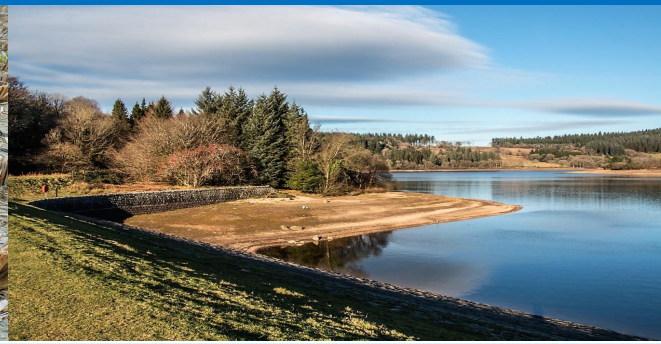
# Drought Information Statement for Southern NM/Far West TX

## Valid January 3, 2024

Issued By: NWS El Paso (Santa Teresa, NM)
Contact Information: sr-epz.nws@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated February 7, 2024 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/EPZ/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.





# U.S. Drought Monitor

**Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for southern New Mexico and far west Texas**

- Drought intensity and Extent
  - D4 (Exceptional Drought): Portions of Southwest New Mexico including Mimbres River Basin
  - D3 (Extreme Drought): Covering majority of Southern New Mexico and El Paso, TX
  - D2 (Severe Drought): Covering majority of southwest New Mexico and far west Texas (95% of area)

- Precipitation and mountain snow may improve temporary conditions next few months, but drought conditions will persist through the winter.

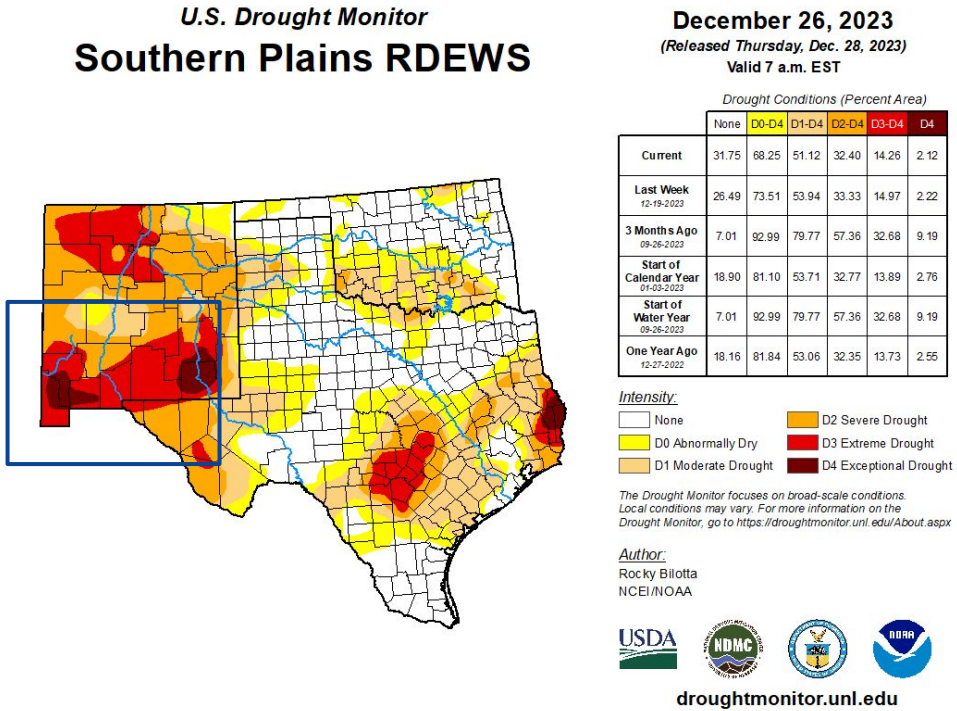



Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor valid 8am EDT December 26

# Recent Change in Drought Intensity

**Link to the latest 3-month change map for southern New Mexico and far west Texas**

- 12-Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - Drought Worsened: Slight degradation over portions of central New Mexico.
  - Drought Improved: No drought improvement was observed

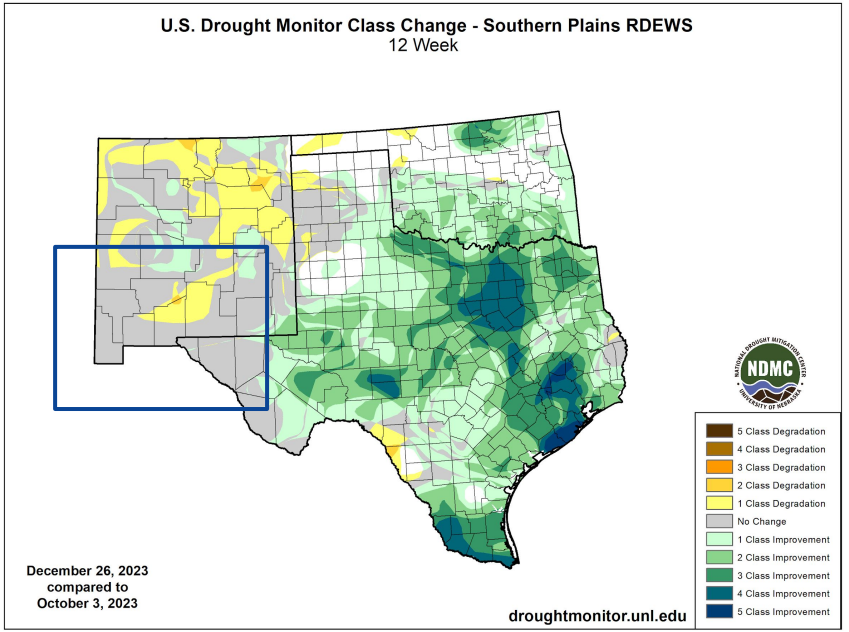
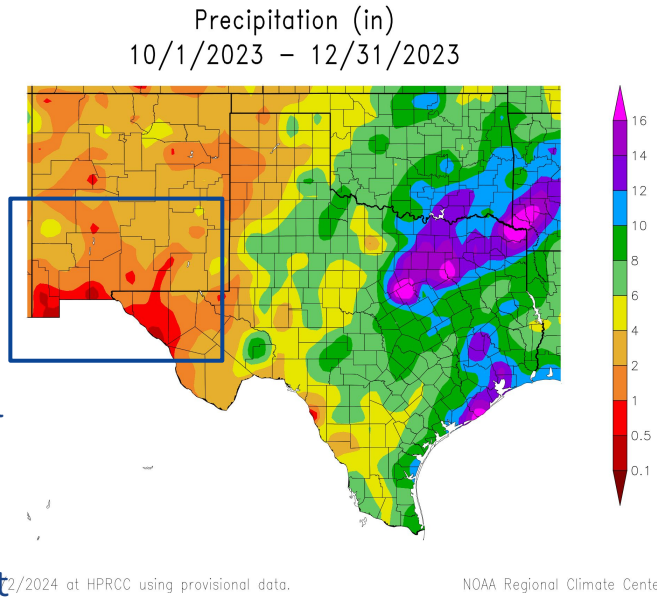



Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor 3-month change map valid 8am EDT December 26

# Precipitation

- 90-day rain totals, generally below 1" along I-10 corridor. 2-4" over mountain forests.
- Below normal rainfall during the fall season (50-70% of normal).
- Combined below normal rainfall, above normal temperatures, and breezy conditions result in favorable environment for drought persistence



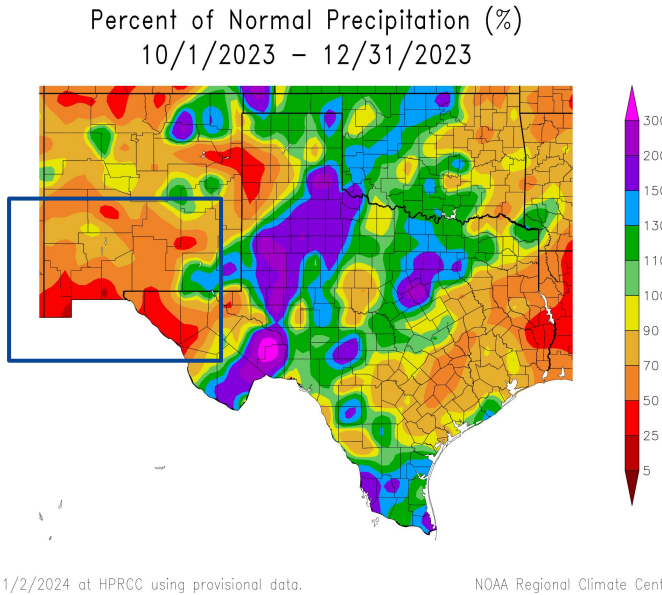
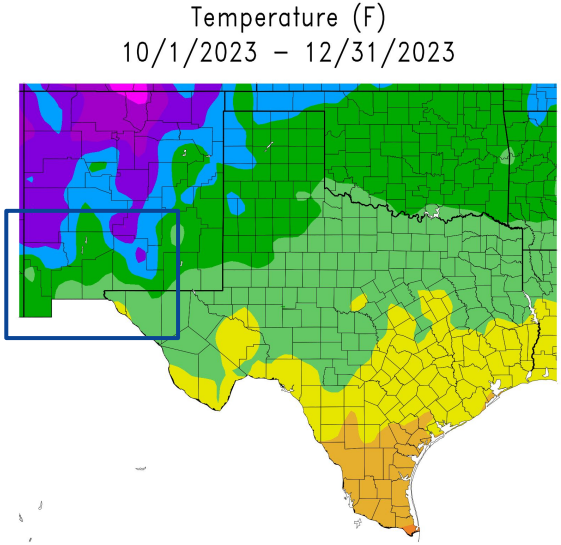




Image Captions:
Left - Precipitation Amount
Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center.
Data over the past 30 days ending 12/31/2023

# Temperature

- Oct-Dec period above normal after record summer/fall heat wave. No significant cold snaps yet.
- Hottest Aug-Oct period in recorded history
- Average high temperatures 2-3 degrees above seasonal normals



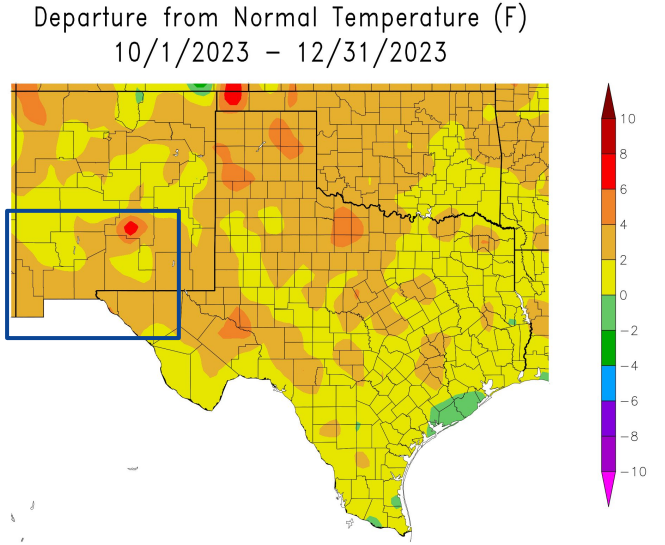




Image Captions:
Left - Average Temperature
Right - Departure from Normal Temperature
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center
Data over the past 30 days ending 12/31/2023

# Summary of Impacts

Links: See/submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) and view the Drought Impacts Reporter

## Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows in Gila and Mimbres basins remain quiet this winter season. Gila River levels remain around 4-5 feet at Redrock and Virden, a slight uptick from autumn. Rio Grande has dried up below the Caballo Dam with no streamflow. Elephant Butte storage has increased to 23.6% capacity (near 30-year median flow). River flooding risk is low at this time.

## Agricultural Impacts

- Hatch and Mesilla Valley irrigation season has ended, with a 2023 season allotment of 14 inches. Forecast is leaning toward above precipitation forecasted over the next 30 days. Please refer to the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) website or your local municipality for more information.

## Fire Hazard Impacts

- Fuel moisture was below normal for much of late fall, allowing for several prescribed fires in the Gila and Lincoln Forests. Elevated fire danger may return early in 2024 pending the mountain snowpack.

## Mitigation Actions

- Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information.

# Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Gila and Mimbres river basin streamflows running well below average
- Rio Grande has dried up below the Caballo Dam with no streamflow

**Gila River Stages**

| | |
|---|---|
| Gila | 1.32 ft |
| Redrock | 4.18 ft |
| Virden | 5.49 ft |

**Rio Grande Stages**

| | |
|---|---|
| El Paso | Low Stage |

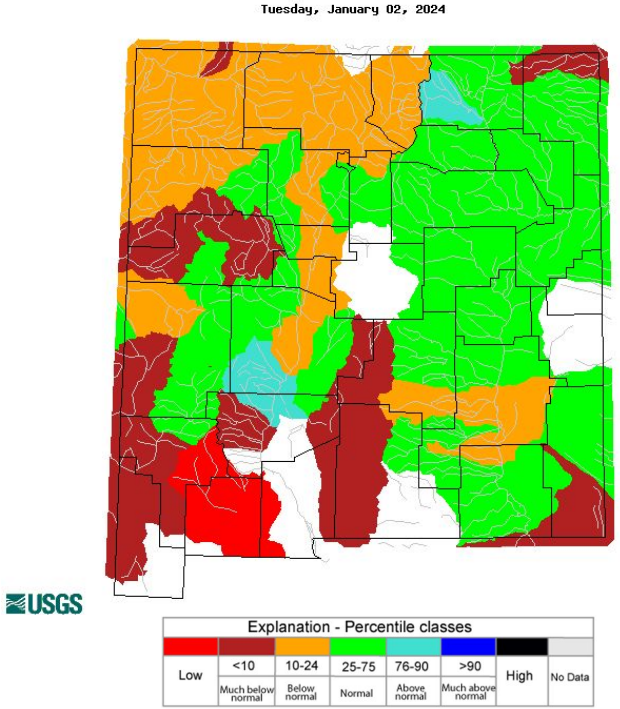


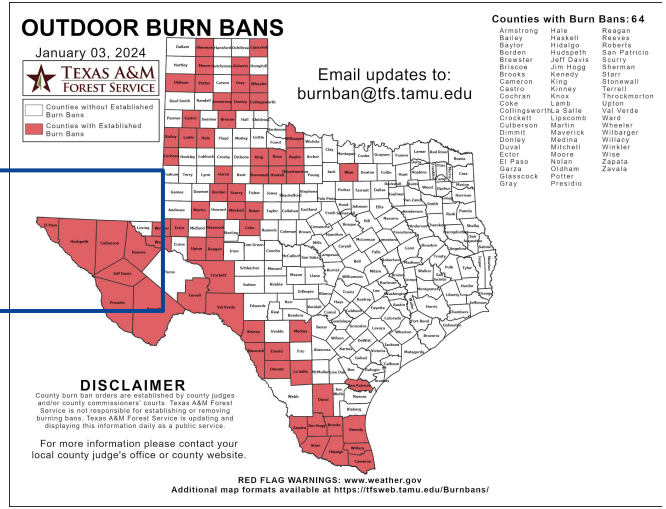

Image Caption: USGS 7 day average streamflow HUC map valid January 2, 2024

# Fire Hazard Impacts

Link to [Wildfire Potential Outlooks from the National Interagency Coordination Center.]

Latest TX Burn Ban map available [here]

Latest NM Fire Restrictions available [here]



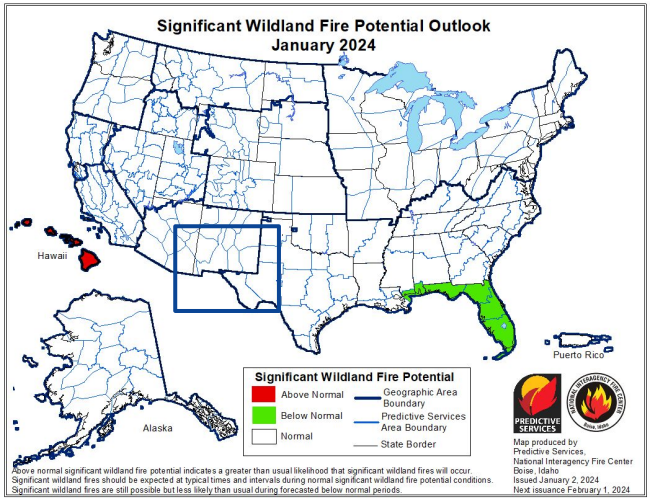




Image Caption: [Significant Wildland Fire Potential Monthly Outlook] for January 2024

# Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- Series of winter storms bringing mountain snows this week and with cooler temperatures. Lowland rains will be possible but generally light in intensity.
- Temporary improvement to drought status is possible, but long-term impacts likely to persist.

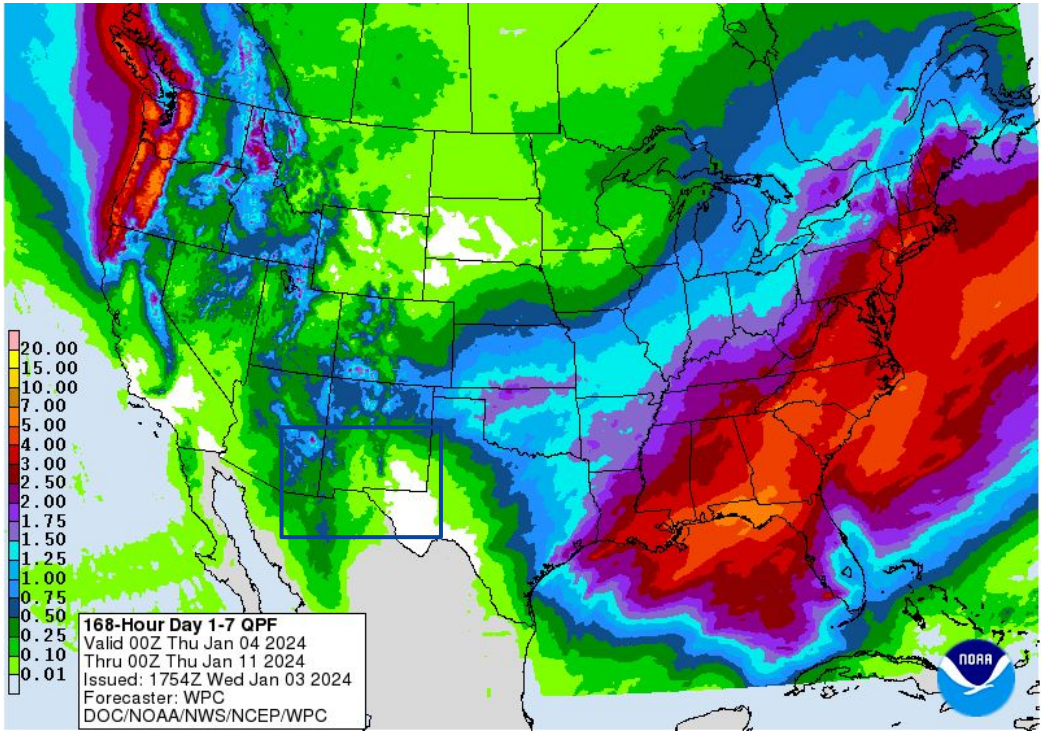



Image Caption: Weather Prediction Center 7-day precipitation forecast valid Jan 4 to Jan 11

# Rapid Onset Drought Outlook

**Links to the latest Climate Prediction Center 8 to 14 day Temperature Outlook and Precipitation Outlook.**

- Sporadic precipitation chances in January may provide temporary relief, however drought conditions are expected to persist through the winter season.

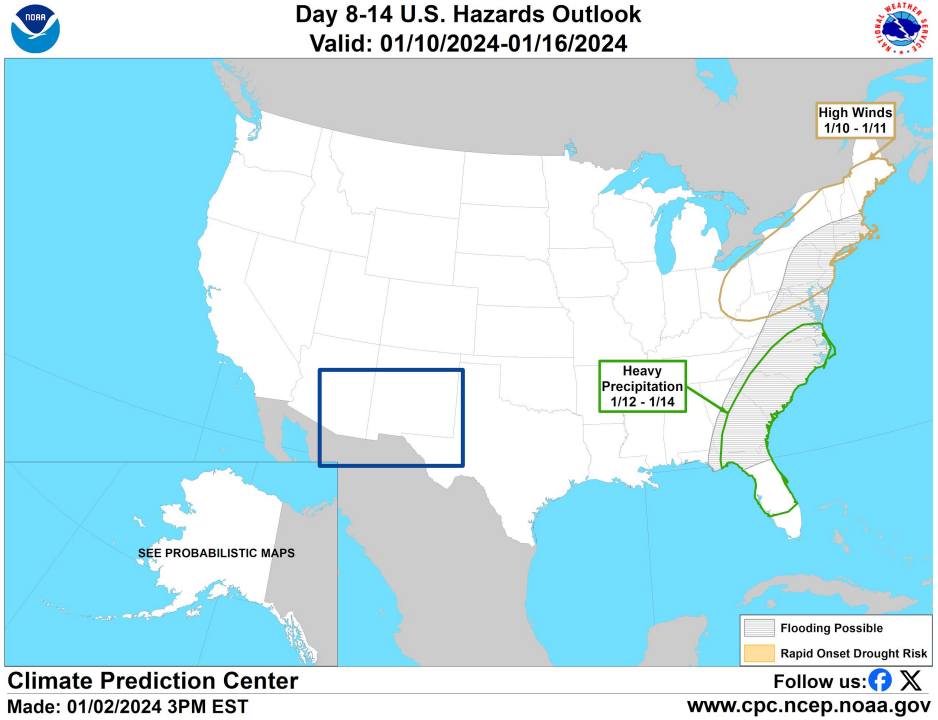
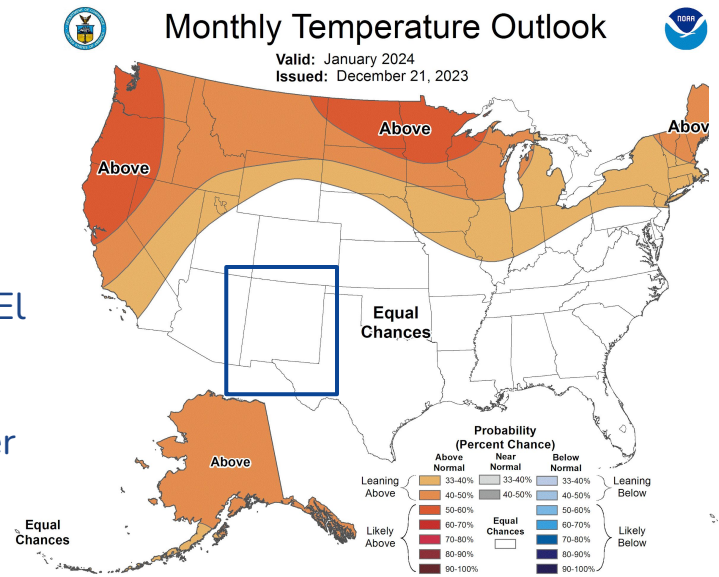



Image Caption:
Days 8 to 14 U.S. Hazards Outlook Valid Jan 10 to Jan 16

# Long-Range Outlooks

**The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage**

- Equal chances for temperatures (likely near normal) through the month of January.
- Equal chances for precipitation (monthly average for El Paso: 0.39")
- NOAA's official Winter Outlook can be found here



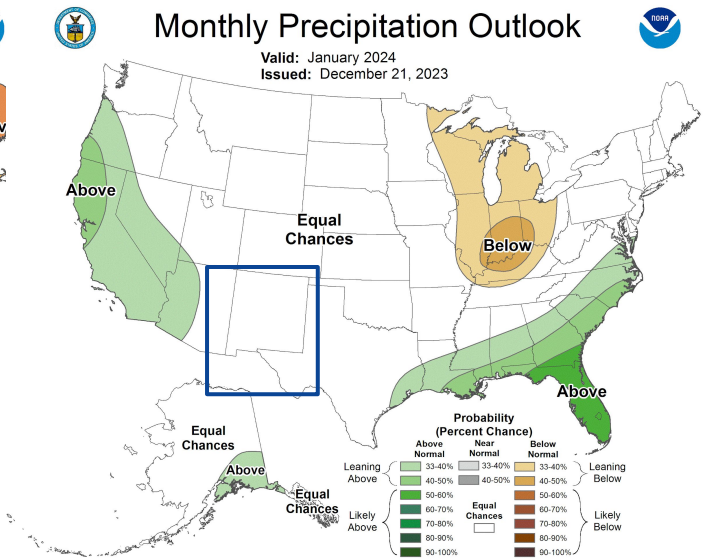




Image Captions:
Left - Climate Prediction Center Monthly Temperature Outlook.
Right - Climate Prediction Center Monthly Precipitation Outlook.
Valid January 2024

# Drought Outlook

**The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage**

- Western New Mexico: Drought conditions may improve as we head into Spring, greatly depending on the mountain pack the next two months.
- Rest of New Mexico and Far West Texas: Drought conditions expected to persist through the winter.

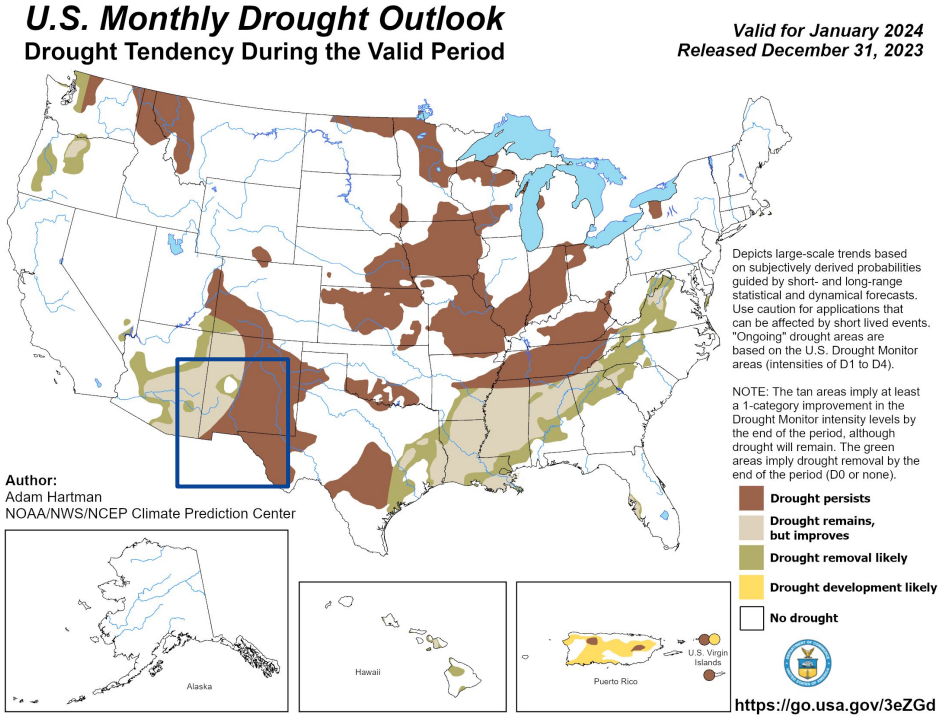



Image Caption:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook Released December 31, 2023 valid for January 2024

Links to the latest:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook