

Southern Plains Drought Outlook Summary

**Thursday, January 15th
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National Weather Service
Southern Region Headquarters
Regional Operations Center
Fort Worth, TX

Prepared by: Kurt Van Speybroeck/Victor Murphy
817-978-1100 x 147

Current Drought Situation

- Parts of south and west TX and southern NM have seen much improvement since September 1, 2014.
- Currently, extreme drought conditions (D3 or worse) cover about 22% of OK, 10% of TX, and 4% of NM.
- 3 months ago, extreme drought conditions (D3 or worse) covered about 12% of OK, 13% of TX, and 7% of NM.

U.S. Drought Monitor Oklahoma

January 13, 2015
(Released Thursday, Jan. 15, 2015)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	29.59	70.41	59.12	42.59	22.58	5.69
Last Week 1/6/2015	29.59	70.41	59.21	42.59	22.35	5.54
3 Months Ago 10/14/2014	22.08	77.92	64.49	55.44	20.87	4.84
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2015	25.63	74.37	62.03	40.84	21.74	5.70
Start of Water Year 9/25/2014	8.55	91.45	73.31	58.13	20.92	4.64
One Year Ago 1/14/2014	35.17	64.83	38.04	18.99	4.84	2.40

Intensity:
 D0 Abnormally Dry D3 Extreme Drought
 D1 Moderate Drought D4 Exceptional Drought
 D2 Severe Drought

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

Author: Richard Tinker
CPC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP

USDA National Drought Mitigation Center NOAA NWS

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

For Southern Plains Drought Monitor go to:
<http://www.drought.gov/drought/regional-programs/southernplains/southern-plains-home>

Current/Ongoing Drought Impacts

- Critical reservoirs in southwest OK such as Altus Lake and Tom Steed Reservoir are below 20% of capacity. (source US Army COE)
- Statewide, Texas reservoirs remain only 64% full; the same as last year, and the lowest for this time of year since 1990. (source: TWDB)
- The main reservoir which serves Wichita Falls is 19% full, the lowest ever for this time of year. The city continues re-use of wastewater for drinking. (source: wichitafallstx.gov)
- 3 of the 4 largest reservoirs in NM are at 14% or less of storage capacity. The largest, Elephant Butte, is at 14% of capacity. (source: NOAA CLIMAS RISA)

U.S. Drought Monitor New Mexico

January 13, 2015
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Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	12.01	87.99	64.59	29.10	3.70	0.00
Last Week 1/6/2015	12.01	87.99	64.59	29.10	3.70	0.00
3 Months Ago 10/14/2014	16.70	83.30	62.64	30.04	6.08	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2015	12.01	87.99	65.38	29.10	3.70	0.00
Start of Water Year 9/25/2014	16.70	83.30	62.57	30.04	6.08	0.00
One Year Ago 1/14/2014	0.39	99.61	78.94	33.13	3.97	0.00

Intensity:
 D0 Abnormally Dry D3 Extreme Drought
 D1 Moderate Drought D4 Exceptional Drought
 D2 Severe Drought

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U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

January 13, 2015
(Released Thursday, Jan. 15, 2015)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	39.80	60.20	40.34	23.49	11.03	2.90
Last Week 1/6/2015	38.95	61.05	41.81	24.07	10.72	2.47
3 Months Ago 10/14/2014	30.96	69.04	48.42	27.50	10.97	2.88
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2015	34.37	65.63	44.68	25.73	11.70	3.17
Start of Water Year 9/25/2014	28.92	71.08	48.95	29.54	11.26	2.69
One Year Ago 1/14/2014	26.18	73.82	44.54	21.59	6.68	0.79

Intensity:
 D0 Abnormally Dry D3 Extreme Drought
 D1 Moderate Drought D4 Exceptional Drought
 D2 Severe Drought

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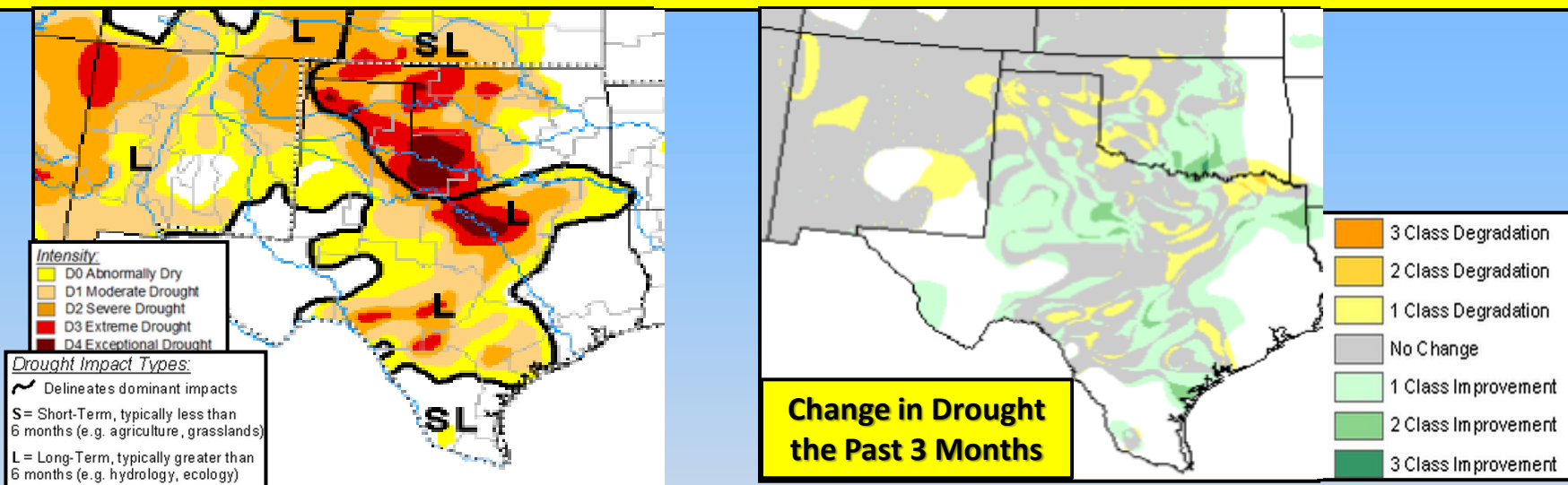
Much of south/southeast/west TX have seen drought relief during the past three Months. No relief for core drought area.

Significant Short Term Drought Relief for some, Others not as fortunate

- 40% of TX is drought free. This is the largest amount of TX out of drought since November 2010 . However, there has been little change to the core Extreme Drought area near Abilene, Childress, Wichita Falls, and DFW. Similarly, 30% of OK is drought free, the most since February 2014. 12% of NM is drought free, mainly in the southeast part of the state, nearly unchanged from last month.
- Paradoxically, the amount of TX (40%) and OK (30%) that are out of drought is the highest in over 4 years (TX) , and nearly 1 year (OK). However, the core extreme to exceptional drought (D3/D4) area in each state is actually larger than 3 months ago.

Some Additional Relief is Hoped for

- Weak El Nino conditions are expected to continue for the next month or two. Based mainly on this, the most recent NWS CPC Long Lead Outlook into April favors above normal precipitation chances for all of New Mexico, west TX, and the TX/OK panhandles.



Drought Conditions (Percent Area) in D3-D4 (Extreme to Exceptional Drought)

State	Current	Last Week	3 Months Ago	1 Year Ago
Oklahoma	22.6%	22.4%	20.9%	4.8%
Texas	11.0%	10.7%	11.0%	6.7%
New Mexico	3.7%	3.7%	8.1%	4.0%

3-month Outlook Precipitation

Above normal precipitation is favored this winter/spring for all of NM and west TX.

As a result, the Seasonal Drought Outlook favors drought improvement across all of NM.

The likelihood of weak El Nino conditions persisting into early spring is about 50%-60%, keeping NM, west TX, and the TX/OK panhandles with a tilt towards wetter than normal.

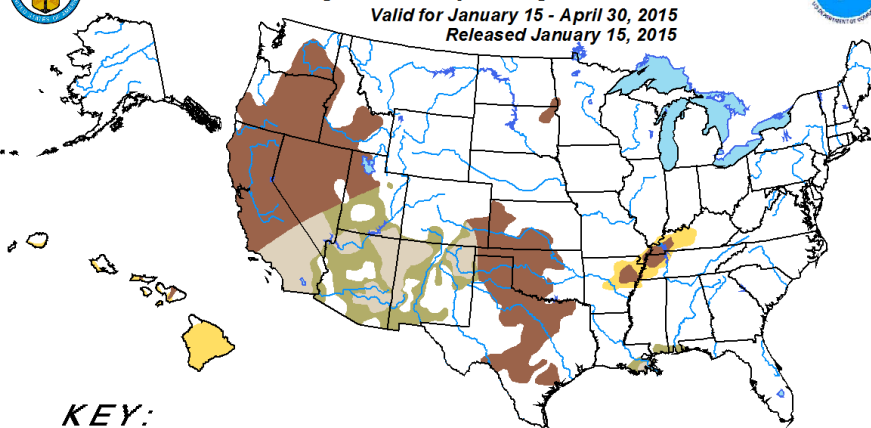


U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for January 15 - April 30, 2015

Released January 15, 2015



KEY:

- Drought persists or intensifies
- Drought remains but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely

Author: David Miskus, Climate Prediction Center, NOAA
http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/sdo_summary.html

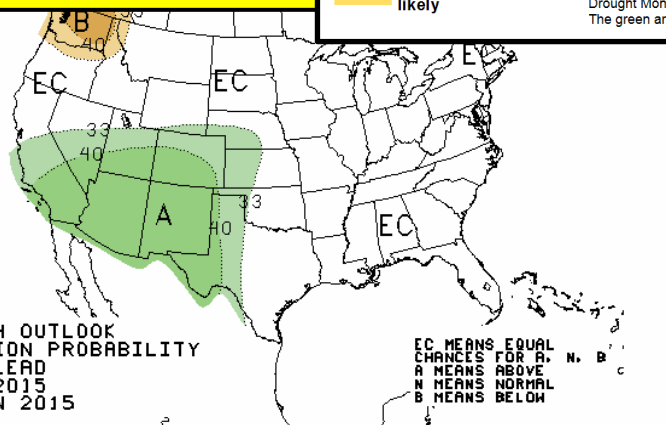
Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Short-term events – such as individual storms – cannot be accurately forecast more than a few days in advance. Use caution for applications – such as crops – that can be affected by such events. "Ongoing" drought areas are approximated from the Drought Monitor (D1 to D4 intensity). For weekly drought updates, see the latest U.S. Drought Monitor.

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)

3-month Outlook Temperature

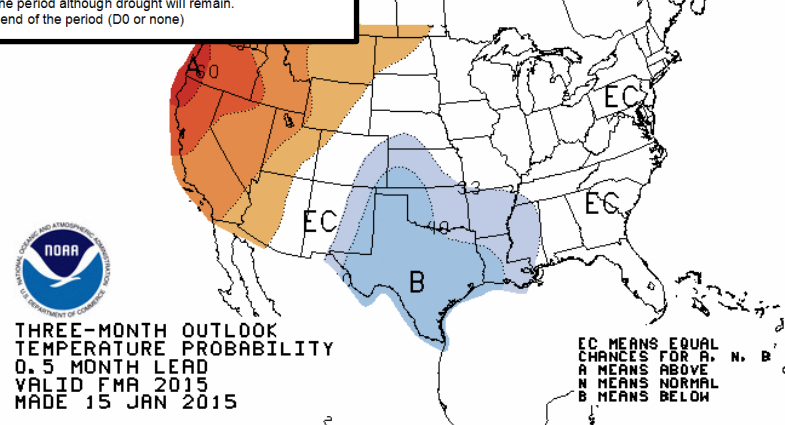
Below normal temperatures are favored into spring for all of TX and OK and eastern NM.

Colder than average temperatures combined with above normal precipitation should result in increased runoff, helping fill area lakes/reservoirs.



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY
0.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID FMA 2015
MADE 15 JAN 2015

EC MEANS EQUAL
CHANCES FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY
0.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID FMA 2015
MADE 15 JAN 2015

EC MEANS EQUAL
CHANCES FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW

Southern Plains Drought Summary

- Much of south and west Texas and parts of New Mexico have seen above normal precipitation in the past 90 days. This has resulted in substantial short term drought improvement over these areas.
- However, most of the core drought area in western Oklahoma, north TX, and the TX/OK panhandles and the Red River area were drier than normal and have seen little to no drought improvement.
- Weak El Nino conditions should persist for another few months. This should result in increased chances for above normal precipitation across New Mexico, west Texas, and the TX/OK panhandles.

<http://www.drought.gov/drought/regional-programs/southernplains/southern-plains-home>

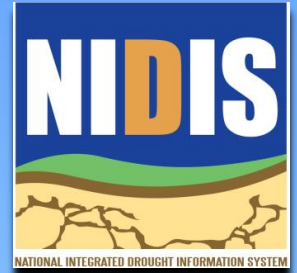
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Information provided by:
National Weather Service
Southern Region Headquarters
Regional Operations Center
Fort Worth, TX



Phone: (817) 978-1100 x147
E-mail: sr-srh.roc@noaa.gov
Web: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov>

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This information along with other drought
resources also available on the
Southern Plains drought.gov web portal

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