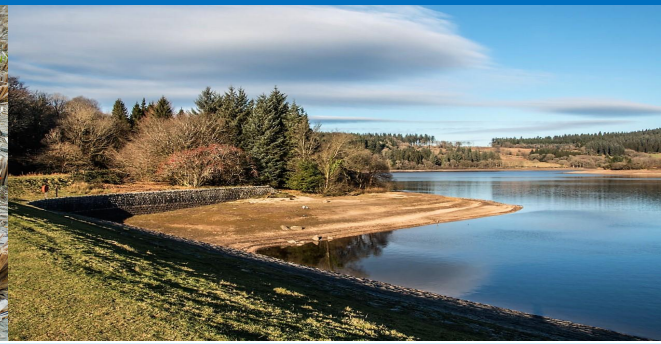
Drought Information Statement for Southern NM/Far West TX

Valid December 5, 2023

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

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

- This product will be updated January 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)

- Winter outlook suggests near normal precipitation, drought conditions will persist through the winter.

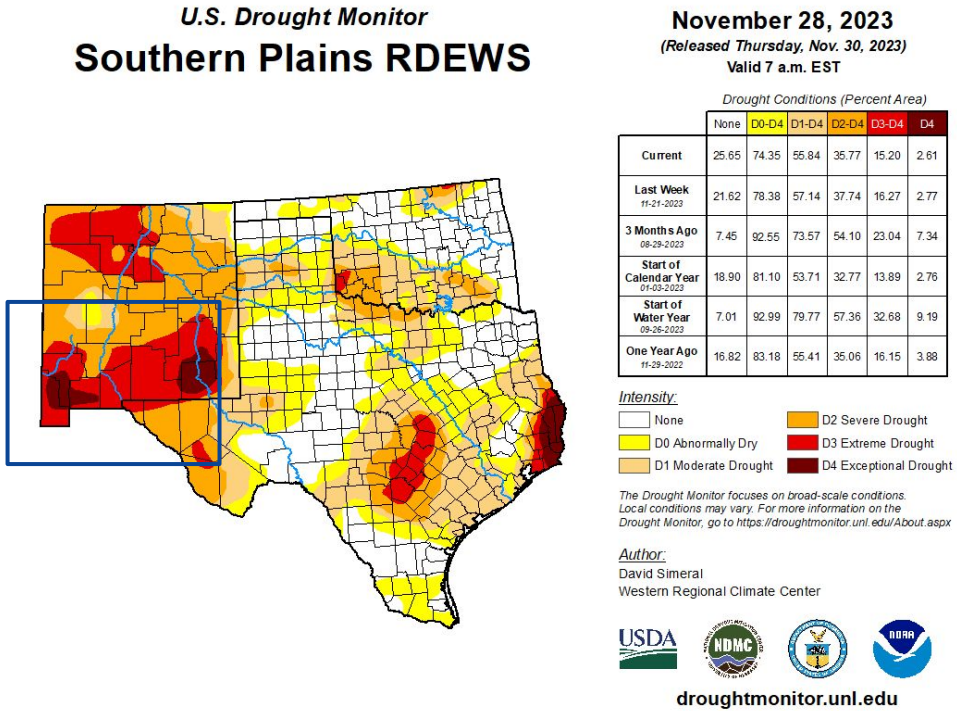


Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor valid 8am EDT November 28

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: Portions of New Mexico, especially southwest New Mexico.
  - Drought Improved: No drought improvement was observed

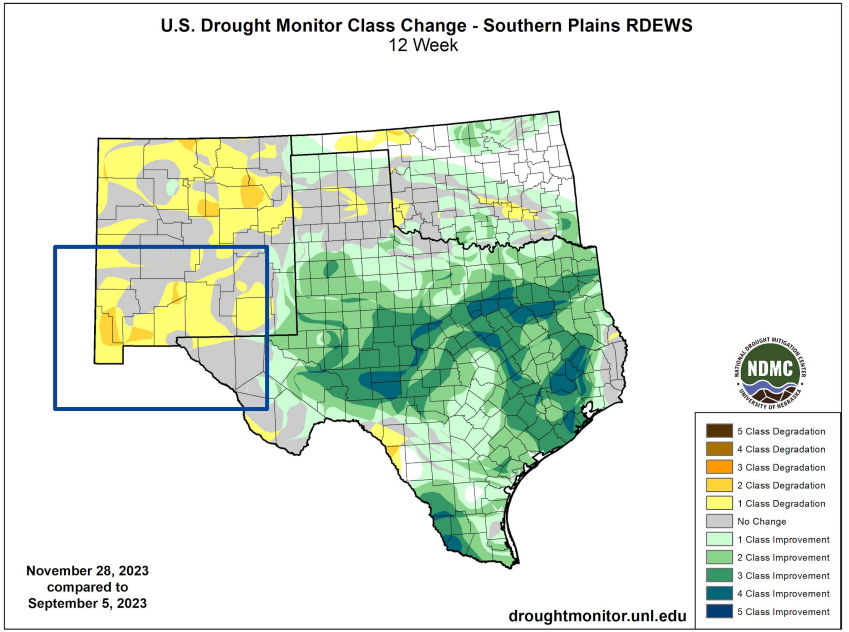
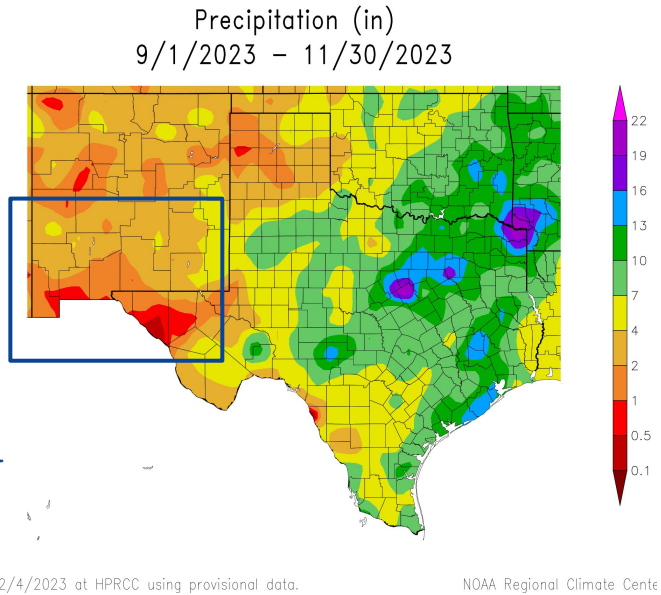


Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor 3-month change map valid 8am EDT November 28

Precipitation

- 90-day rain totals, ranging from 1-2” along I-10 corridor. 2-4” over mountain forests.
- Well 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



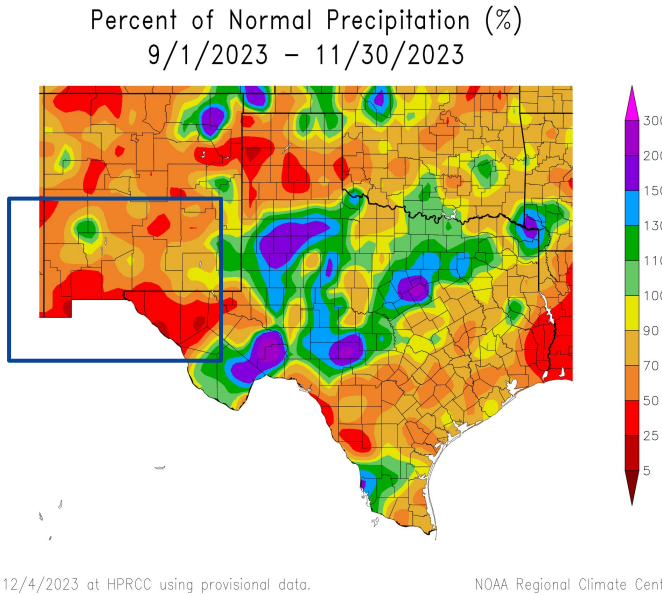
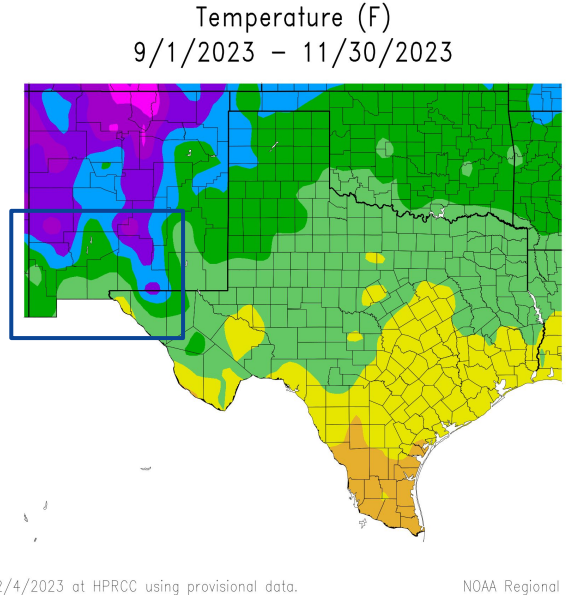


Image Captions:
Left - Precipitation Amount
Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center.
Data over the past 30 days ending 11/30/2023

Temperature

- Record heat from September followed by warm Oct/Nov with short-lived cold snaps.
- Hottest Aug-Oct period in recorded history
- Average high temperatures 3-5 degrees above seasonal normals



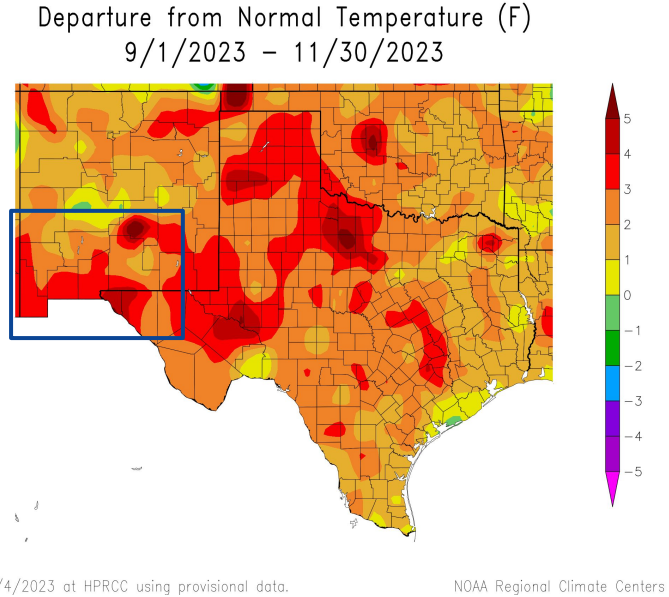


Image Captions:
Left - Average Temperature
Right - Departure from Normal Temperature
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center
Data over the past 30 days ending 11/30/2023

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 as we enter the winter season. Gila River levels remain around 4-5 feet at Redrock and Virden, a slight uptick from a month ago. Rio Grande has dried up below the Caballo Dam with no streamflow. Elephant Butte storage at 19.3% capacity. River flooding risk is low at this time.

Agricultural Impacts

- Hatch and Mesilla Valley irrigation season has ended, with a season allotment of 14 inches. Near normal 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	1.26 ft
Redrock	4.10 ft
Virden	5.60 ft

Rio Grande Stages

El Paso	Low Stage

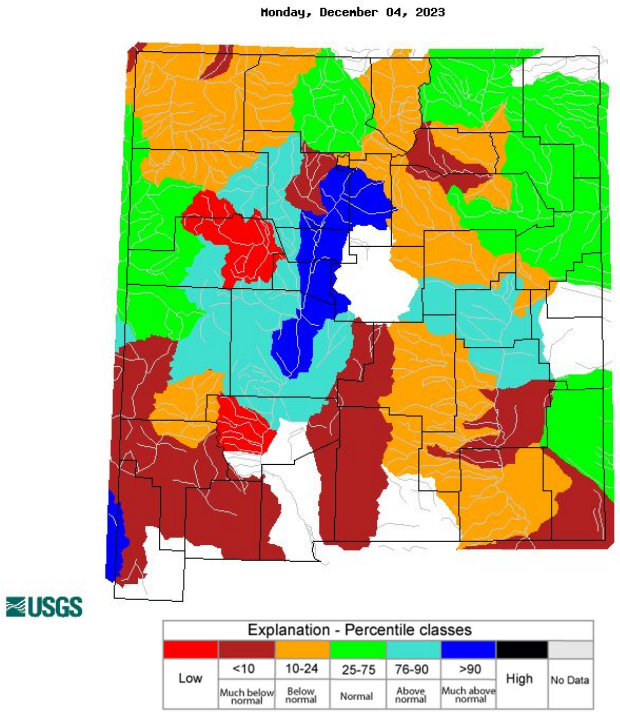


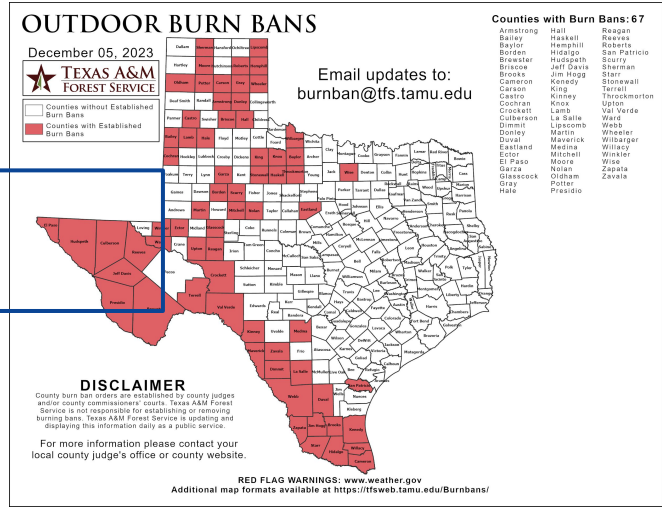
Image Caption: USGS 7 day average streamflow HUC map valid December 4, 2023

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]



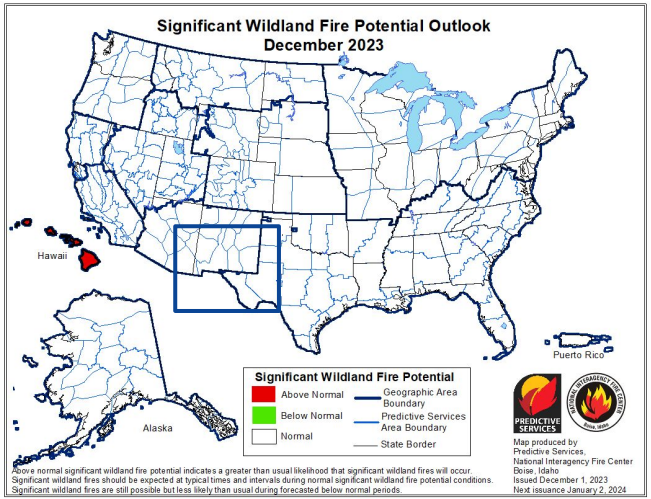


Image Caption: [Significant Wildland Fire Potential Monthly Outlook] for December 2023

Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- No precipitation expected in the next 7 days. Likely remaining dry well into mid-December.
- Drought status likely to persist.

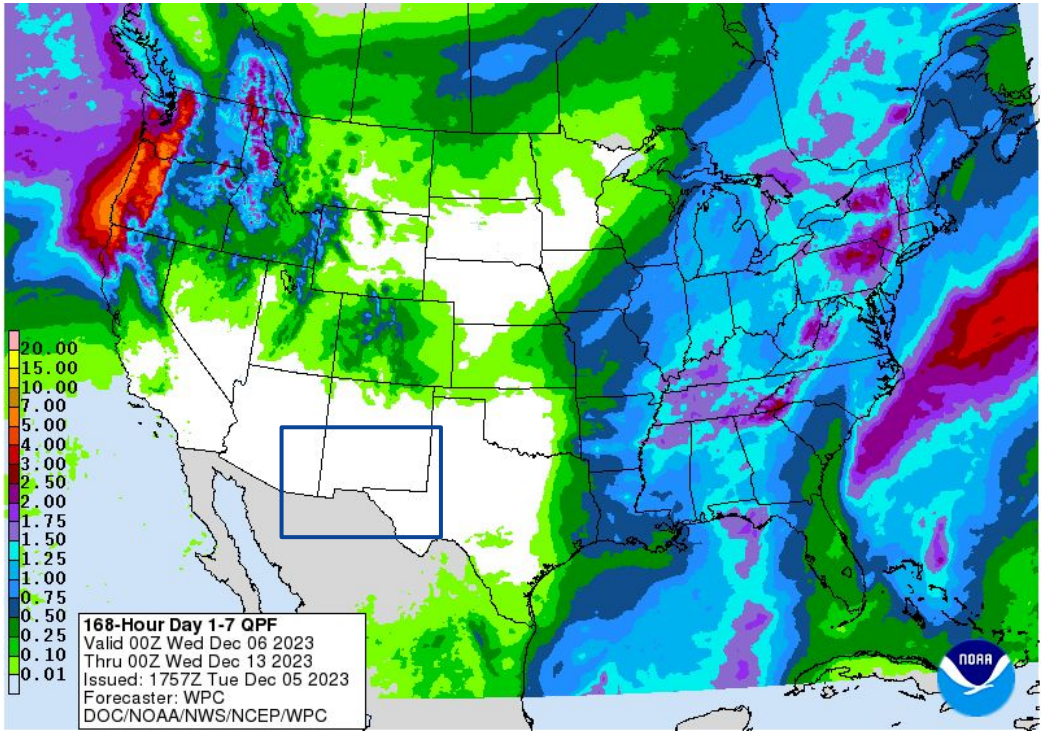


Image Caption: Weather Prediction Center 7-day precipitation forecast valid Dec 6 to Dec 13

Rapid Onset Drought Outlook

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

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

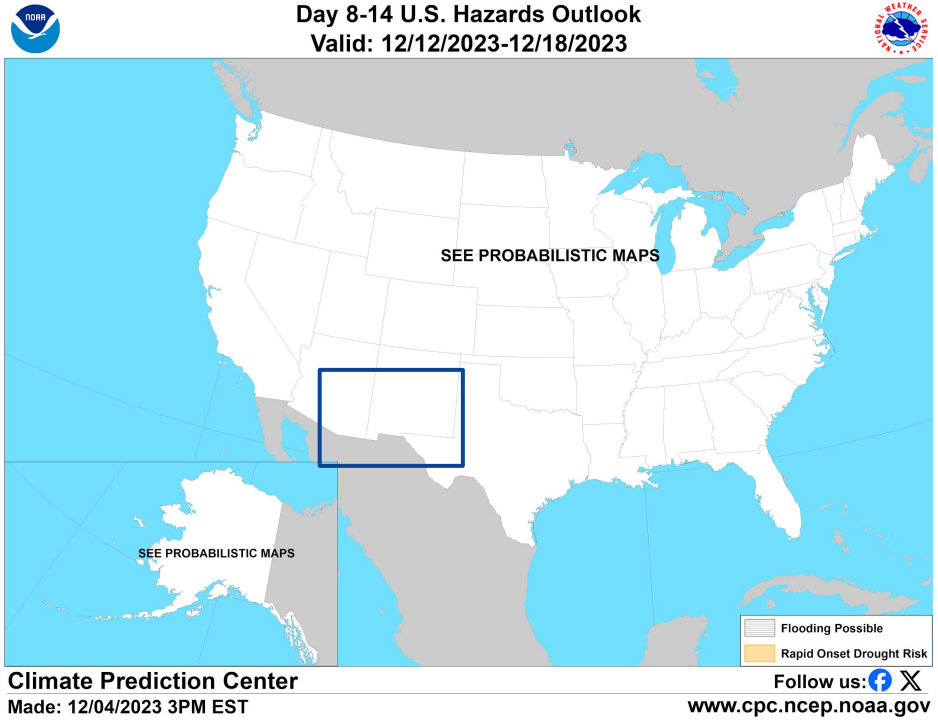
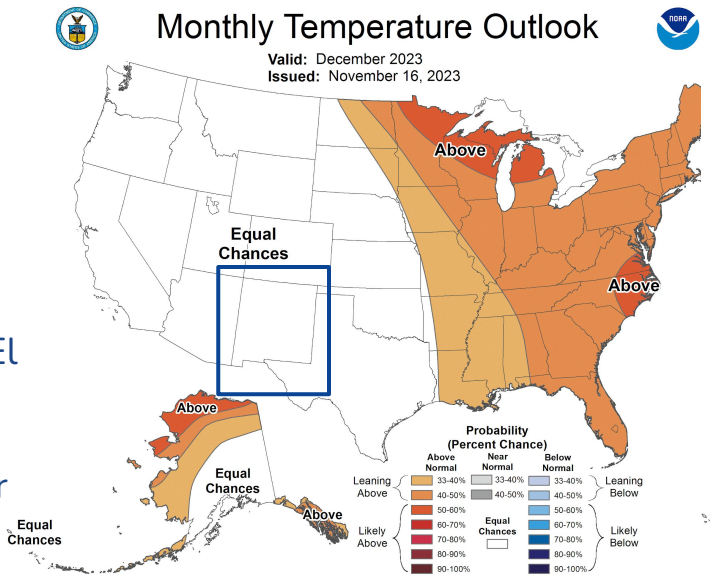


Image Caption:
Days 8 to 14 U.S. Hazards Outlook Valid Dec 12 to Dec 18

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 December.
- Equal chances for precipitation (monthly average for El Paso: 0.63")
- NOAA's official Winter Outlook can be found here



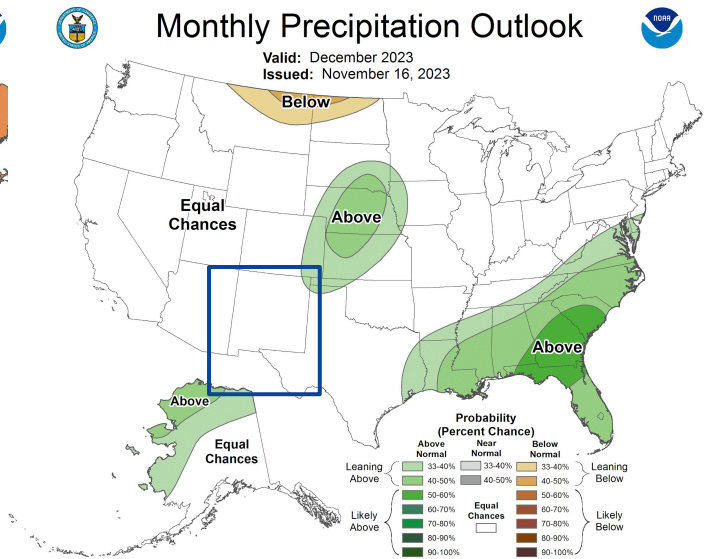
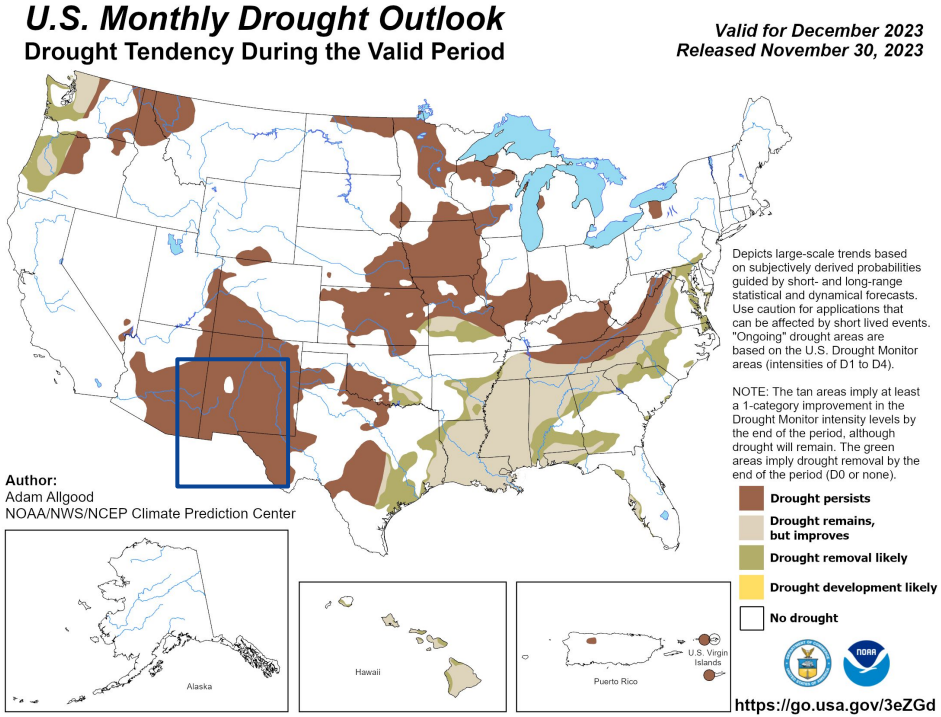


Image Captions:
Left - Climate Prediction Center Monthly Temperature Outlook.
Right - Climate Prediction Center Monthly Precipitation Outlook.
Valid December 2023

Drought Outlook

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

- Drought conditions expected to persist through the winter.



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

Image Caption:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook Released November 30 2023 valid for December 2023