



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

Weekly Report - Snowpack / Drought Monitor Update

Date: 03 January 2013

SNOTEL SNOWPACK AND PRECIPITATION SUMMARY

Temperature: [SNOTEL](#) and ACIS 7-day temperature anomaly ending 3 January shows departures below normal across the West with the most negative values over the High Plains (Fig. 1a). [ACIS](#) 7-day average temperature anomalies shows the greatest positive temperature departures over parts the northernmost Rockies ($>+6^{\circ}\text{F}$). The greatest negative departures occurred over the North Great Basin ($<-15^{\circ}\text{F}$) (Fig. 1b).

Precipitation: [ACIS](#) 7-day average precipitation amounts for the period ending yesterday shows very low amounts across the entire West (Fig. 2a). In terms of percent of normal, high percentages were found scattered across the eastern half of the West including in west-central Nevada (Fig. 2b). SNOTEL [month to date](#) precipitation percent of normal for the first 2 days of January shows insignificant (insufficient) statistics as would be expected. By next week, January's weather pattern will become more obvious (Fig. 2c). For the [2013 Water-Year](#) that began on 1 October 2012, statistics continue to favor the Northern Tier States and the Northern Sierra with surplus. Deficits dominate over eastern Wyoming and all of Colorado and New Mexico (Fig. 2d).

Snow: [Snow depths](#) for the week revealed that increases were moderate over the 4-Corner States, Northern Great Basin, and Bighorn Mountains. Moderate declines were also noted over the Northern Sierra, Cascades, and most ranges over Idaho (Fig. 3a). As for [snow water-equivalent](#), the largest deficits continue over much of New Mexico, all of Colorado, eastern Wyoming, and the northeastern Great Basin. Significant surpluses exist over the Cascades, Sierra, Wasatch, Uinta, mountain of Arizona, Upper Snake River Basin, and Upper Green River Basin. However, since last week, many basins across the Pacific Northwest and the Upper Green River including the Lower Green-Colorado Rivers have seen a decrease of one bin category. Even the Northern Sierra has had a decrease in SWE between 20 and 30 percent. A continuation of this decline is expected over the next two weeks as high pressure dominates the West. The upside to this situation is that temperatures will remain well below average. A quick moving winter storm traveled across the Southwest last week and helped to maintain SWE levels (Fig. 3b).

Weather Summary: Two weather systems moved across the country during the last 7 days, dropping abundant precipitation from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southeast and Northeast, with a third system developing at year's end. Above-normal precipitation also fell across parts of the West, mostly in the Great Basin, from these systems. The cumulative impact of precipitation during this week and previous weeks resulted in contraction of drought areas in the West, South, and East. But drought expanded in those areas which missed out on the beneficial precipitation.

The West: Pacific systems dropped half an inch of precipitation across much of the West Coast and parts of the Great Basin, with up to 2 inches of precipitation falling across parts of the Far West. Most of the coastal precipitation fell outside of current drought areas. However, storm systems of the last few weeks have contributed to a normal or above-normal snowpack from the

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report

Sierra Nevada to Washington State and across parts of the Great Basin to Northern Rockies. As a result, D0-D2 was trimmed in northeast California and adjacent Nevada, D3 was shaved in northwest Nevada, D2-D3 was pulled back in northeast to central Utah, and the area of SL impacts in the Great Basin was contracted to cover the region from northeast Nevada to southeast Oregon. On the other hand, the Southwest has continued to miss out on most of the beneficial precipitation. D3 expanded in northwest and east central New Mexico and D2 expanded in Catron County in west central New Mexico where long-term deficits continued or worsened. Author: Richard Heim, 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. 4 through 4d).

Soil Moisture

Soil moisture (Fig. 5), 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 6 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. 7) 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.

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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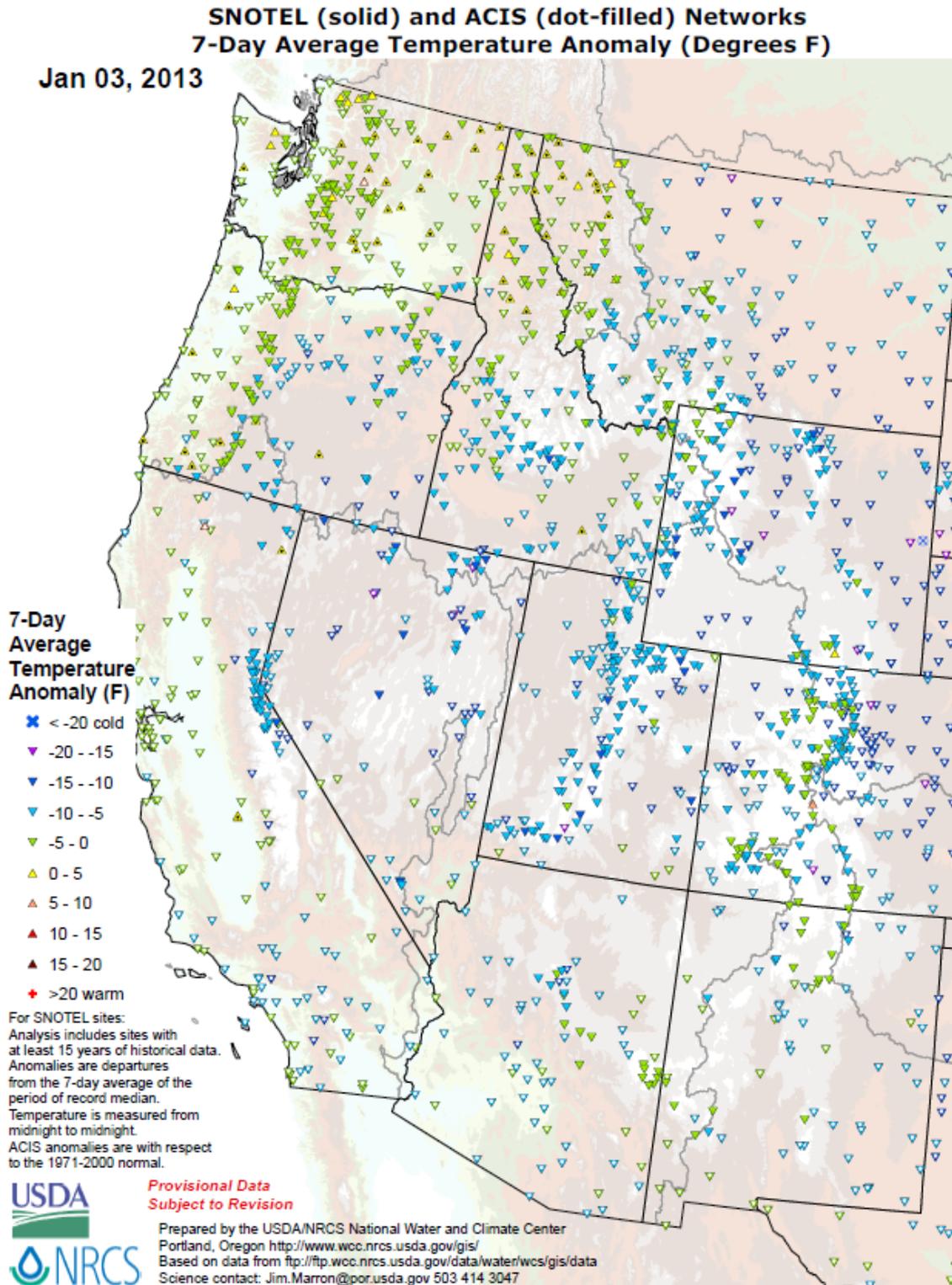
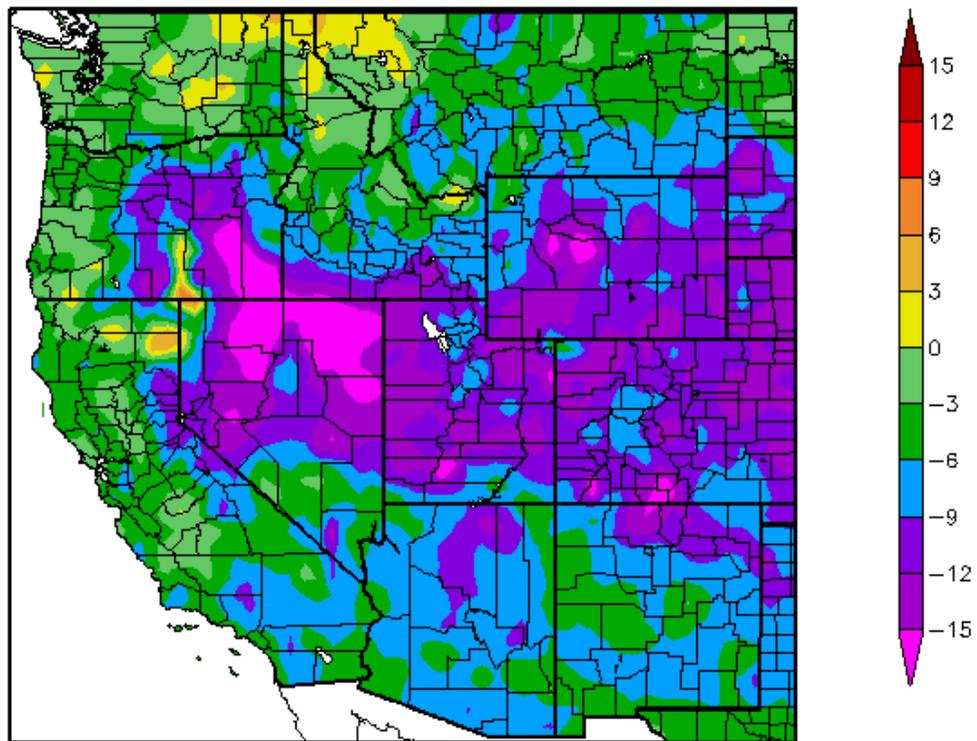


Fig. 1a: SNOTEL and ACIS 7-day temperature anomaly ending 3 January shows departures below normal across the West with the most negative values over the High Plains.

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Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
12/27/2012 - 1/2/2013



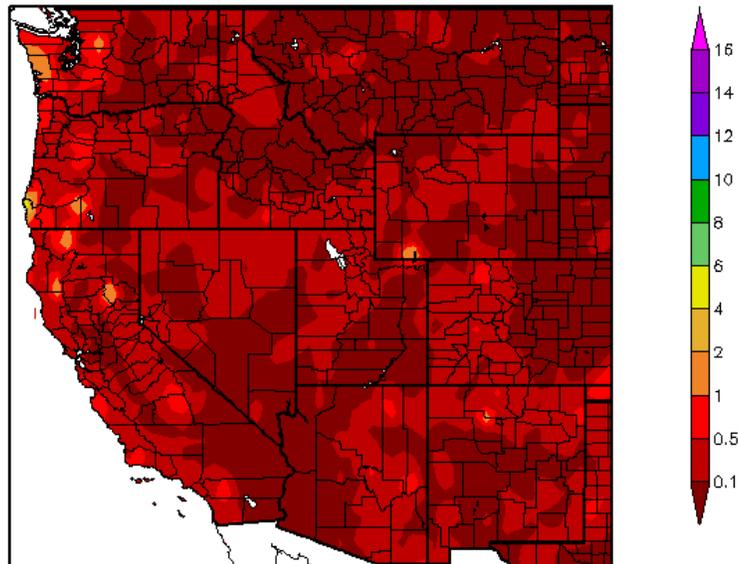
Generated 1/3/2013 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Fig. 1b: ACIS 7-day average temperature anomalies show the greatest positive temperature departures over parts the northernmost Rockies (>+6°F). The greatest negative departures occurred over the North Great Basin (<-15°F).

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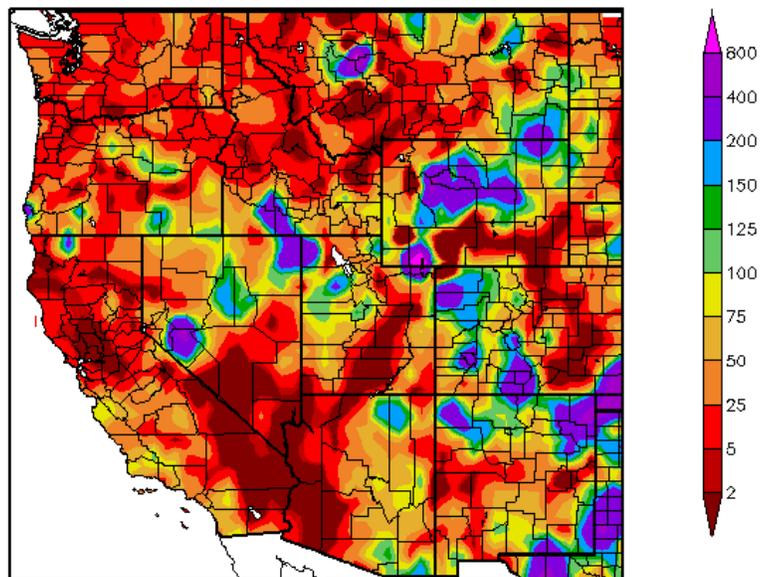
Precipitation (in)
12/27/2012 - 1/2/2013



Generated 1/3/2013 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
12/27/2012 - 1/2/2013



Generated 1/3/2013 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Fig. 2a and 2b: [ACIS](#) 7-day average precipitation amounts for the period ending yesterday shows very low amounts across the entire West (Fig. 2a). In terms of percent of normal, high percentages were found scattered across the eastern half of the West including in west-central Nevada (Fig. 2b).

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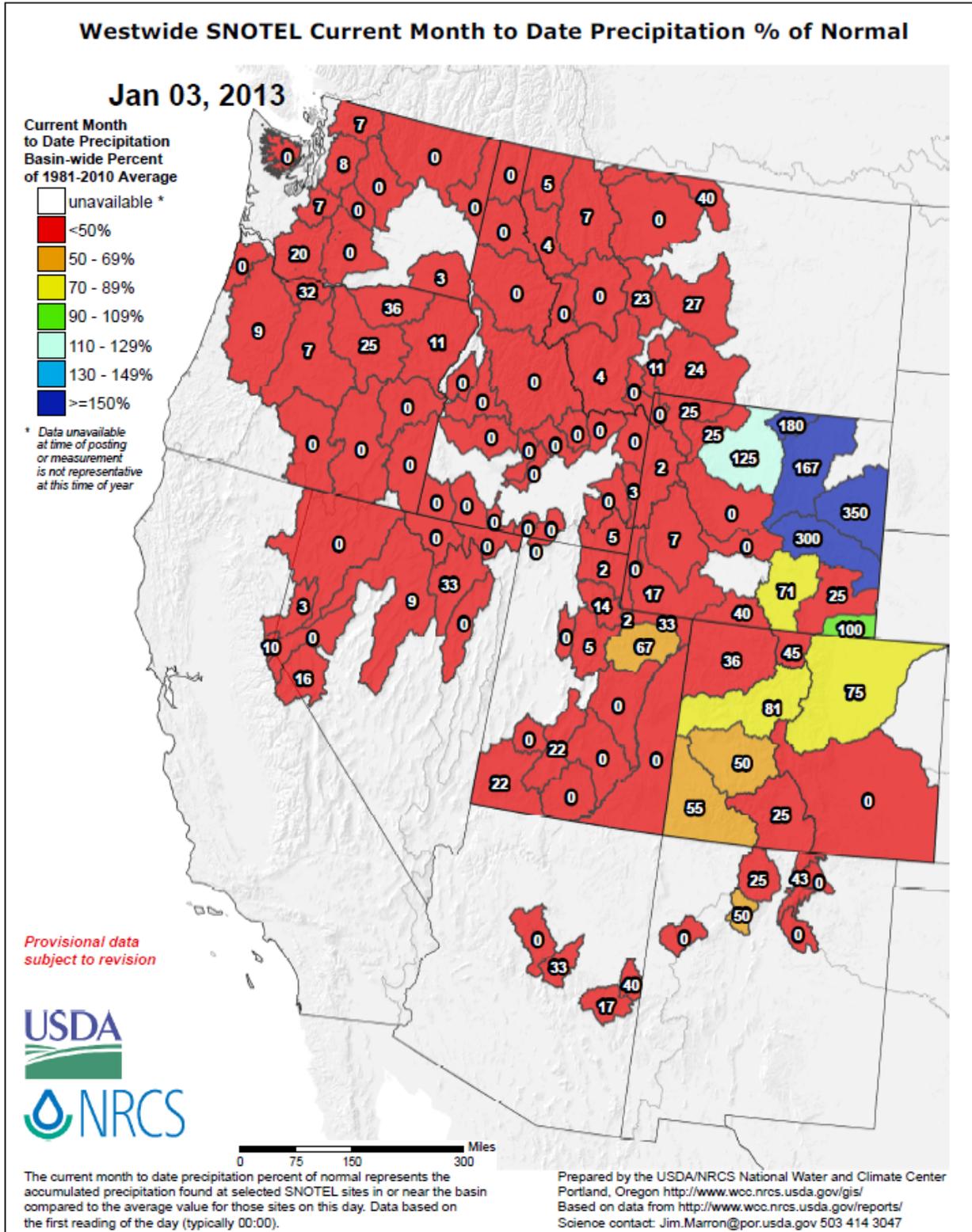


Fig. 2c: SNOTEL month to date precipitation percent of normal for the first 2 days of January shows insignificant (insufficient) statistics as would be expected. By next week, January's weather pattern will be more obvious.

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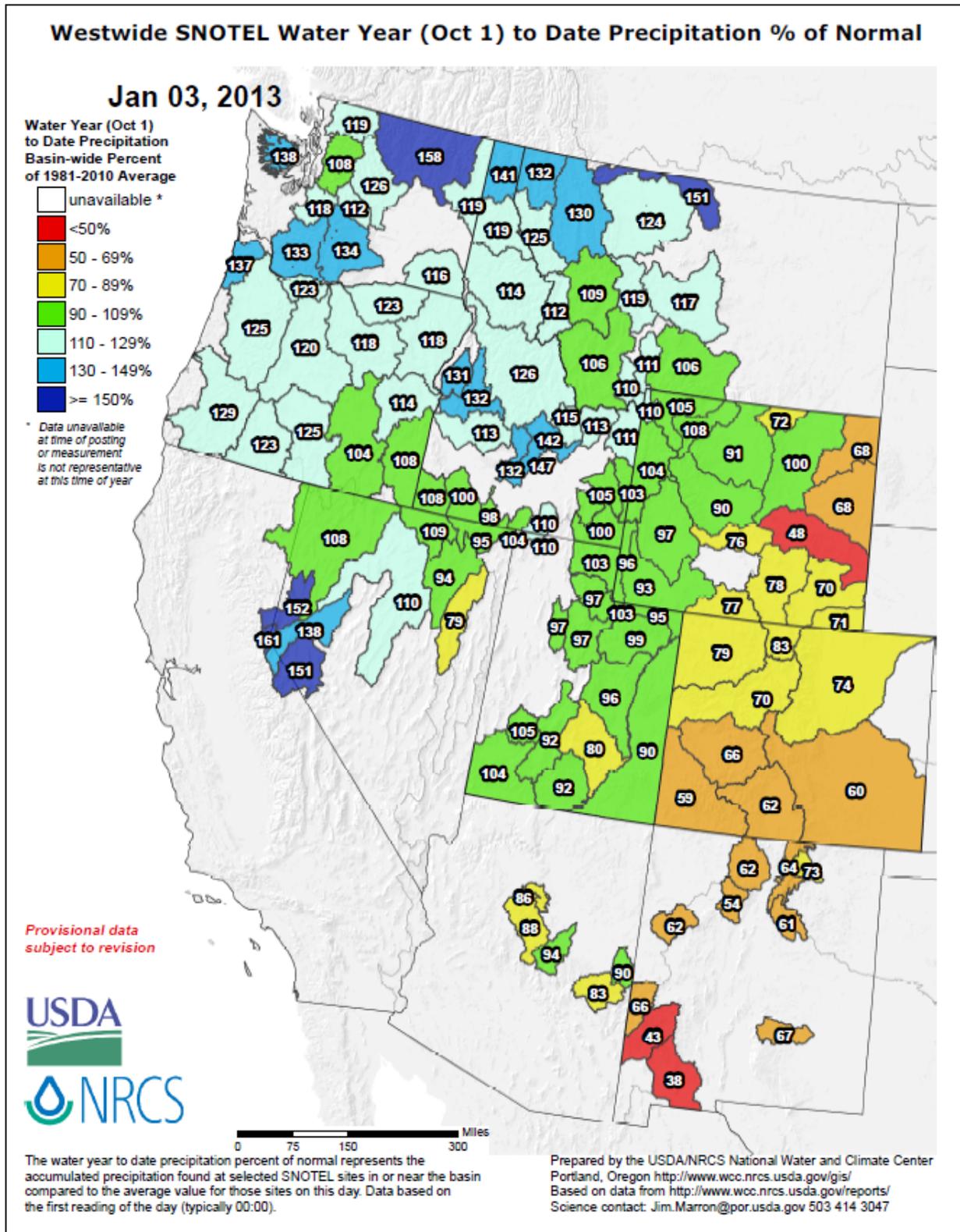


Fig. 2d: For the 2013 Water-Year that began on 1 October 2012, statistics continue to favor the Northern Tier States and the Northern Sierra with surplus. Deficits dominate over eastern Wyoming and all of Colorado and New Mexico.

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SNOTEL 7-Day Snow Depth Change (Inches)

Jan 03, 2013

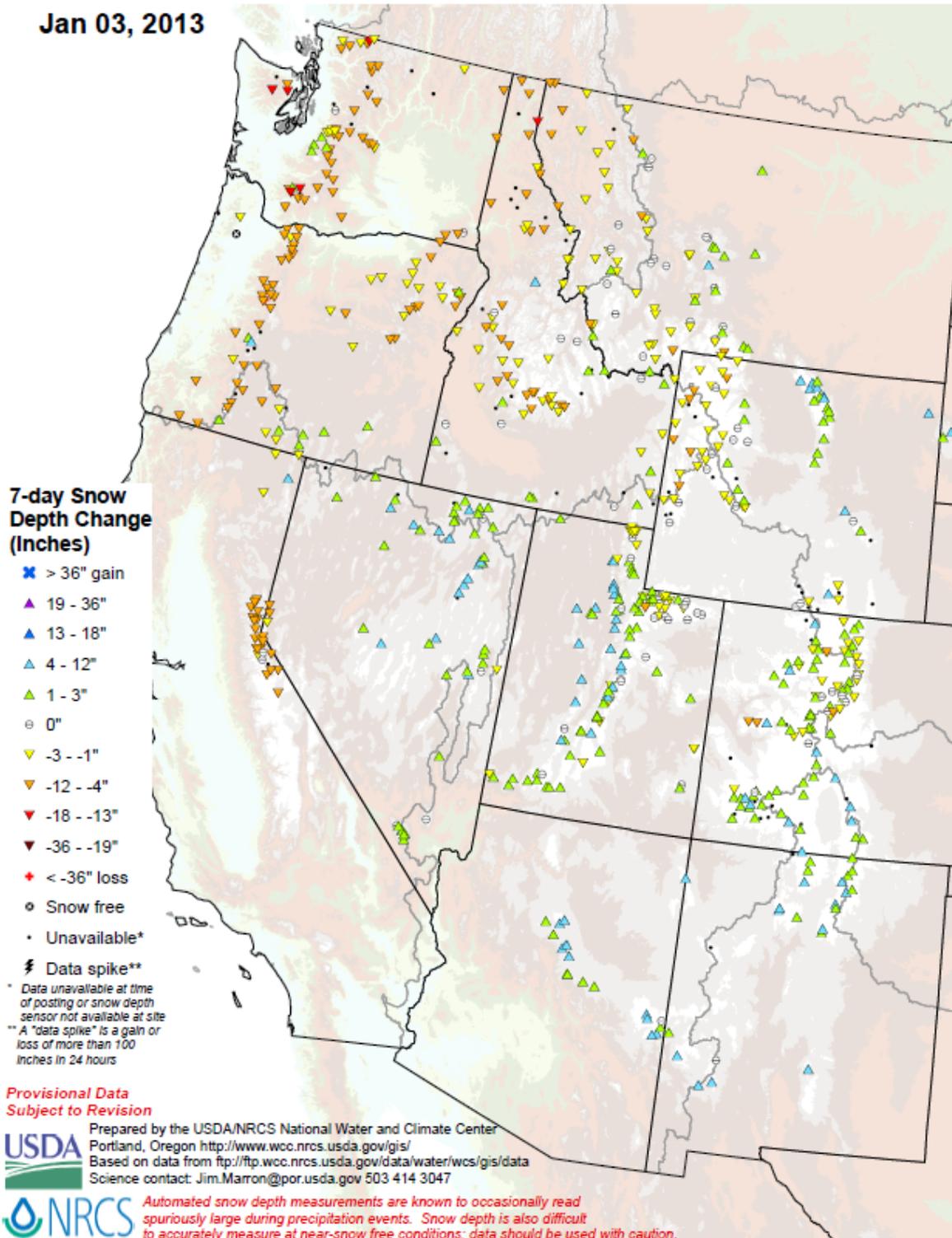


Fig. 3a: **Snow depths** for the week revealed that increases were moderate over the 4-Corner States, Northern Great Basin, and Bighorn Mountains. Moderate declines were also noted over the Northern Sierra, Cascades, and ranges over Idaho.

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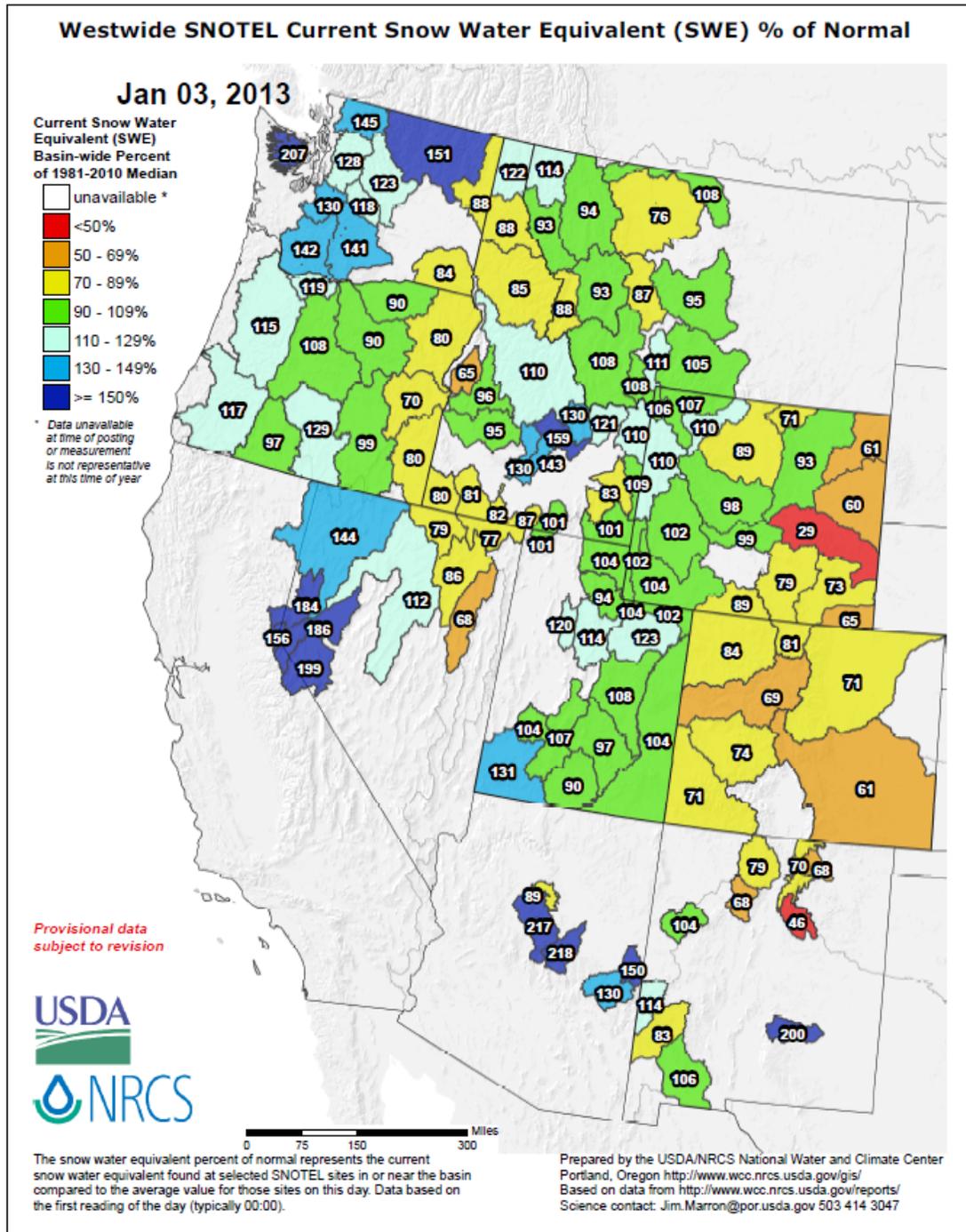


Fig. 3b: Snow Water-Equivalent: Largest deficits continue over much of New Mexico, all of Colorado, eastern Wyoming, and the northeastern Great Basin. Significant surpluses exist over the Cascades, Sierra, Wasatch, Uinta, mountain of Arizona, Upper Snake River Basin, and Upper Green River Basin. However, since last week, many basins across the Pacific Northwest and the Upper Green River including the Lower Green-Colorado Rivers have seen a decrease of one bin category. Even the Northern Sierra has had a decrease in SWE between 20 and 30 percent. A continuation of this decline is expected over the next two weeks as high pressure dominates the West. The upside of this situation is that temperatures will remain well below average. A quick moving winter storm traveled across the Southwest last week and helped to maintain SWE levels.

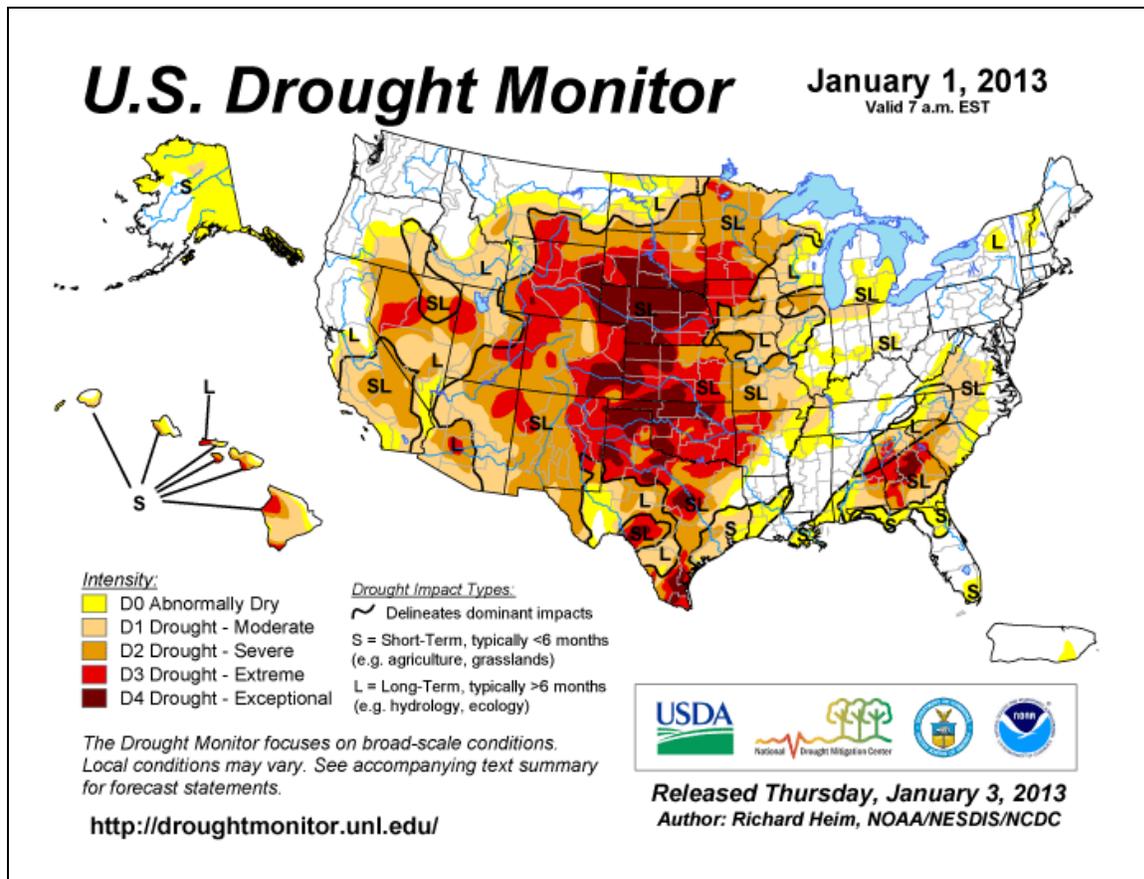


Fig. 4: Current [Drought Monitor](#) weekly summary. The exceptional D4 levels of drought are found over Georgia, and scattered across the western corn belt of the Plains into Colorado, Wyoming, easternmost New Mexico, and southward into Texas. For more drought news, see [Drought Impact Reporter](#). Click for the latest statistics for [California Reservoirs](#). The late November [drought indicator blend and component percentiles](#) spreadsheet is a great resource for climate division drought statistics. See Fig. 8 for the latest [Drought Outlook](#) (forecast).

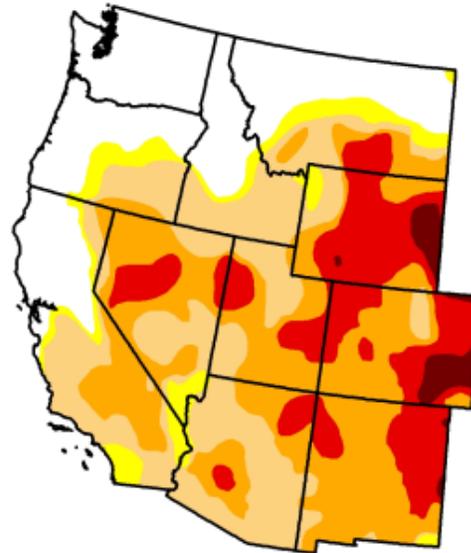
U.S. Drought Monitor

West

January 1, 2013
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	24.39	75.61	69.31	45.04	18.01	2.15
Last Week (12/25/2012 map)	24.28	75.72	69.42	45.80	18.83	2.15
3 Months Ago (10/02/2012 map)	13.61	86.39	77.12	43.47	16.27	2.14
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	24.39	75.61	69.31	45.04	18.01	2.15
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	15.12	84.88	77.15	43.65	16.85	1.77
One Year Ago (12/27/2011 map)	48.49	51.51	20.05	12.22	2.67	0.78



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://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, January 3, 2013
Richard Heim, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

Fig. 4a: Drought Monitor for the [Western States](#) with statistics over various time periods. No significant changes occurred this past week. See latest [Climate Assessment for the Southwest Report](#). See latest [Western Water Assessment Report](#).

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report

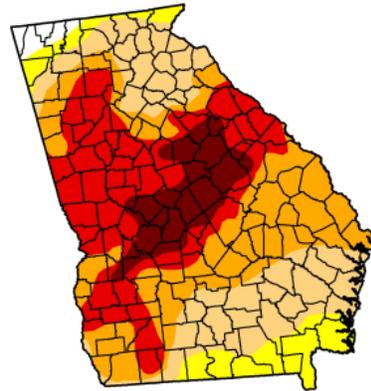
U.S. Drought Monitor
Georgia

January 1, 2013
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	1.63	98.37	89.49	64.87	36.96	10.25
Last Week (12/25/2012 map)	0.69	99.31	90.61	68.55	37.41	13.53
3 Months Ago (10/02/2012 map)	42.42	57.58	47.77	38.67	21.78	9.03
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	1.63	98.37	89.49	64.87	36.96	10.25
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	37.30	62.70	52.44	42.66	34.04	17.18
One Year Ago (12/27/2011 map)	12.07	87.93	85.36	81.00	63.92	0.00

Intensity:

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- D1 Drought - Moderate
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<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



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Fig. 4b: D4 conditions are over Georgia. Note some improvement in D4 this past week.

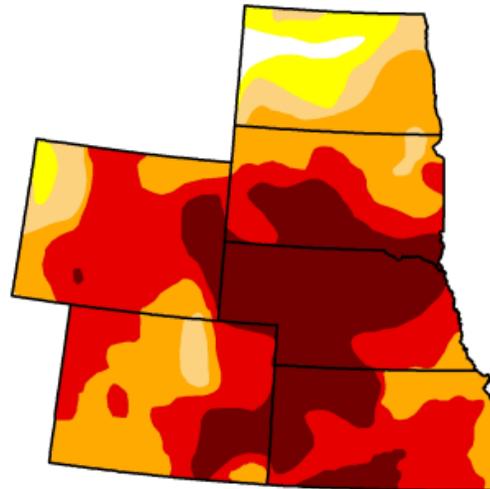
U.S. Drought Monitor
High Plains

January 1, 2013
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	1.54	98.46	93.01	86.20	60.25	26.99
Last Week (12/25/2012 map)	1.54	98.46	93.01	86.20	60.25	26.99
3 Months Ago (10/02/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	99.62	87.51	60.70	27.91
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	1.54	98.46	93.01	86.20	60.25	26.99
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	98.91	83.80	61.28	24.35
One Year Ago (12/27/2011 map)	61.66	38.34	18.12	7.22	2.07	0.04

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
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<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, January 3, 2013
Richard Heim, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

Fig. 4c: Drought Monitor for the [High Plains](#) with statistics over various time periods. Conditions remained unchanged for the week.

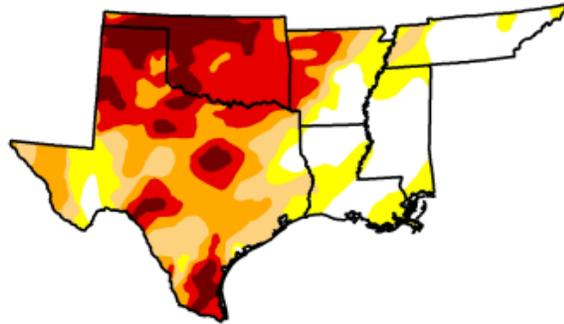
U.S. Drought Monitor

South

January 1, 2013
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	21.18	78.82	63.69	50.50	32.80	10.98
Last Week (12/25/2012 map)	19.12	80.88	65.56	49.91	32.52	10.14
3 Months Ago (10/02/2012 map)	28.17	71.83	60.13	38.85	23.18	6.27
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	21.18	78.82	63.69	50.50	32.80	10.98
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	24.13	75.87	66.61	51.50	29.86	9.11
One Year Ago (12/27/2011 map)	26.47	73.53	69.01	54.81	39.11	17.15



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
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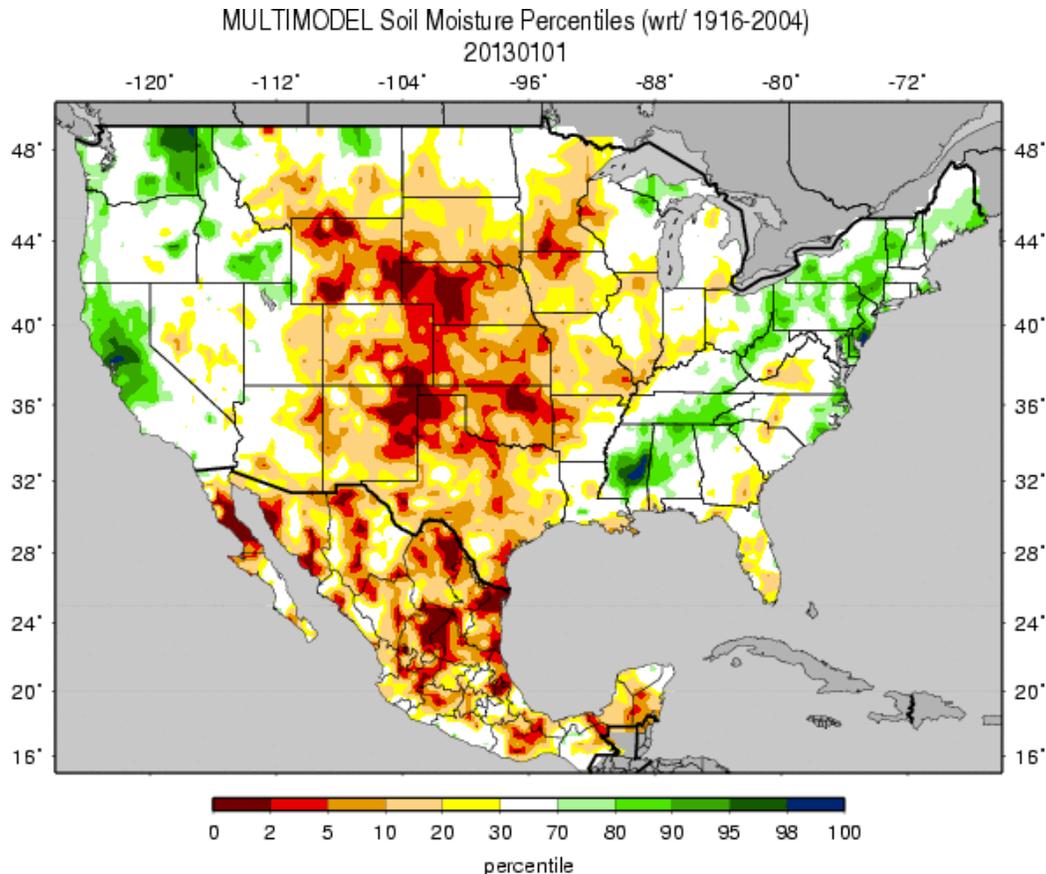
Released Thursday, January 3, 2013
Richard Heim, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

Fig. 4d: Drought Monitor for the [South-Central Region](#) with statistics over various time periods. Note some further deterioration in the D4 category over the past 7 days. Check out the [Texas Drought Website](#).

Recent NASS Report:

The condition of small grains and canola across [Oklahoma](#) continued to deteriorate under the protracted drought. Seventy percent of rye, 65 percent of canola and 61 percent of wheat were rated poor to very poor at the end of December. The poor condition of small grains meant limited grazing opportunities for livestock producers already facing poor pastures and low hay supplies. A winter storm on Christmas Day brought snow, with the highest totals falling in southeastern Oklahoma. A few other minor precipitation events followed the last week of December. The Southeast district has recorded 2.49 inches for the month so far, with most districts averaging less than half an inch. Precipitation totals on this report include rain and snow measured through December 30th, but frozen precipitation is recorded as it melts, so some snow and ice may be excluded. Overall the moisture received during December was still far below average for the month, leaving seasonal totals even further behind. For the period since September 1st all districts have received less than sixty percent of their normal moisture. The North Central district has recorded only 34 percent of normal precipitation for this period. Topsoil moisture conditions were rated 92 percent short to very short. Subsoil moisture conditions declined from the last report and were rated 98 percent short to very short.

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Figs. 5: Soil Moisture ranking in percentile as of 01 January shows dryness scattered across Plains, much of the Rockies, and eastern half of the Southwest. Wetness dominates from northern California, eastern Washington, southeastern Idaho, and from Mississippi to much of New England. Freezing soils will skew actual moisture values, making them less than reliable over the Northern States.

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](#))

n (2006) MONTH=2012-12-04 (Daily) NRCS National Water and Climate Center - Provisional Data - subject to revision
Thu Jan 03 07:59:09 PST 2013

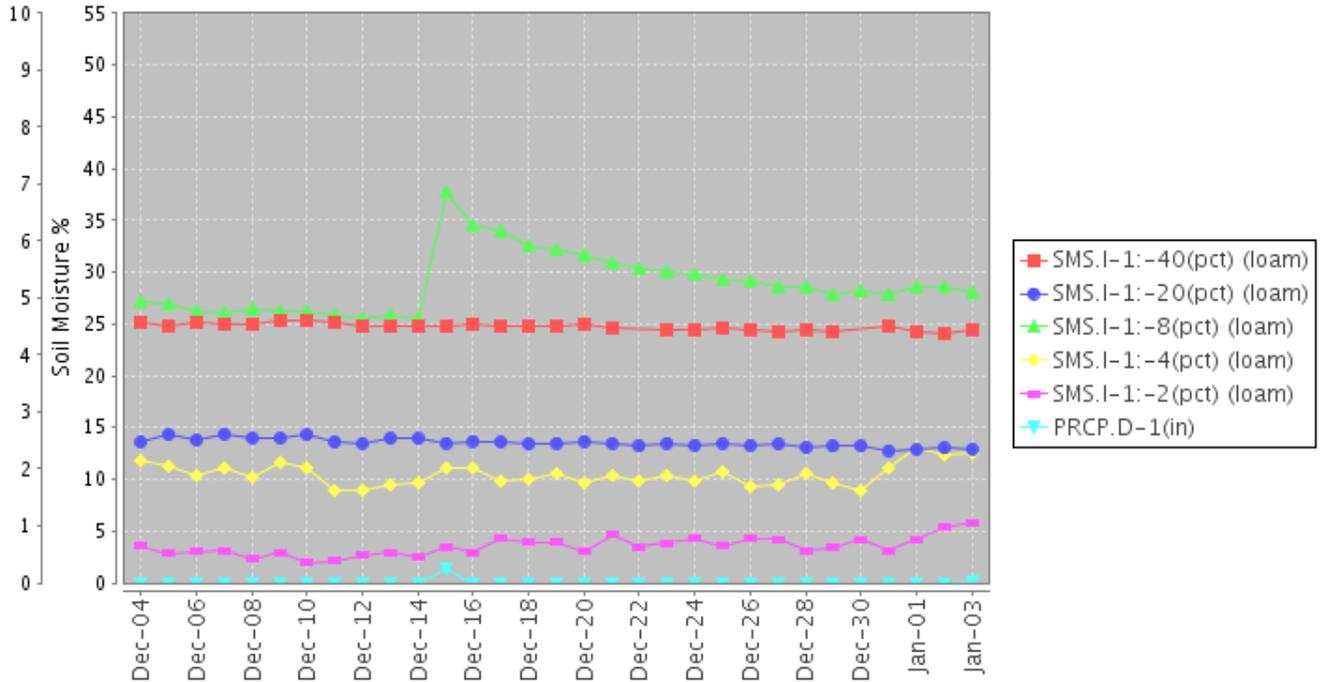


Fig. 6: This NRCS resource shows a site over the [Panhandle of Texas](#) with soil moisture increasing with depth. The 8 inch depth shows the highest moisture content.

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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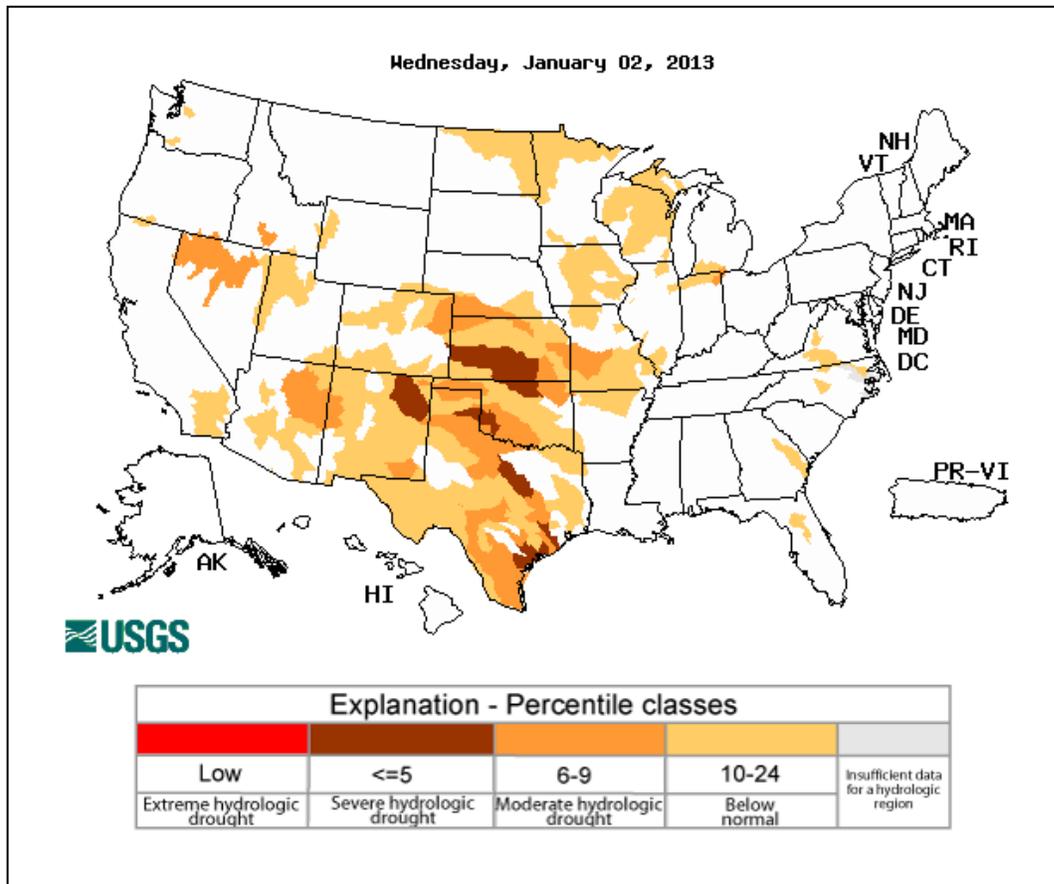


Fig. 7: Map of below normal 7-day average streamflow compared to historical streamflow for the day of year. **Severe** conditions exist over northeast New Mexico, the Central and Southern Plains, and southeast Texas. As with soil moisture, streamflow data can be severely compromised by prolonged freezing temperatures. See the USGS [National Water Information System Mapper](#).

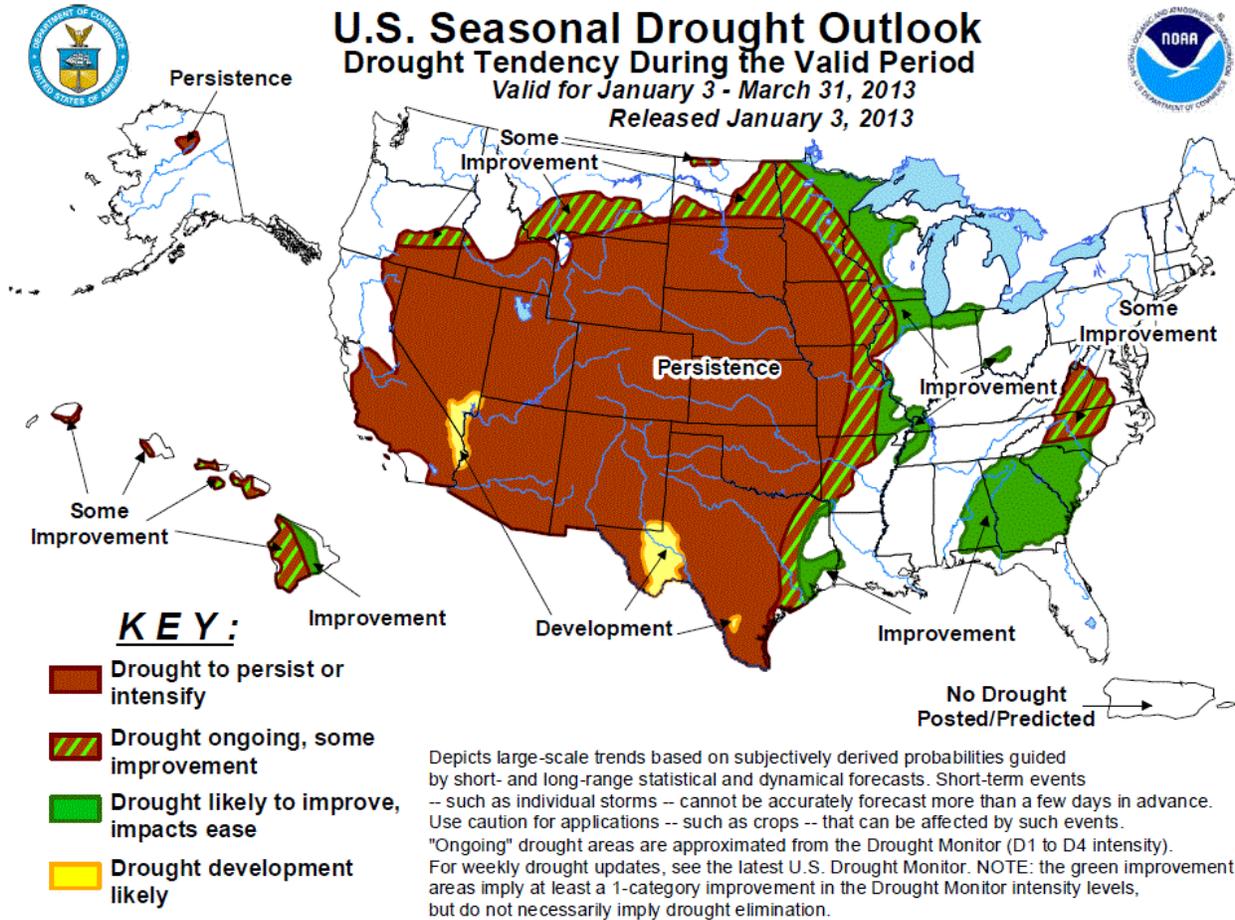


Fig. 8: U.S. seasonal Drought Outlook released today (3 January 2013).

See **USDA Drought Assistance [website](#)**.

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National Drought Summary -- January 1, 2013

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/>.

Weather Summary: Two weather systems moved across the country during the last 7 days, dropping abundant precipitation from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southeast and Northeast, with a third system developing at year's end. Above-normal precipitation also fell across parts of the West, mostly in the Great Basin, from these systems. The cumulative impact of precipitation during this week and previous weeks resulted in contraction of drought areas in the West, South, and East. But drought expanded in those areas which missed out on the beneficial precipitation.

The Northeast to Mid-Atlantic: Another week of widespread 1 to 2-inch precipitation across the Northeast further contracted D0 over New York. The remaining D0 reflected lingering precipitation deficits at the 2 to 12 month time scales. The D1 in central Virginia expanded to West Virginia in an area which received below-normal precipitation this week and which had notable deficits at longer time scales.

Southeast to South: A large area of 2+-inch rains fell from eastern Texas to the western Carolinas, with several reports from Texas to Alabama exceeding 4 inches. Widespread improvement in the drought depiction was made, with D0-D2 being pulled back across parts of eastern Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas. The area of D4 from east central Alabama to west central Georgia was eliminated and D2-D4 pulled back in the vicinity of Athens, Georgia. D0 was shaved in Mississippi and Tennessee. It should be noted that, while the beneficial rains have improved short-term moisture conditions, the precipitation was mostly being soaked into the ground to improve soil moisture. Streamflow levels improved in some areas, but many lakes responded slowly if at all, and long-term moisture deficits remained, especially in Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas. An area of L impacts was added where the heaviest rains fell and short-term dryness was eliminated. Meanwhile, dry weather continued across much of western, central, and Deep South Texas, where areas of D0-D4 expanded.

The Plains and Midwest: Additional snow fell across parts of the central Plains – enough to arrest further deterioration but insufficient to improve the drought depiction. Precipitation in Oklahoma had little impact on reservoir and lake levels, and agricultural reports indicated that soil moisture remained depleted and the condition of small grains and canola across the state continued to deteriorate. On the other hand, even though precipitation was generally below normal across the western Great Lakes this week, above-normal precipitation in recent weeks prompted the contraction of D2 from Lake County, Illinois and Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties in Wisconsin where long-term deficits have shrunk considerably.

The West: Pacific systems dropped half an inch of precipitation across much of the West Coast and parts of the Great Basin, with up to 2 inches of precipitation falling across parts of the Far West. Most of the coastal precipitation fell outside of current drought areas. However, storm

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systems of the last few weeks have contributed to a normal or above-normal snowpack from the Sierra Nevada to Washington State and across parts of the Great Basin to Northern Rockies. As a result, D0-D2 was trimmed in northeast California and adjacent Nevada, D3 was shaved in northwest Nevada, D2-D3 was pulled back in northeast to central Utah, and the area of SL impacts in the Great Basin was contracted to cover the region from northeast Nevada to southeast Oregon. On the other hand, the Southwest has continued to miss out on most of the beneficial precipitation. D3 expanded in northwest and east central New Mexico and D2 expanded in Catron County in west central New Mexico where long-term deficits continued or worsened.

Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico: Precipitation has been below normal over southeast Puerto Rico for several months and streamflows are dropping, so a spot of D0 was added. In Alaska, drier-than-normal weather continued over much of the state, with snow water content 21% of normal in the Koyukuk Basin, where a spot of D1S was added. No change was made to Hawaii this week.

Looking Ahead: The active weather pattern of the last few weeks will settle down during the next five days (January 3-7). Half an inch to an inch of precipitation is projected to fall across parts of southwest Texas, the Gulf of Mexico states, the coastal Southeast, the eastern Great Lakes, and far northwest Washington State. Otherwise, it should be mostly dry across the country. Temperatures should moderate in the Northern Plains and East but cool off in the West.

The CPC 6-10 day and 8-14 day forecasts (for January 8-16) show the highest likelihood of above-normal precipitation for much of the country east of the Rockies and below-normal precipitation from California to the Southern Rockies. Temperatures are expected to average below normal for the West and above normal for the East. Western and southern coastal Alaska should be wetter and warmer than normal.

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