



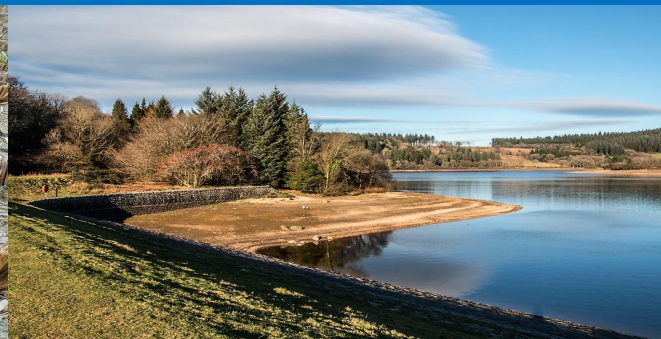
Drought Information Statement for Southern NM/Far West TX

Valid March 4, 2024

Issued By: NWS El Paso (Santa Teresa, NM)

Contact Information: sr-epz.nws@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated April 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.





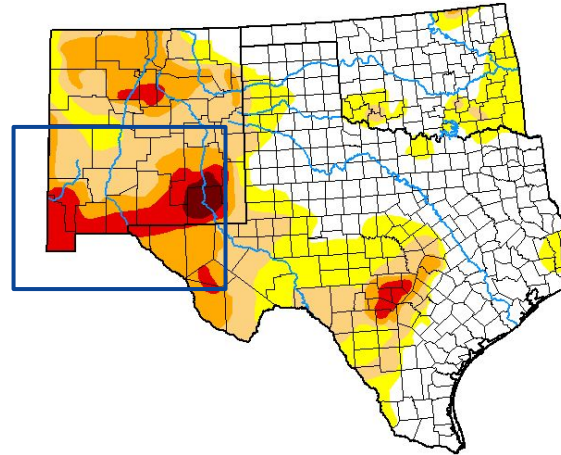
U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for southern New Mexico and far west Texas

Drought Intensity and Extent

- **D3 (Extreme Drought)**
Southern New Mexico lowlands including portions of Otero, Dona Ana, Luna, Grant, and Hidalgo Counties. El Paso, TX
- **D2 (Severe Drought)**
Covering majority of south-central New Mexico and Hudspeth County Texas
- **D1 (Moderate Drought)**
Central New Mexico (100% of area)
- Precipitation and mountain snow may temporarily improve conditions next few months, but drought will persist into Spring.

U.S. Drought Monitor Southern Plains RDEWS



February 27, 2024
(Released Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	44.63	55.37	37.14	17.96	6.28	0.93
Last Week 02-20-2024	48.46	51.54	37.14	17.96	6.28	0.93
3 Months Ago 11-28-2023	25.65	74.35	55.84	35.77	15.20	2.61
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2024	31.65	68.35	51.27	31.88	13.52	2.12
Start of Water Year 09-25-2023	7.01	92.99	79.77	57.36	32.68	9.19
One Year Ago 02-28-2023	23.09	76.91	58.28	31.52	13.75	2.47

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Richard Heim
NCEI/NOAA



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor valid February 27





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:**
No drought worsening was observed
- **Drought Improved:**
Slight improvement across central New Mexico and the Gila/Lincoln National Forests, lowlands along International Border remain the same.

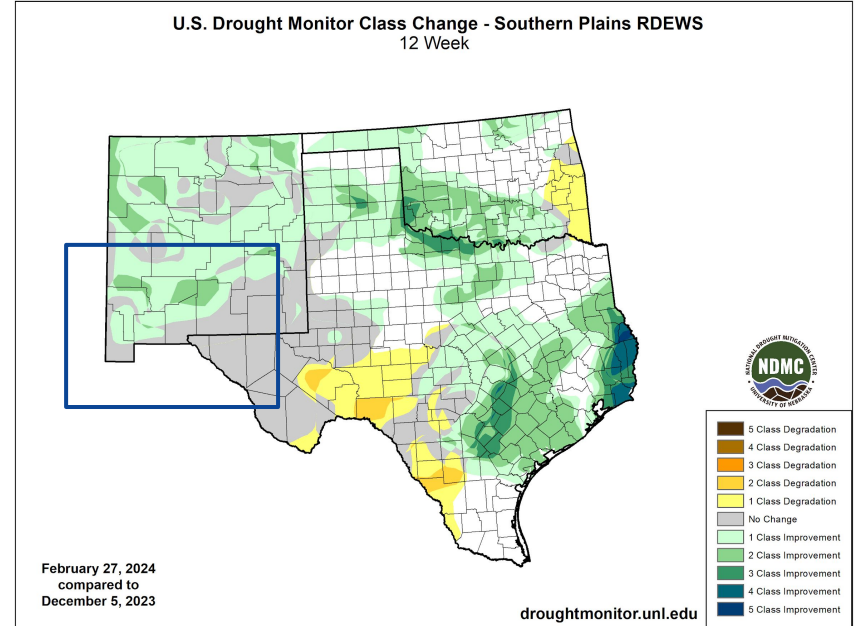


Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor 3-month change map valid February 27





Precipitation

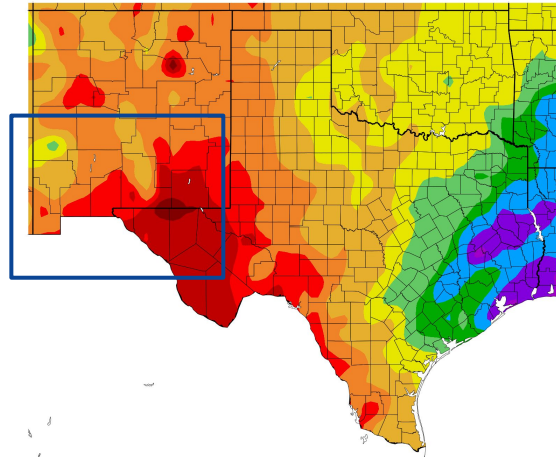
90-day rain totals, 1.00-2.00” along I-10 corridor. 4-7” over mountain forests.

Precipitation greatly favoring west and central New Mexico (125-150% of normal)

Much drier across far west Texas down to Big Bend (25-50% of normal).

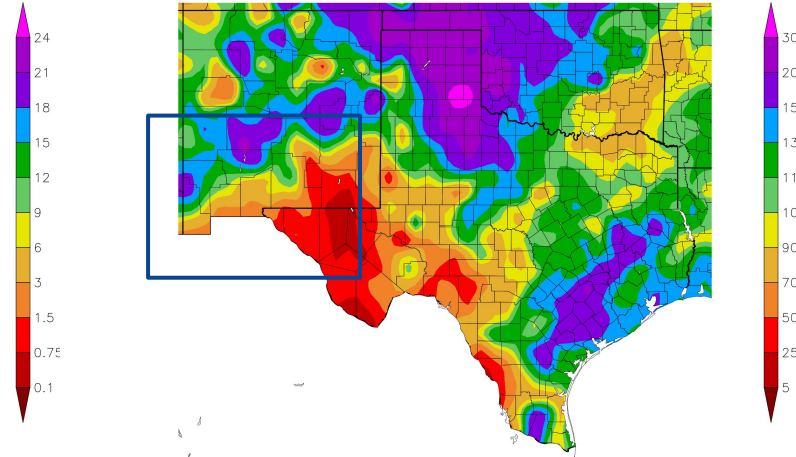
Drought was fairly static last few months as precipitation is low but closer to seasonal normals. Currently in the middle of the driest time of year.

Precipitation (in)
12/1/2023 - 2/29/2024



Generated 3/2/2024 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
12/1/2023 - 2/29/2024



NOAA Regional Climate Center Generated 3/2/2024 at HPRCC using provisional data.

NOAA Regional Climate Center

Image Captions:
Left - Precipitation Amount
Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center.
Data over the past 30 days ending 2/29/2024

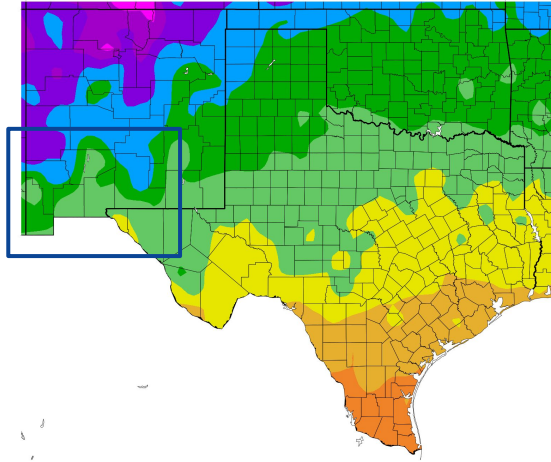




Temperature

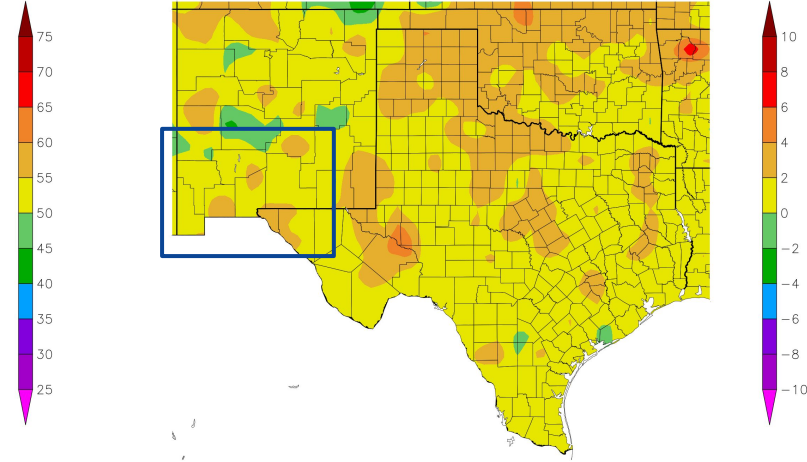
- Slightly above normal winter temperatures. No significant cold snaps this year.
- 2023 was hottest year on record for El Paso
- Average high temperatures 1-3 degrees above seasonal normals

Temperature (F)
12/1/2023 - 2/29/2024



Generated 3/2/2024 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
12/1/2023 - 2/29/2024



NOAA Regional Climate Cen Generated 3/2/2024 at HPRCC using provisional data.

NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Image Captions:
Left - Average Temperature
Right - Departure from Normal Temperature
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center
Data over the past 30 days ending 2/29/2024





Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows in Gila and Mimbres have picked up as mountain snowpack is above normal and snowmelt has begun. Expect a steady river rise in the next few months, with rapid surges possible due to mountain rains. Gila River levels have increased to 5-6 feet at Redrock and Virden. Rio Grande remains dry below the Caballo Dam with no streamflow. Elephant Butte storage sits at 24.9% capacity (near 30-year median flow). River flooding risk is low at this time.

Agricultural Impacts

- Rio Grande headwater snowpack has increased greatly this month, giving better confidence in a normal Hatch and Mesilla Valley irrigation season. Drought status will keep demand high, though. 2023 season allotment was 14 inches. Please refer to the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) website or your local municipality for more information.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Short-term fuel moisture has been higher recently, allowing for several prescribed fires in the Gila and Lincoln Forests this month. High fire danger expected in March/April as winds pick up and humidity falls.





Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

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

Gila River Stages

Gila 2.76 ft
 Redrock 5.49 ft
 Virden 6.14 ft

Rio Grande Stages

El Paso Low Stage

Saturday, March 02, 2024

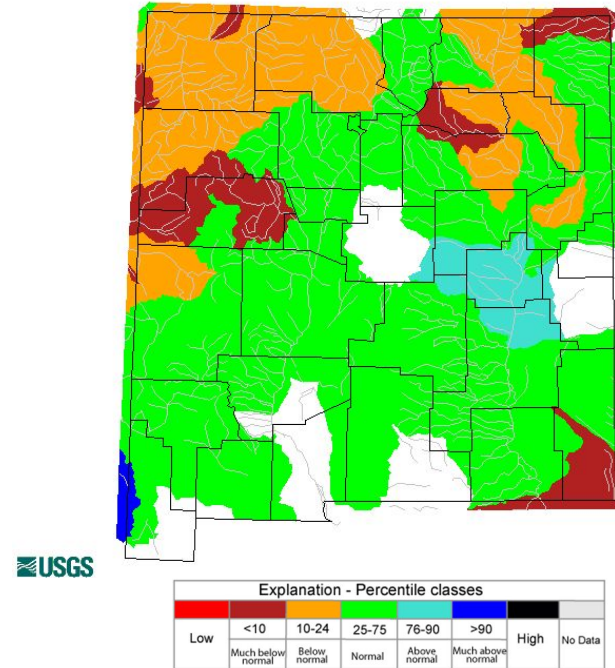


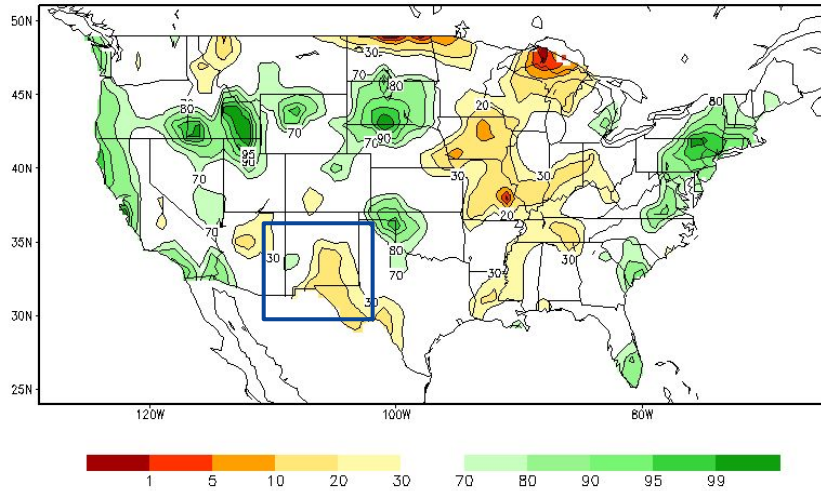
Image Caption: USGS 7 day average streamflow HUC map valid March 2, 2024





Agricultural Impacts

Calculated Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile
MAR 02, 2024



Crop Moisture Index by Division
Weekly Value for Period Ending FEB 24, 2024
Short Term Need vs. Available Water in a Shallow Soil Profile

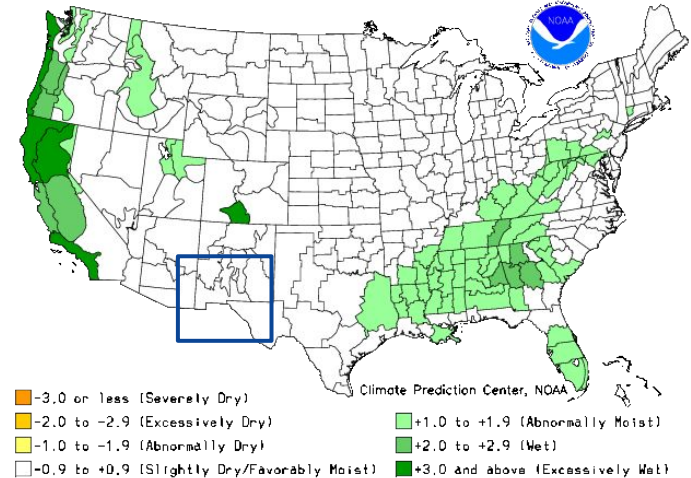


Image Captions:

Left: CPC Calculated [Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile](#) valid March 2, 2024

Right: [Crop Moisture Index by Division](#). Weekly value for period ending February 21, 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](#)

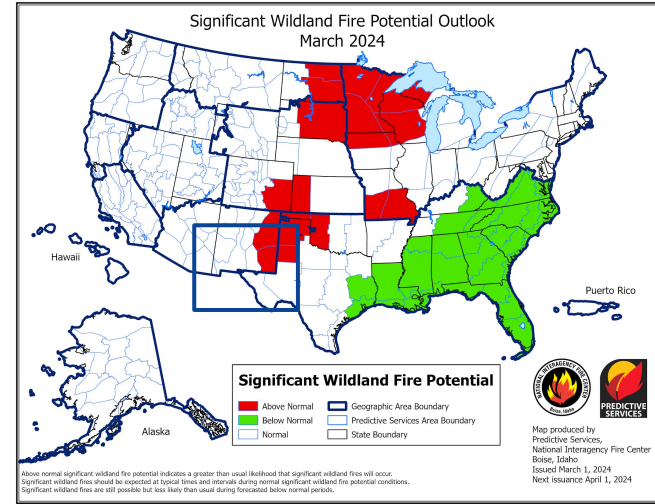
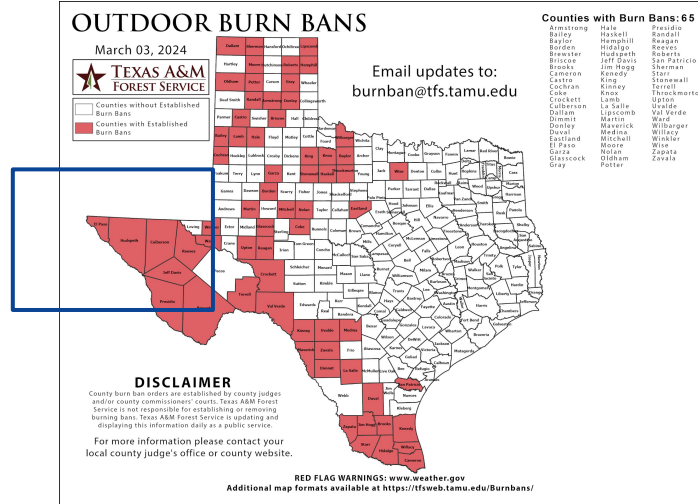


Image Caption: [Significant Wildland Fire Potential Monthly Outlook](#) for March 2024





Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- Slight precipitation chances late this week, otherwise dry conditions through the first half of March. Lowland rains will be generally light in intensity.
- Gila Region snowpack likely to remain above normal through March, closer to normal over Lincoln National Forest.
- Temporary improvement to drought status is possible, but long-term impacts likely to persist.

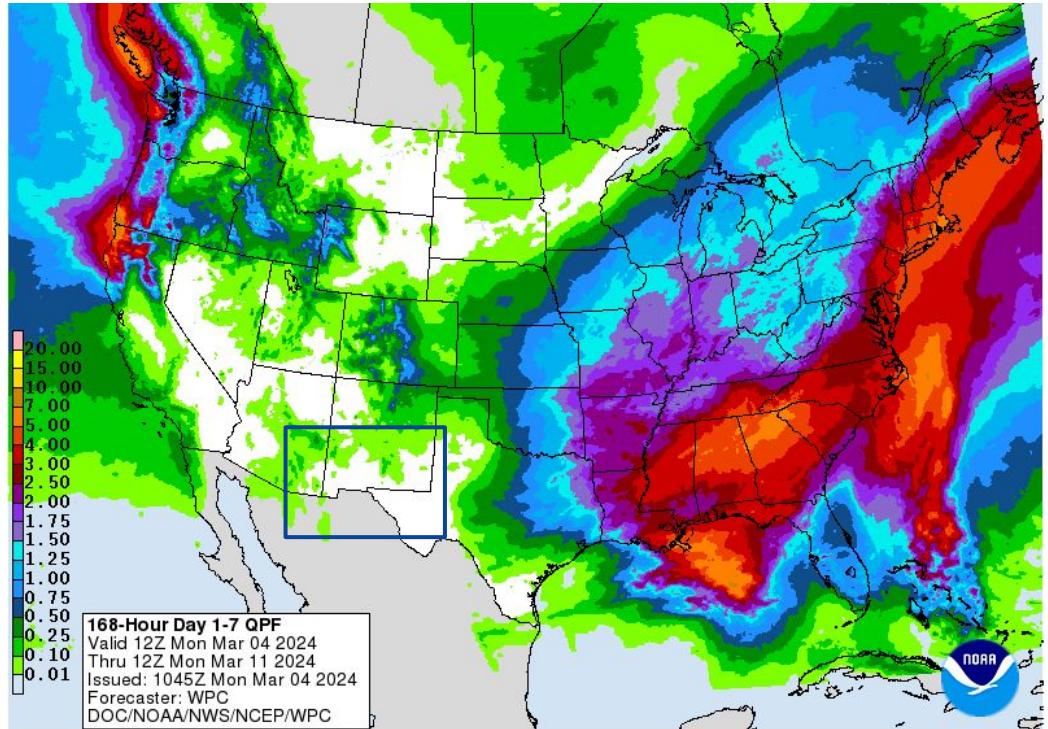


Image Caption: Weather Prediction Center [7-day precipitation forecast](#) valid Mar 4 to Mar 11





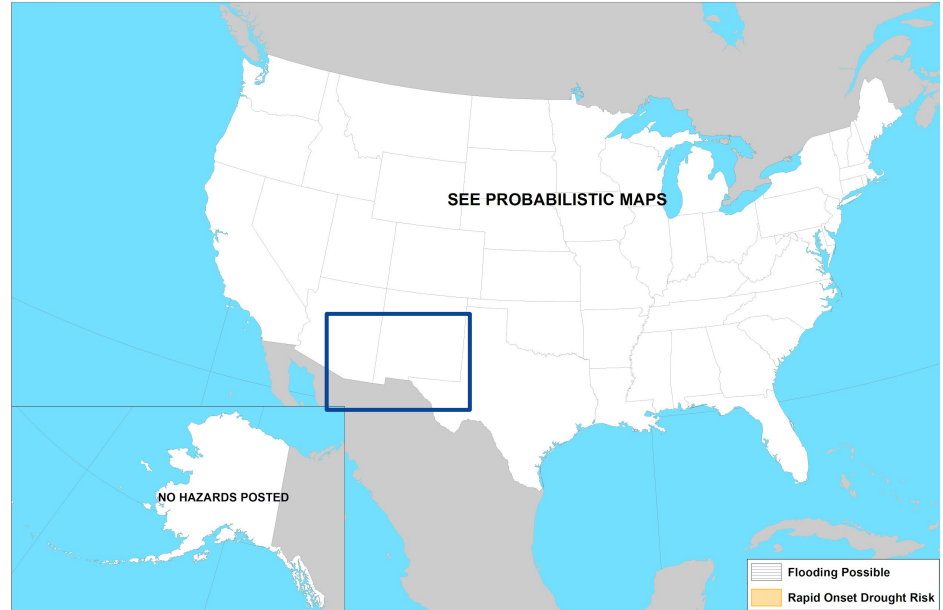
Rapid Onset Drought Outlook

Links to the latest Climate Prediction Center 8 to 14 day [Temperature Outlook](#) and [Precipitation Outlook](#).

- Sporadic precipitation chances in March may provide temporary relief, however drought conditions are expected to persist into the Spring season.



Day 8-14 U.S. Hazards Outlook
Valid: 03/09/2024-03/15/2024



Climate Prediction Center
Made: 03/01/2024 3PM EST

Follow us:
www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

Image Caption:
[Days 8 to 14 U.S. Hazards Outlook](#) Valid Mar 9 to Mar 15





Long-Range Outlooks

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- 33-40% chance for below normal temperatures through the month of March, especially further west.
- 33-40% chance for below normal precipitation, especially east toward Trans-Pecos and Big Bend (monthly average for El Paso: 0.24")

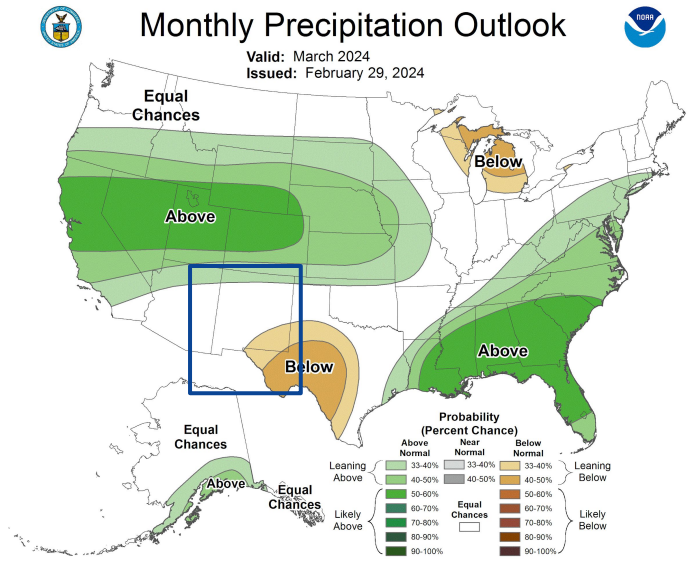
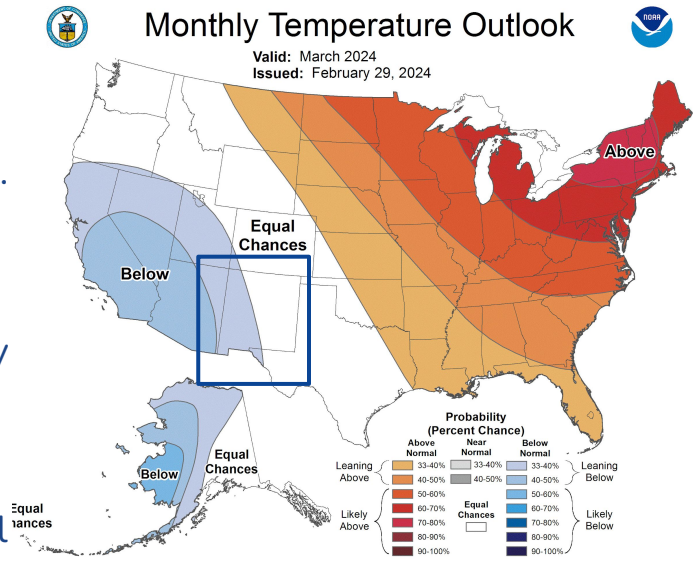


Image Captions:

Left - [Climate Prediction Center Monthly Temperature Outlook](#),

Right - [Climate Prediction Center Monthly Precipitation Outlook](#).

Valid March 2024





Drought Outlook

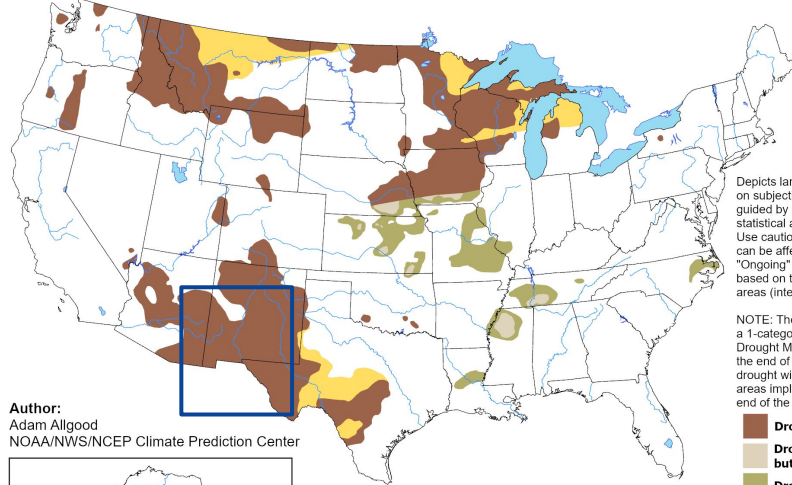
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- Drought conditions are expected to persist through March, with few changes.

U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for March 2024
Released February 29, 2024

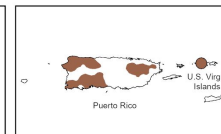
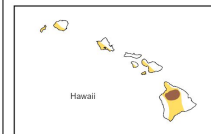


Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Use caution for applications that can be affected by short lived events. "Ongoing" drought areas are based on the U.S. Drought Monitor areas (intensities of D1 to D4).

NOTE: The tan areas imply at least a 1-category improvement in the Drought Monitor intensity levels by the end of the period, although drought will remain. The green areas imply drought removal by the end of the period (D0 or none).

- Drought persists
- Drought remains, but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely
- No drought

Author:
Adam Allgood
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center



<https://go.usa.gov/3eZGd>

Image Caption:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook Released
February 29, 2024 valid for March 2024

Links to the latest:

- [Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
El Paso, TX