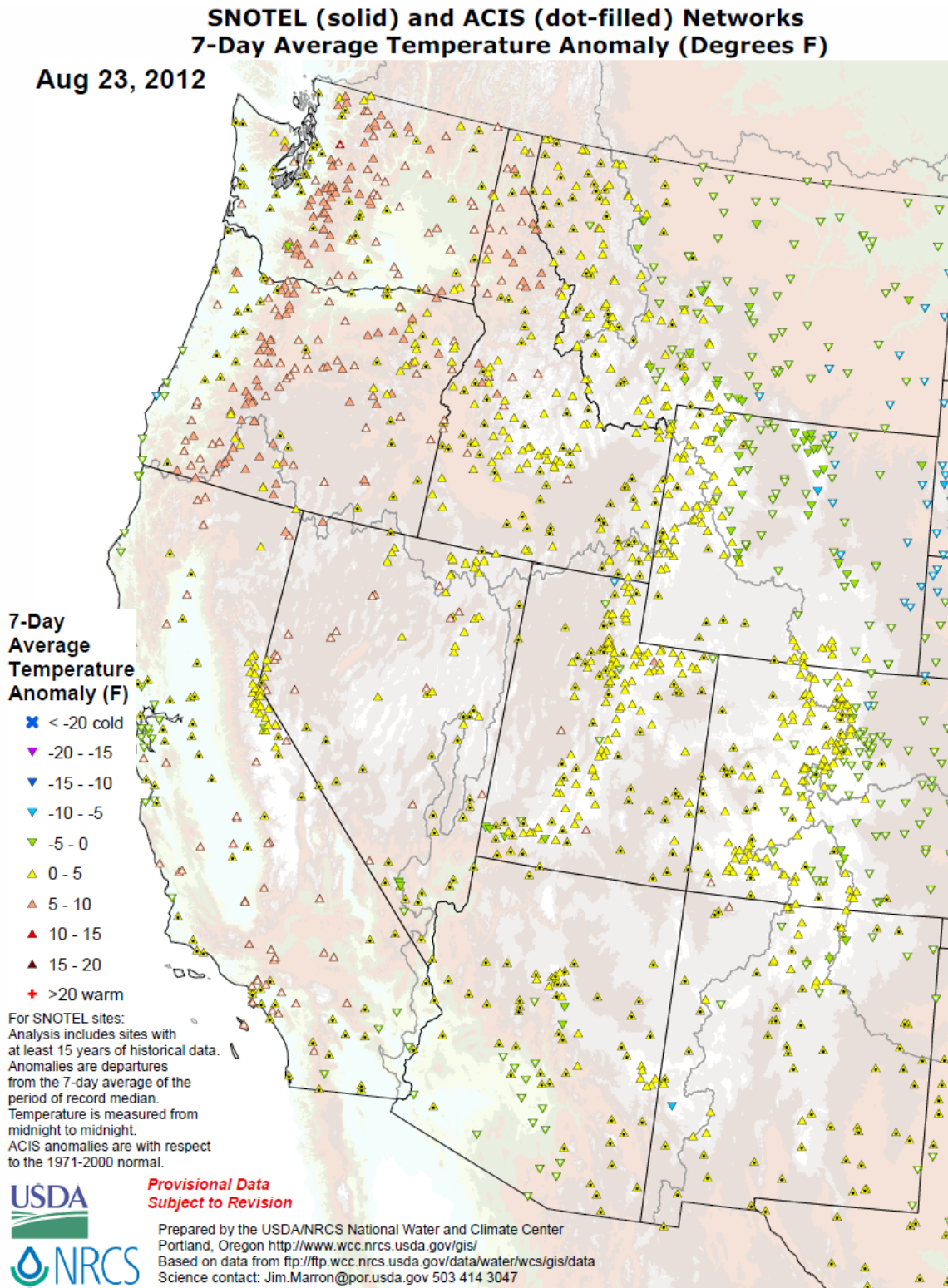
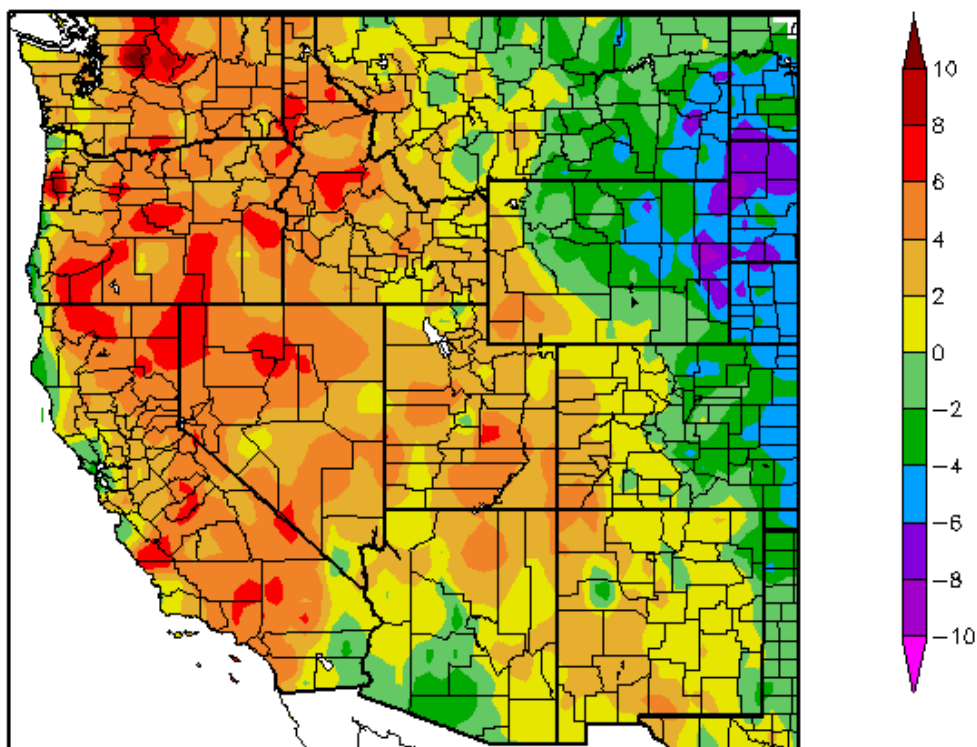


Fig. 1: SNOTEL and ACIS 7-day temperature anomaly ending 23 August shows a strong west to east gradient (i.e. warmer to cooler pattern) across the West. The Southwest Monsoon over southern Arizona has kept temperatures below average.

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
8/16/2012 – 8/22/2012



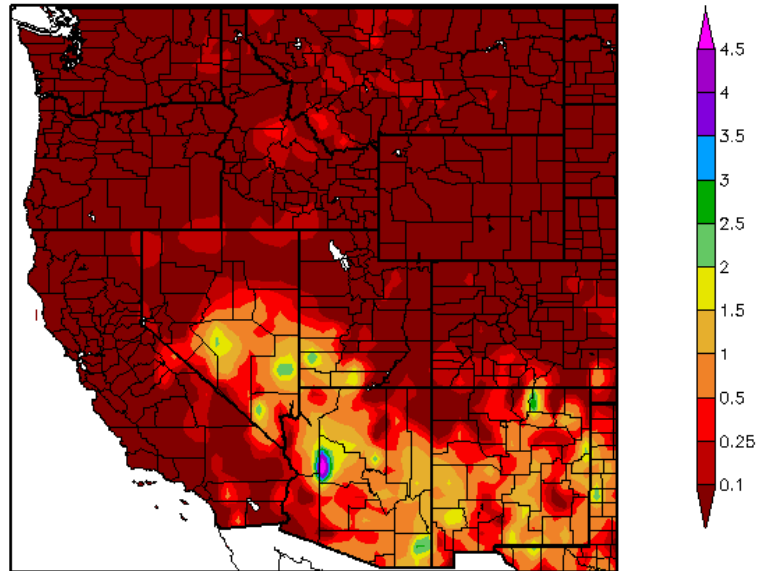
Generated 8/23/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Fig. 1a: ACIS [7-day](#) average temperature anomalies show the greatest positive temperature departures over north-central Washington ($>+10^{\circ}\text{F}$). The greatest negative departures occurred over the northwestern High plains ($<-8^{\circ}\text{F}$).

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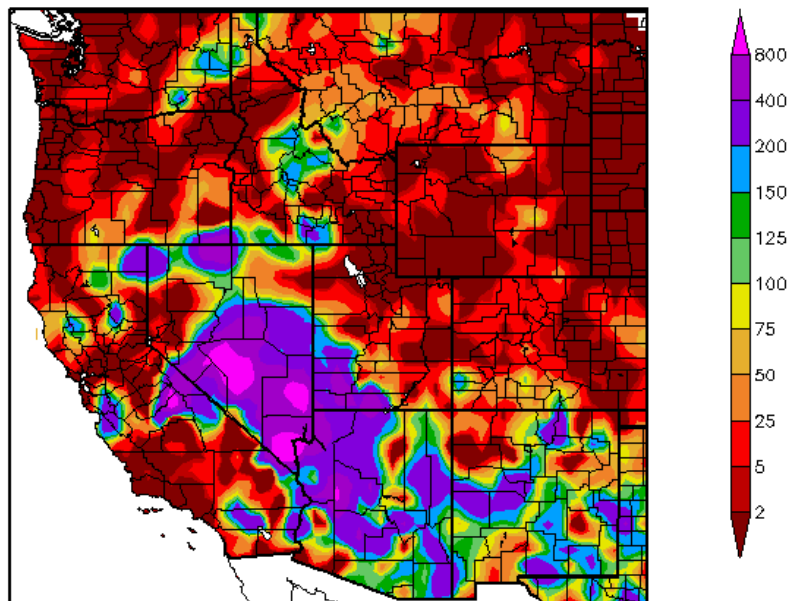
Precipitation (in)
8/16/2012 – 8/22/2012



Generated 8/23/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
8/16/2012 – 8/22/2012



Generated 8/23/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Fig. 2 and 2a: [ACIS](#) 7-day average precipitation amounts for the period ending yesterday shows the bulk of moisture over the Southwest and Southern Great Basin (top). In terms of percent of normal, this depiction follows suit although some isolated storms extended northward into the Northern Rockies and California mountain ranges (bottom).

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Westwide SNOTEL Water Year (Oct 1) to Date Precipitation % of Normal

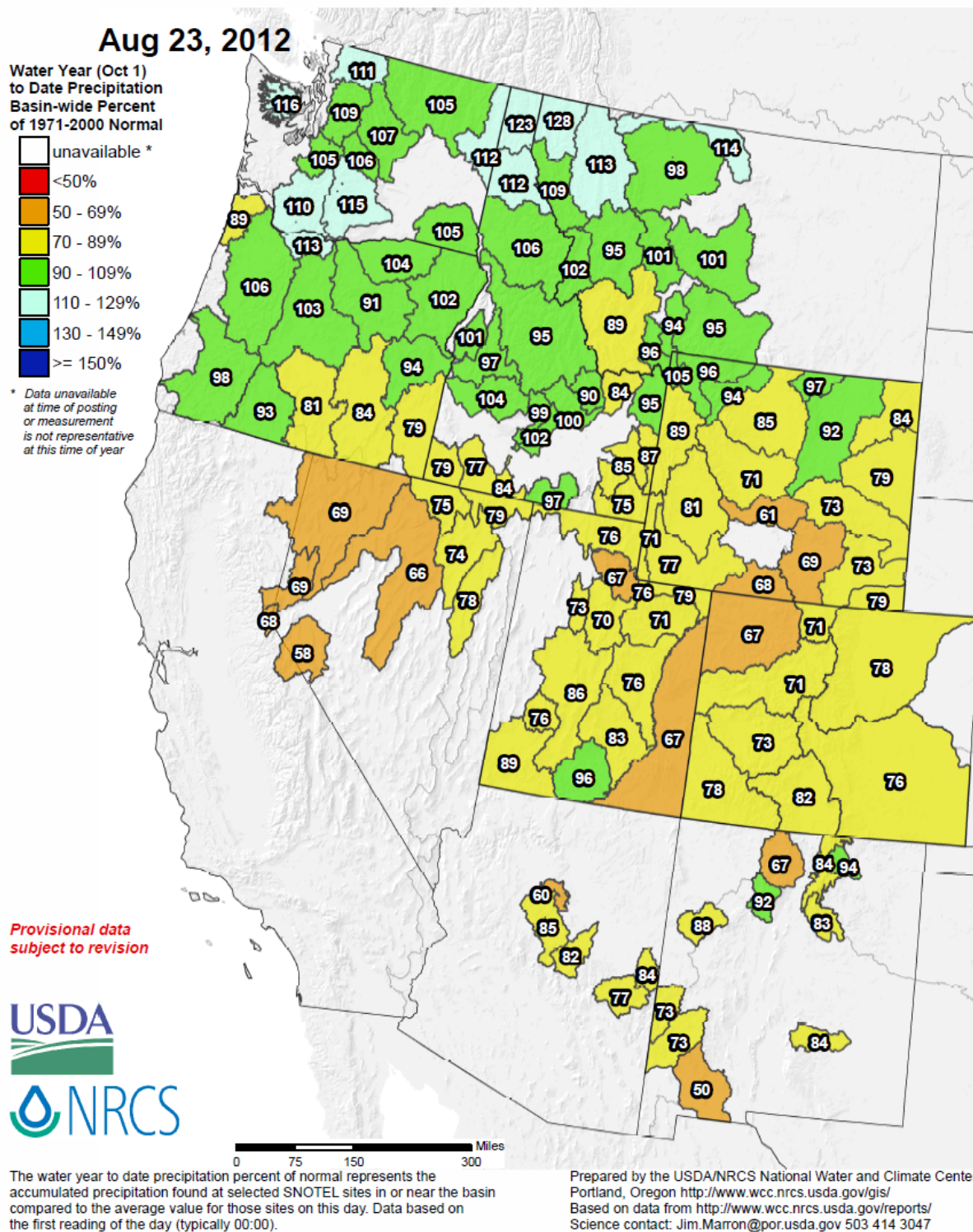


Fig 2b: Since the start of the [2012 Water-Year](#) that began on 1 October 2011, the seasonal moisture has continued to favor the Northern Tier States. Over much of the southern half of the West, drier conditions dominate. However, values are moderately higher over parts of New Mexico in response to the Summer Monsoon. Values are not expected to change much anywhere for the remainder of this Water Year.

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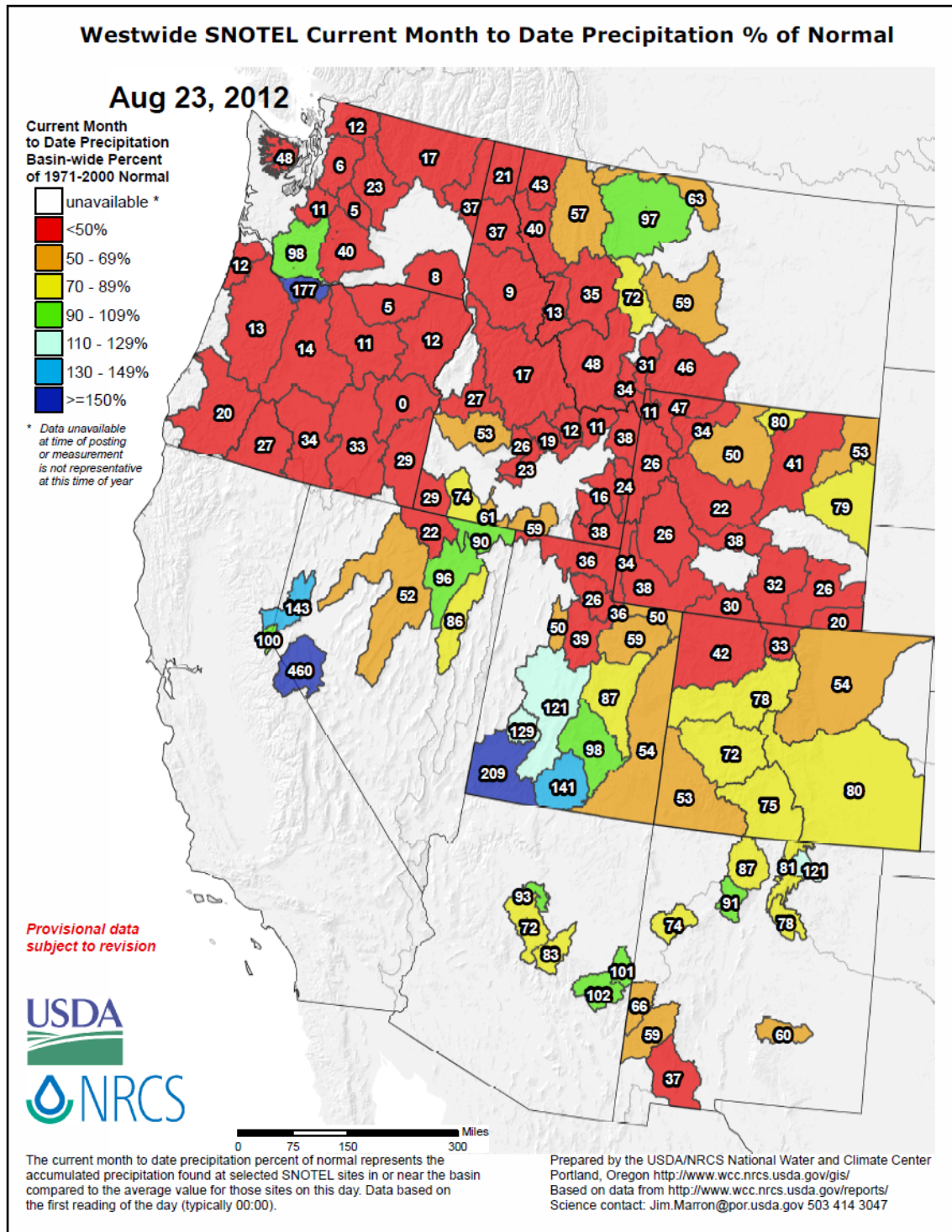


Fig. 2c: With three weeks of August complete, Utah appears to be making up some lost moisture from earlier this spring and summer. The Southwest Monsoon has been only partially active over Arizona and New Mexico thus far in August. Another area with fortunate rainfall has been over the westernmost Great Basin near Reno, NV. However, the lack of moisture over much of the Northern Tier States is perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the precipitation pattern this month over the West.

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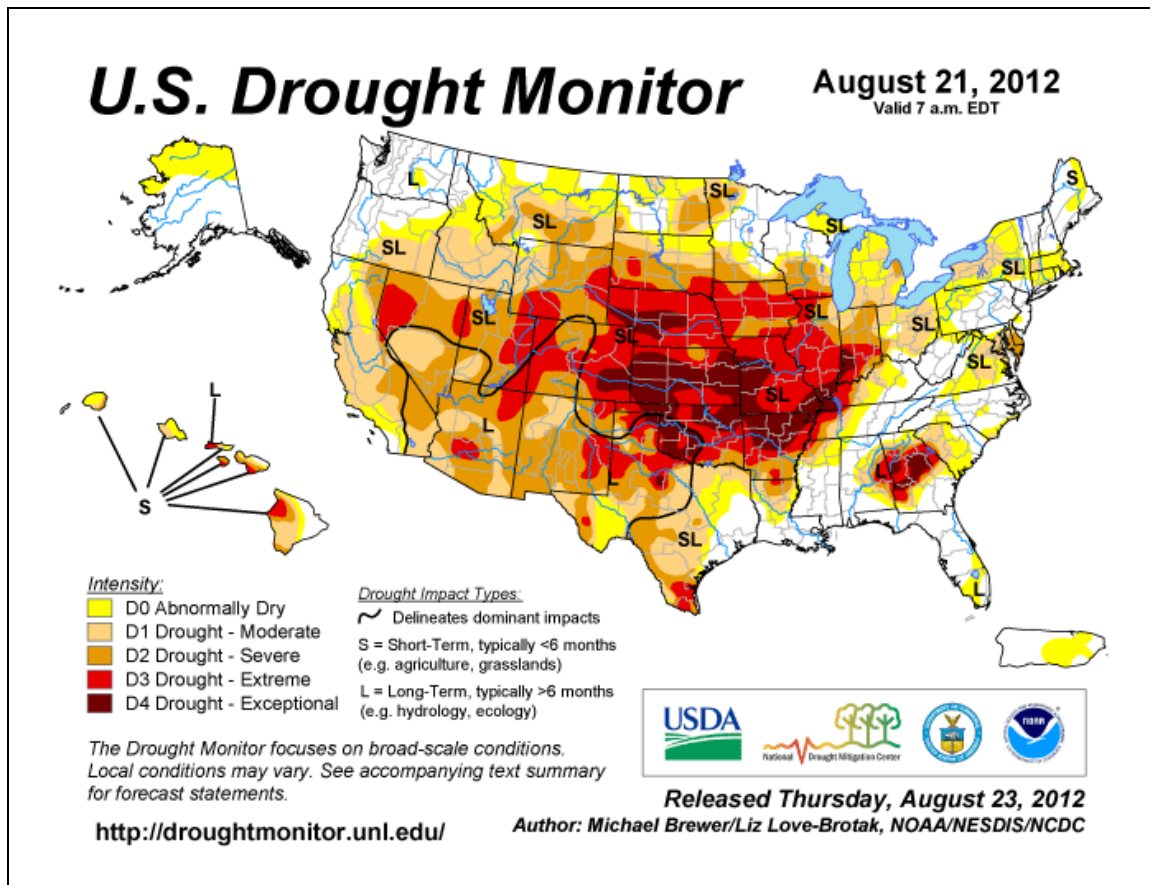


Fig. 3: Current [Drought Monitor](#) weekly summary. The exceptional D4 levels of drought are found over the Southeast and scattered across the corn belt of the Central Plains into Colorado. For more drought news, see [Drought Impact Reporter](#). Click for the latest statistics for [California Reservoirs](#). The monthly [drought indicator blend and component percentiles](#) spreadsheet is a great resource for climate division drought statistics.

Agriculture

[Drought lingering but leveling off](#) - Aug 17, **U.S.**

[Drought-stricken woman rancher has to 'sell cows or watch them starve'](#) - Aug 12, **Arkansas**

[Hawaii Ranches Struggle Under Drought Conditions](#) - Aug 15, **Hawaii**

[Kentucky cows eat candy instead of corn](#) - Aug 14, **Western Kentucky**

[Midwest drought 2012: woes and opportunities -- tales of the historic event](#) - Aug 13, Variety of experiences

[Some Idaho Farmers Pray, Others Turn On The Water](#) - Aug 11, **Idaho**

Water Supply & Quality

[Chesapeake Dead Zone Down, Dry Weather Credited](#)

[Drought sends Mississippi into 'uncharted territory'](#)

[Odessa 40 Percent Water Rate Hike Passes First Approval](#)

[Salt creeping up the Mississippi River](#)

[San Marcos to implement Stage 3 drought rules](#)

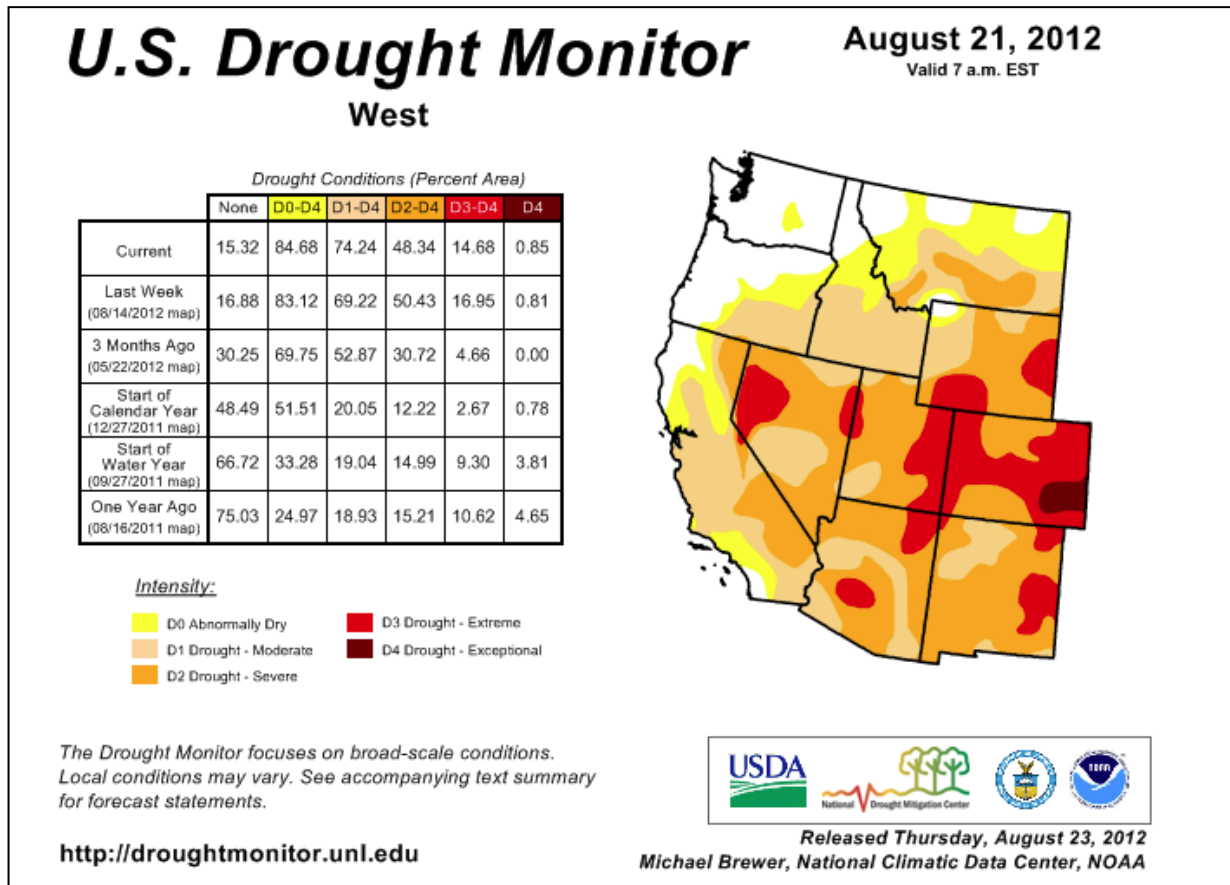


Fig. 3a: Drought Monitor for the [Western States](#) with statistics over various time periods. Some deterioration in D1 and slight improvement in D3 and D4 occurred this week.

Alert: The National Weather Service in Albuquerque would like to provide you an update on an upper level disturbance that will be impacting northern and central New Mexico through Friday.

Overview:

An unseasonal upper level disturbance is currently tracking eastward through Arizona. This disturbance will advance into western and central New Mexico this afternoon and into the evening. By Friday this weather system will track toward the northeast corner of New Mexico before exiting. Abundant atmospheric moisture is in place ahead of this feature, and scattered to numerous thunderstorms are expected to erupt as it enters the state. While individual thunderstorms are expected to move to the east northeast between 10 to 20 mph, some of the more vigorous thunderstorms will be capable of producing high rainfall rates, especially in western New Mexico. A Flash Flood Watch has been issued for most areas west of the Rio Grande Valley, as well as the Sacramento/Capitan mountains of Lincoln County. Remember, a Flash Flood Watch means that conditions may develop that lead to flash flooding; it does NOT mean that flash flooding is imminent. The Las Conchas, Whitewater Baldy, Little Bear, and White burn scars will be especially susceptible to flash flooding this afternoon and this evening.

Also see, [August 2012 Southwest Climate Outlook](#).

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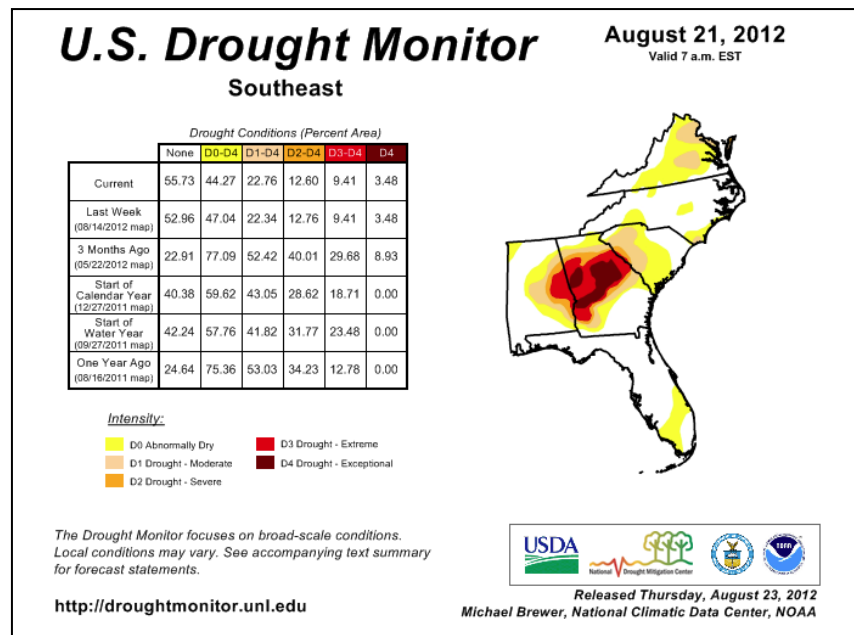


Fig. 3b: Drought Monitor for the [Southeastern States](#) with statistics over various time periods. Note no significant changes occurred this week.

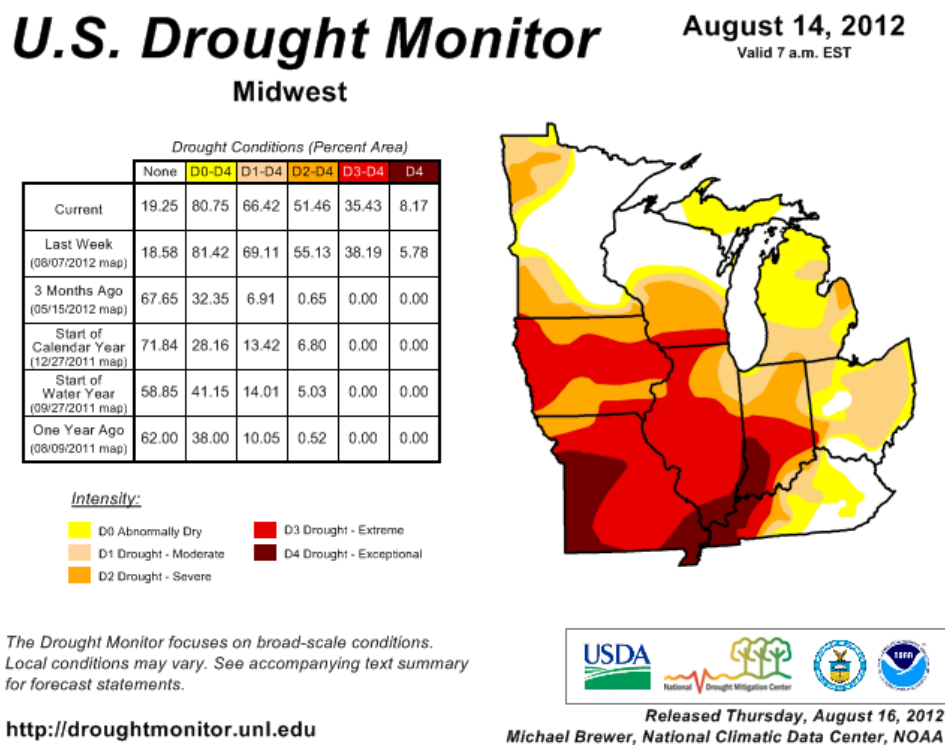


Fig. 3c: Drought Monitor for the [Mid-West](#) with statistics over various time periods. Note some more deterioration in D4 but some improvement in all other categories this week.

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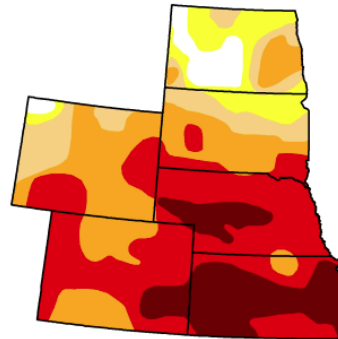
U.S. Drought Monitor High Plains

August 21, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	4.31	95.69	87.49	76.96	51.72	16.20
Last Week (08/14/2012 map)	4.48	95.52	86.05	76.97	49.64	15.52
3 Months Ago (05/22/2012 map)	36.54	63.46	27.23	6.57	1.49	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	61.66	38.34	18.12	7.22	2.07	0.04
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	70.09	29.91	17.44	11.97	6.22	2.96
One Year Ago (08/16/2011 map)	76.78	23.22	16.63	12.23	7.58	2.60

Intensity:

■ D0 Abnormally Dry ■ D3 Drought - Extreme
■ D1 Drought - Moderate ■ D4 Drought - Exceptional
■ D2 Drought - Severe



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, August 23, 2012
Michael Brewer, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

Fig. 3d: Drought Monitor for the [High Plains](#) with statistics over various time periods. Note no significant change this week. See the latest [Kansas Drought Report](#).

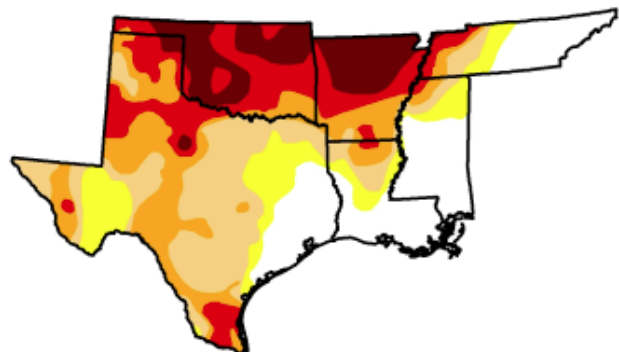
U.S. Drought Monitor South

August 21, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	21.86	78.14	66.80	45.62	27.98	11.71
Last Week (08/14/2012 map)	21.47	78.53	69.54	49.01	28.32	11.16
3 Months Ago (05/22/2012 map)	26.10	73.90	35.28	18.33	7.31	0.58
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	26.47	73.53	69.01	54.81	39.11	17.15
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	18.34	81.66	76.26	70.61	63.67	53.77
One Year Ago (08/16/2011 map)	7.07	92.93	83.11	73.73	64.82	49.27

Intensity:

■ D0 Abnormally Dry ■ D3 Drought - Extreme
■ D1 Drought - Moderate ■ D4 Drought - Exceptional
■ D2 Drought - Severe



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

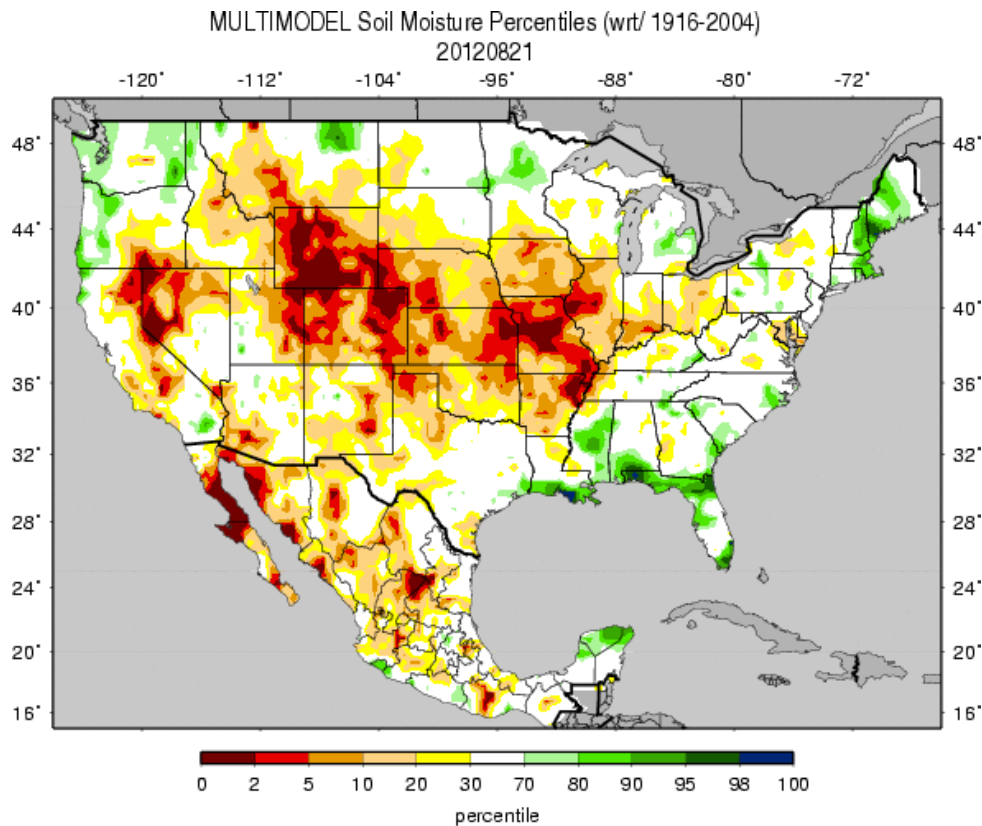
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



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Michael Brewer, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

Fig. 3e: Drought Monitor for the [South-Central Region](#) with statistics over various time periods. Note some improvement in D1 to D3 this week.

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Figs. 4: Soil Moisture ranking in [percentile](#) as of 21 August shows dryness over much of the Interior US. Exceptions include the Coastal Region of Oregon & Washington, eastern Washington and Montana, the eastern Gulf Coast and eastern New England.

Useful Hydrological Links:

USDA western U.S. mountain snow water content anomaly map.

USGS (U.S. Geological Service) [observed streamflow](#);

NOAA Climate Prediction Center (CPC) modeled runoff [anomalies](#) and [percentiles](#);

VIC (University of Washington Variable Infiltration Capacity macro scale hydrologic model) [1-](#), [2-](#), [3-](#), and [6-](#)month and [water year-to-date](#) runoff percentiles;

NLDAS (North American Land Data Assimilation System) modeled streamflow [anomalies](#) and [percentiles](#);

NLDAS model runoff [anomalies](#) and [percentiles](#);

USGS groundwater observations ([real-time network](#), [climate response network](#), [total active network](#));

USDA snow water content observations for the West (SNOTEL station [percentiles](#) and [percent of normal](#), SNOTEL basin [percent of normal](#) and [percent of average](#)) and Alaska ([SNOTEL station percent of normal](#), [SNOTEL basin percent of normal](#));

USDA reservoir storage as [percent of capacity](#).

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Soil Climate Analysis Network ([SCAN](#))

Station (2009) MONTH=2012-07-24 (Daily) NRCS National Water and Climate Center – Provisional Data – subject to revision
Thu Aug 23 08:29:34 PDT 2012

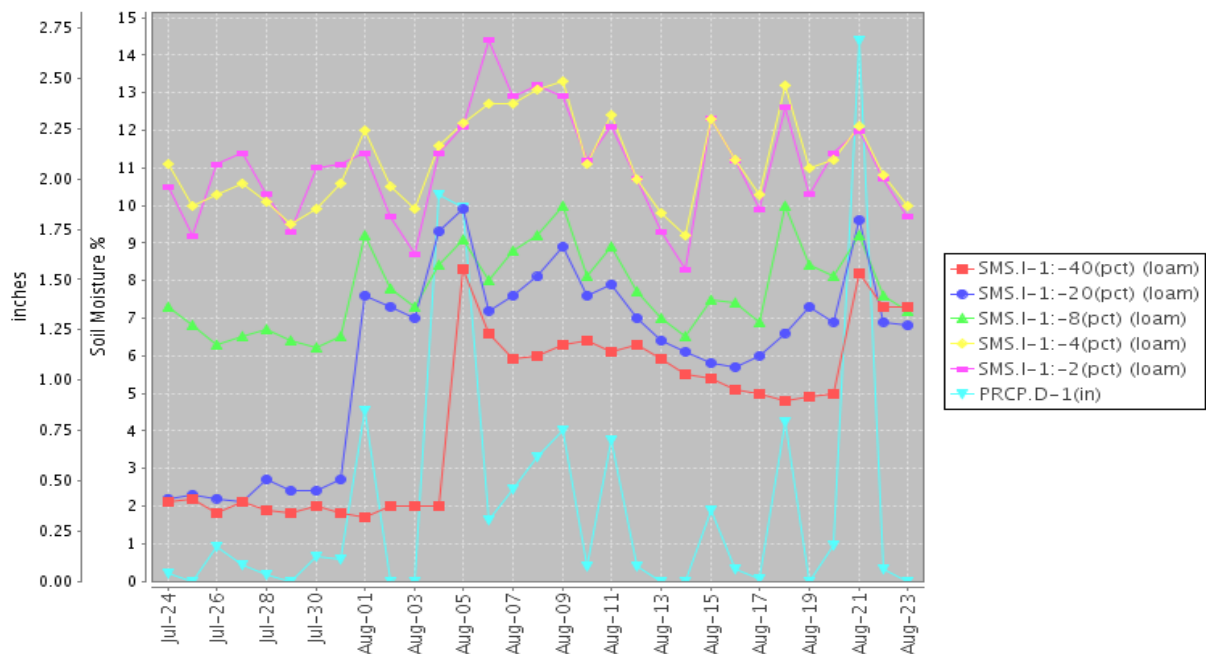


Fig. 5: This NRCS resource shows a site over the [Central Panhandle of Florida](#) with fluctuating soil moisture with periodic rainfall.

Useful Agriculture Links:

- USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) [observed soil moisture conditions](#), [departures and percentiles](#), and comparison to [5-year average](#) and [10-year average](#);
- the Palmer [Crop Moisture Index \(CMI\)](#), which intensified during the month in the West and Lower to Mid-Mississippi Valley (weeks [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#));
- CPC modeled soil moisture [anomalies](#) and [percentiles](#) for end of May, and [soil moisture anomaly change](#) compared to previous month;
- CPC's Leaky Bucket model [soil moisture percentiles](#);
- NLDAS modeled soil moisture percentiles for the [top soil layer](#) and [total soil layer](#);
- VIC modeled [soil moisture percentiles](#), and [soil moisture percentile change](#) compared to previous month;
- USDA observed [pasture and rangeland conditions](#);
- [Vegetation Drought Response Index \(VegDRI\)](#);
- the NOAA/NESDIS satellite-based [Vegetation Health Index \(VHI\)](#);
- the USGS agro-hydrologic model ([Soil Water Index](#), [Water Requirement Satisfaction Index](#));
- Selected SNOTEL Sites (measured [2"](#), [4"](#), [8"](#), [20"](#), and [40"](#) soil moisture depths);

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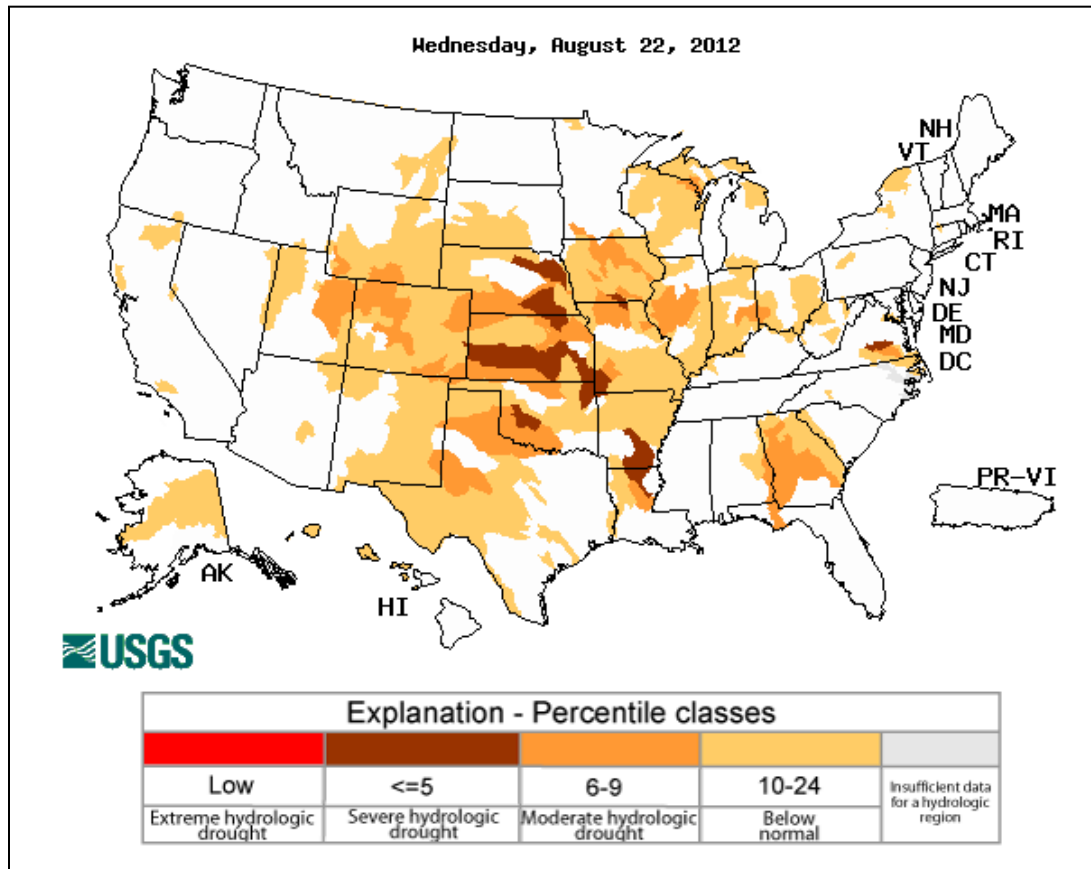


Fig. 6: Map of below normal 7-day average [streamflow](#) compared to historical streamflow for the day of year. **Severe** conditions exist over parts of Kansas, Nebraska, southwest Missouri, Oklahoma, and south-central Virginia

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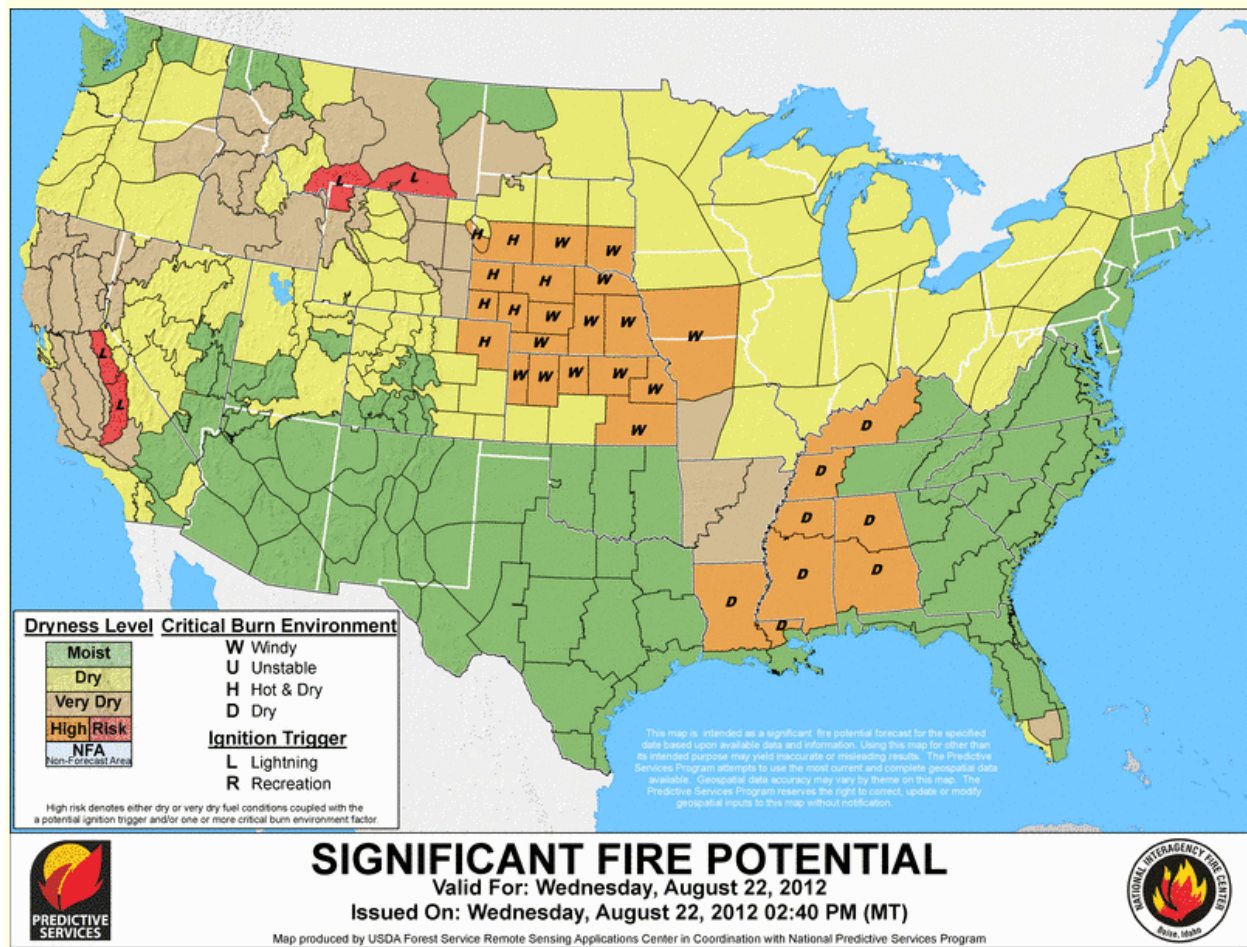


Fig. 7: [Significant fire potential](#) for yesterday. This resource also provides forecasts out to 7 days. Also check out: [NOAA's Fire Server](#). Risk has increased over eastern California and the southern Montana Rockies during the past several days. Also see: [Experimental Southwest area wildland fire smoke impact awareness page](#) and the latest, [National Interagency Fire Agency Report](#).

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National Drought Summary -- August 21, 2012

The discussion in the Looking Ahead section is simply a description of what the official national guidance from the National Weather Service (NWS) National Centers for Environmental Prediction is depicting for current areas of dryness and drought. The NWS forecast products utilized include the HPC 5-day QPF and 5-day Mean Temperature progs, the 6-10 Day Outlooks of Temperature and Precipitation Probability, and the 8-14 Day Outlooks of Temperature and Precipitation Probability, valid as of late Wednesday afternoon of the USDM release week. The NWS forecast web page used for this section is:
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/forecasts/>.

This U.S. Drought Monitor week saw a few notable improvements and some serious degradation. Temperatures have generally been below normal this week from the east side of the Rockies to the East Coast, with the exception of Texas, the Southeast Coast, and northern New England. This has helped ease drought impacts, particularly in those areas where beneficial precipitation fell. One such area is in the Ohio Valley where parts of Indiana saw more than five inches of rain. This is the second straight week of beneficial precipitation for some of these areas and this precipitation has largely alleviated Exceptional Drought (D4) from the state, despite lingering impacts still being felt. Last week, drought gripped slightly less of the agricultural land in the country with 85% of the U.S. corn crop, 83% of soybeans, 63% of hay, and 71% of cattle areas experiencing drought. Nearly half of the corn (49%) and soybean (46%) areas are experiencing Extreme (D3) to Exceptional (D4) Drought. This has led to both reduced yields and earlier harvests. Additional impacts this week include closing of an 11-mile stretch of the Mississippi River near Greenville, MS to barge traffic because of low water levels and wildfires expanding from northern California to Idaho.

The Southeast: Continued beneficial precipitation in the Southeast this week helped to improve drought conditions, particularly in northern Alabama and the upstate of South Carolina. Drought continues to strongly grip Georgia, eastern Alabama and western Tennessee and to a lesser extent areas of North Carolina and northern Mississippi where conditions remain relatively unchanged.

The Northeast and Mid-Atlantic: Most of this area received enough precipitation that drought conditions held status quo with minor reductions in Abnormal Dryness (D0) in Maine and Rhode Island and a reduction in Severe Drought (D1) in Massachusetts.

The South and Southern Plains: In Oklahoma, drought intensified to Exceptional Drought (D4) status in the northeast part of the state, which continues to miss out on beneficial precipitation falling to the south, just over the Texas border. Drought conditions in parts of eastern and extreme western Texas improved with the recent rains, while a lack of rain in the central and panhandle parts of the state led to expansion of Exceptional (D4), Extreme (D3), Severe (D2), and Moderate (D1) Drought as well as Abnormal Dryness (D0). In Louisiana, Extreme (D3) and Severe (D2) Drought expanded in the north.

The Central and Northern Plains and Midwest: More widespread rains in the Midwest alleviated some D1-D4 Drought as well as Abnormal Dryness (D0) through southern Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio and into western Kentucky again this week. Lingering drought impacts remain in many areas, leaving devastated agriculture in its wake. Despite a much cooler week this week, Exceptional (D4) and Extreme (D3) Drought continue to expand in the area from northern Missouri and into Kansas and Nebraska where beneficial precipitation has

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been hard to come by. North Dakota saw a minor change in Moderate Drought (D1) and Abnormal Dryness (D0) in the north central part of the state.

The West: The drought in southeast California, Arizona, and New Mexico has begun to respond to the recent monsoon rains. Areas of Extreme (D3) and Moderate (D2) Drought were alleviated, largely across the southern part of the states. A slight expansion of Exceptional Drought (D4) took place in eastern Colorado while in Idaho, Moderate Drought (D1) and Abnormal Dryness (D0) continues to expand and contribute to wildfires.

Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico: Drought conditions remained unchanged in Alaska and Puerto Rico this week. In Hawaii, drought intensified to Extreme (D3) levels in southern Lanai.

Looking Ahead: During the August 23 - 27, 2012 time period, there is an enhanced probability of precipitation in the Northern Plains and in the extreme South throughout the entire period, as well as in the Southwest and the south Atlantic Coast early in the period, and around the Great Lakes later in the period. Below normal precipitation is expected in the Northwest, New England, and into the Ohio Valley. The northern tier of the country is expected to see above normal temperatures.

For the ensuing 5 days (August 28 – September 1, 2012), the odds favor normal to above normal temperatures everywhere in the U.S. with the exception of the Pacific Coast. Normal to below-normal precipitation is expected from the West Coast, through the Southern and Central Plains and into the Ohio Valley and South. Above-normal precipitation is expected from the Northern Plains, through the Great Lakes, and all along the East Coast. In Alaska, temperatures are expected to be normal to above-normal over the entire state and precipitation is expected to be below normal in the south and above normal in the north.

Author: [Michael Brewer, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA](#)

Dryness Categories

D0 ... Abnormally Dry ... used for areas showing dryness but not yet in drought, or for areas recovering from drought.

Drought Intensity Categories

D1 ... Moderate Drought

D2 ... Severe Drought

D3 ... Extreme Drought

D4 ... Exceptional Drought

Drought or Dryness Types

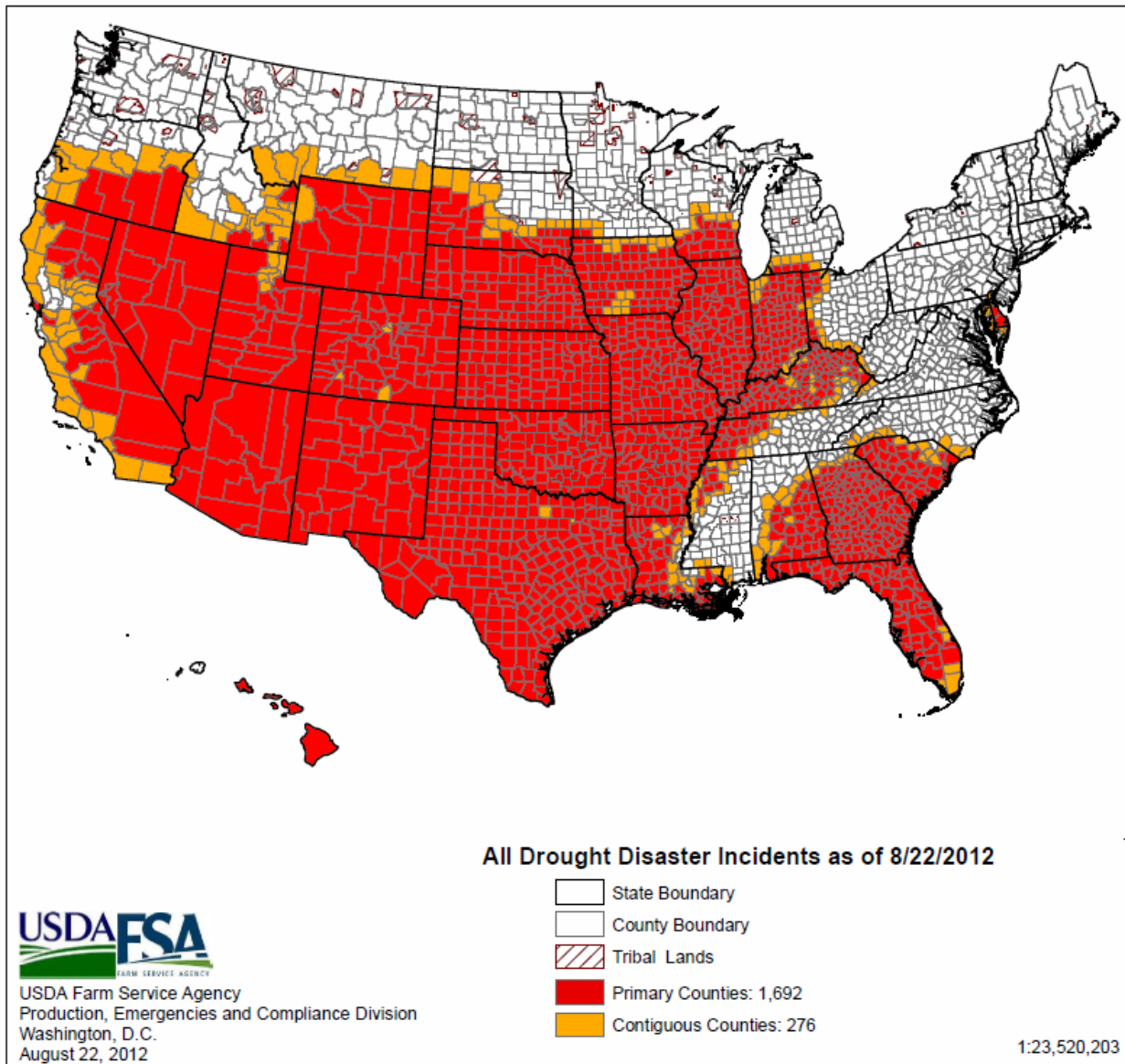
S ... Short-Term, typically <6 months (e.g. agricultural, grasslands)

L ... Long-Term, typically >6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

Updated August 22, 2012

Special Drought Update

2012 Secretarial Drought Designations - All Drought



Help for You

Producers and Farmers

Additional Emergency Funding to Assist Livestock and Crop Producers: To assist producers facing extreme drought conditions, USDA will utilize nearly \$16 million in financial and technical assistance to immediately help crop and livestock producers in 19 states cope

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with the adverse impacts of the historic drought. In addition, USDA will initiate a transfer of \$14 million in unobligated program funds into the Emergency Conservation Program.

These funds can be used to assist in moving water to livestock in need, providing emergency forage for livestock, and rehabilitating lands severely impacted by the drought. Together these efforts should provide nearly \$30 million to producers struggling with drought conditions.

[Emergency Disaster Designation and Declaration Process Overview](#)

[Contact your local Farm Services Agency for more information](#)

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Emergency Haying and Grazing

For 2012, a county is authorized for [emergency haying and grazing](#) outside the Primary Nesting Season if the county is designated as level "D0-Abnormally Dry", as of July 19, 2012 or later, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The U.S. Drought Monitor is available online at: <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/> 

Under this special determination, emergency **haying** is authorized to August 31, 2012. Emergency **grazing** is authorized until September 30, 2012.

Learn more about [FSA Disaster Program](#) (PDF) triggers, key requirements, payments and funding levels for each disaster programs.

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