



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

110 N Court St. • P.O. Box 788  
Heppner, OR 97836  
541-676-5613  
[www.co.morrow.or.us](http://www.co.morrow.or.us)

David Sykes, Chair  
Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner  
Roy Drago Jr., Commissioner

September 6, 2023

Mr. Ryan Andrews  
Hydrologist  
Oregon Water Resources Department  
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council  
725 Summer St. N.E., Suite A  
Salem, OR 97301  
Email: [ryan.m.andrews@state.or.us](mailto:ryan.m.andrews@state.or.us)

Ms. Traci Naile  
Operations & Preparedness Manager  
Oregon Office of Emergency Management  
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council  
P.O. Box 14370  
Salem, OR 97301  
Email: [traci.naile@state.or.us](mailto:traci.naile@state.or.us)

RE: Morrow County Drought

Dear Mr. Andrews and Ms. Naile,

Morrow County, by and through its County Elected Officials, requests that the Governor of Oregon issue an Executive Order for all of Morrow County under the provisions of ORS 536 as a direct result of severe, continuing and projected drought conditions.

There is the potential for Morrow County agriculture and livestock, natural resources, recreational, tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe damage resulting from extreme weather conditions within the County. The County is experiencing negative impacts to agriculture.

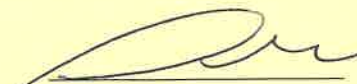
The County has already formally declared a drought and has attached a copy of the adopted Resolution for your files.

The Morrow County Board of Commissioners has determined that additional action by, and support from, the State is needed. This may include assistance from the Oregon Water Resources Department and other Oregon executive branch agencies, operating within their statutory authorities.

Morrow County Board of Commissioners therefore requests an Executive Order from the Governor, declaring drought in Morrow County.

We extend in advance our appreciation for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

  
David Sykes  
Chair

  
Jeff Wenholz  
Commissioner

  
Roy Drago Jr.  
Commissioner

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MORROW COUNTY, OREGON**

IN THE MATTER OF DECLARING            )  
A STATE OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY    )  
IN MORROW COUNTY                    )        RESOLUTION NO. R-2023-21

**THIS MATTER COMING BEFORE** the Morrow County Board of Commissioners sitting as the County governing body on September 6, 2023, at a regularly scheduled meeting;

**WHEREAS**, information has been provided to the Morrow County Board of Commissioners that a drought is occurring in Morrow County and that protective actions may be, or are, required to protect the citizens of Morrow County;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has designated Morrow County as a contiguous disaster county due to drought, enabling producers in the County eligible for emergency aid, with a moderate drought monitor condition;

**WHEREAS**, the Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District supports the emergency declaration of drought in Morrow County;

**WHEREAS**, over 90% of Morrow County is currently in a D1 drought (moderate drought) and the rest of the County is either DO drought (abnormally dry – ~1%) or D2 drought (severe drought – ~1%) according to the U.S. Drought Monitor as of 8/15/2023;

**WHEREAS**, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Seasonal Temperature Outlook for Morrow County forecasts a 40-50% probability that temperatures will be above normal – Valid: Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2023, Issued: August 17, 2023;

**WHEREAS**, unless weather conditions improve substantially to above normal conditions, water users who rely on stored water will have a shortened water use season, and depending upon the priority date of their water right, water users who rely on stream flows will have substantially less water available and a shortened water use season;

**WHEREAS**, the NOAA Seasonal Precipitation Outlook for Morrow County forecasts a 33-40%/40-50% probability that precipitation will be below normal – Valid: Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2023, Issued: August 17, 2023;

**WHEREAS**, the NOAA Seasonal Drought Outlook for Morrow County valid for August 17, 2023-November 30, 2023 predicts drought will persist in ~90-95% of the County and drought development is likely in the remainder;

**WHEREAS**, the above conditions will result in severe economic hardship to Morrow County, including shortages of livestock forage, loss of agricultural interests, and increased chance of wildfire;

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Board of Commissioners resolves that:

1. A state of emergency exists in Morrow County due to drought conditions.
2. Due to the state of emergency, the Morrow County Board of Commissioners does hereby request and entreat the Honorable Tina Kotek, Governor of the State of Oregon, to:
  - A. Declare a “State of Emergency,” a drought, to exist in Morrow County, Oregon under ORS 536;
  - B. Direct the Oregon Water Resources Department to provide all available means of assistance to Morrow County agricultural producers.
  - C. Direct Office of Emergency Management to coordinate and assist as needed, to address current and projected conditions in Morrow County.
  - D. Direct all other state agencies to coordinate with the above agencies and to provide appropriate state resources as determined necessary to assist those affected in Morrow County.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR  
MORROW COUNTY, OREGON**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Sykes, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Roy Drago Jr., Commissioner



**Oregon State**  
University

**Extension Service – Morrow County**  
Oregon State University  
54173 Hwy 74  
PO Box 397  
Heppner, Oregon, 97836

**P** 541-676-9642 |  
extension.oregonstate.edu/morrow

**TO:** Morrow County Administrator and Board of Commissioners  
**FROM:** L.K. Lutcher, Oregon State University, Plant & Soil Scientist, Ph.D.  
**RE:** Climatic Conditions and Drought, Dryland Agricultural Region  
**DATE:** August 31, 2023

This letter is my response to a request made by Ms. Roberta Vanderwall, former Administrator for Morrow County. Ms. Vanderwall asked me to provide agricultural information that might be used to support the County's request for a declaration of drought by the Governor.

The average quantity of crop-year precipitation in Morrow County ranges from 8 to 12 inches, depending on location. A good overall average (if you have to pick one number) is **9 inches**. The overall average, for the previous crop-year (September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023) was **6.6 inches**.

This year's wheat crop was negatively impacted by an unusually dry fall which reduced emergence in many fields. Rainfall in May and June (which is critically important for winter wheat production) was 42% and 11% of the long-term (overall) average, respectively.

The moisture status of a representative field of fallow (a Ritzville silt loam that will be planted to winter wheat this fall) was measured on **August 28<sup>th</sup>** of the current year. The quantity of plant-available moisture in the 5-foot soil profile was **4.6 inches**. This is 38% of the soil's capacity to store plant available water. It is 63% of what one would expect during a "normal" year.

I am in complete agreement with your decision to request an Executive Order for a "Determination of a State of Drought Emergency" in Morrow County.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or require additional information.

[larry.lutcher@oregonstate.edu](mailto:larry.lutcher@oregonstate.edu)

541.571.4454 (cell)

Signature:



**Soil & Water Conservation District**

*Our Mission: To conserve, protect, and develop soil, water and other natural resources for the economic and environmental benefit of the residents of Morrow County*

[www.morrowswcd.org](http://www.morrowswcd.org)

430 W. Linden Way, PO Box 127, Heppner, OR 97836-0127

Phone (541)676-5452 Fax (541)676-9624

Morrow SWCD  
PO Box 127  
Heppner, OR 97836

August 22, 2023

Morrow County Board of Commissioners  
Morrow County Bartholomew Building  
110 N. Court St.  
PO Box 788  
Heppner, OR 97836

Attention: Morrow County Board of Commissioners

The Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District wishes to formally support the emergency declaration of drought in Morrow County, Oregon. The following points are our basis for declaration, as are the attached documents:

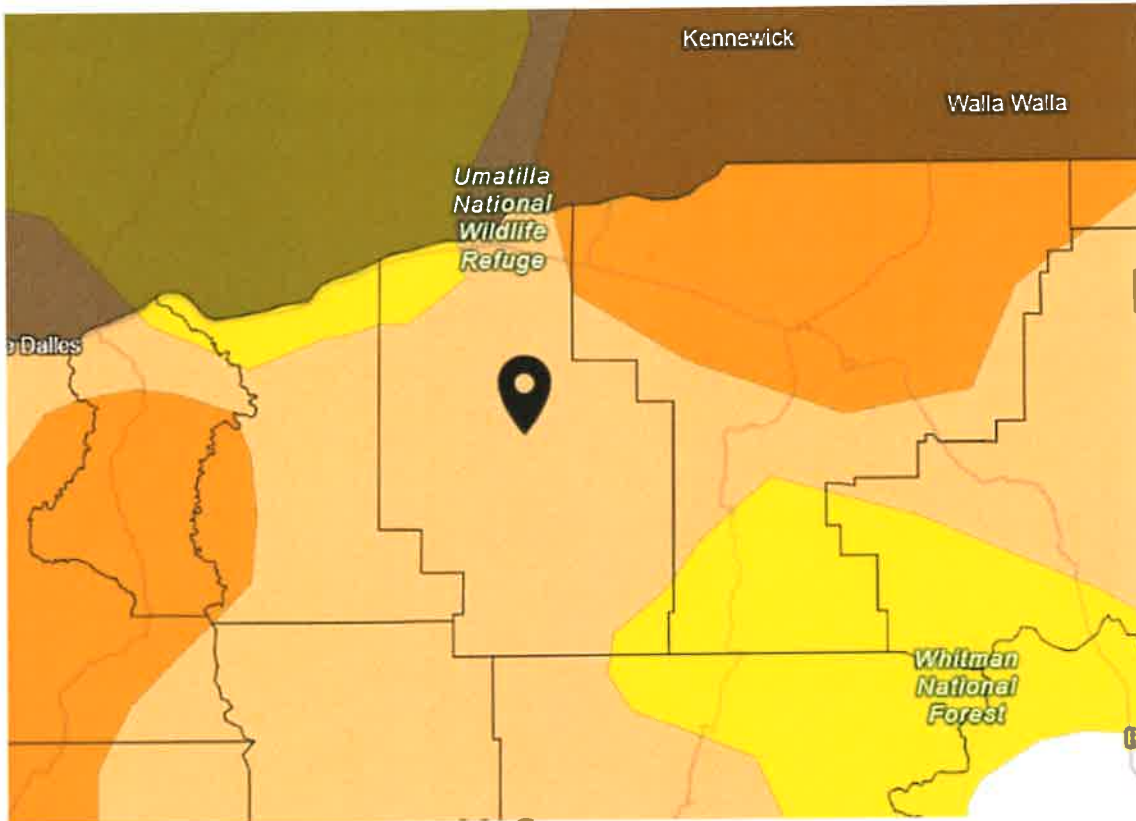
- Over 90% of Morrow County is currently in a D1 drought (moderate drought) and the rest of the County is either D0 drought (abnormally dry – ~7%) or D2 drought (severe drought - ~1%) according to the U.S. Drought Monitor as of 8/15/2023.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Seasonal Temperature Outlook for Morrow County forecasts a 40-50% probability that temperatures will be above normal – Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2023, Issued: August 17, 2023.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Seasonal Precipitation Outlook for Morrow County forecasts a 33-40%/40-50% probability that precipitation will be below normal – Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2023, Issued: August 17, 2023.
- The NOAA Seasonal Drought Outlook for Morrow County valid for August 17, 2023 – November 30, 2023 predicts drought will persist in ~90-95% of the County and drought development is likely in the remainder.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Kevin D. Payne  
District Manager

# U.S. Drought Monitor



## Drought & Dryness Categories

	D0 - Abnormally Dry
	D1 - Moderate Drought
	D2 - Severe Drought
	D3 - Extreme Drought
	D4 - Exceptional Drought
	Total Area in Drought (D1-D4)

## % of Morrow County

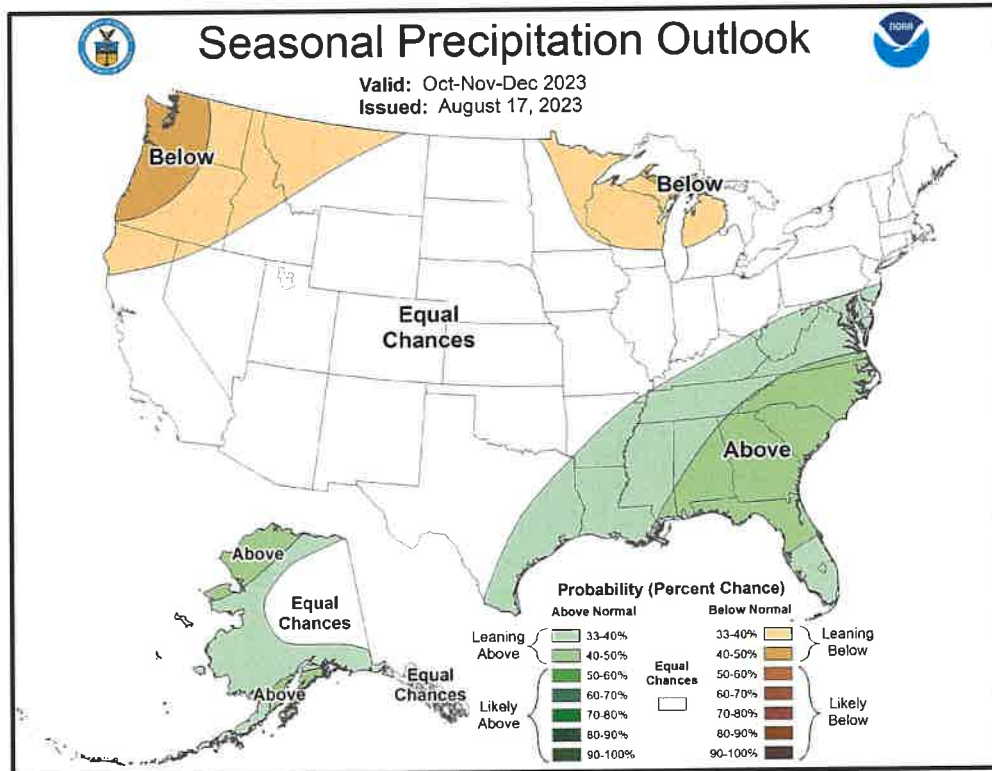
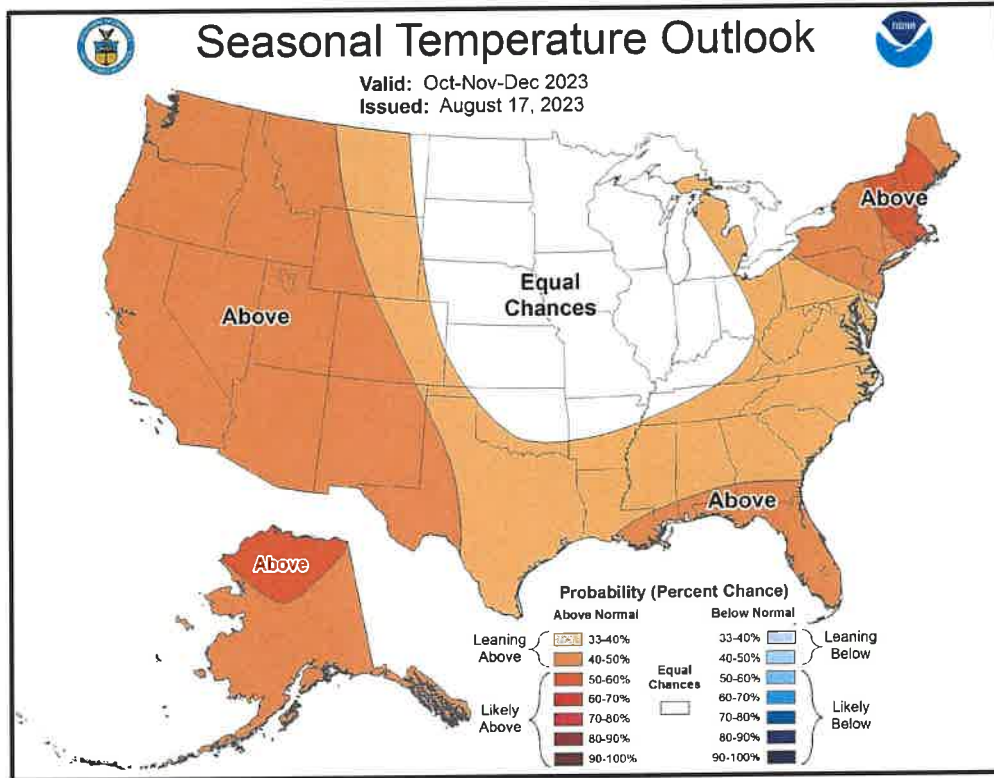
7.18%
91.93%
0.89%
0%
0%
92.82%

The U.S. Drought Monitor depicts the location and intensity of drought across the country using 5 classifications: Abnormally Dry (D0), showing areas that may be going into or are coming out of drought, and four levels of drought (D1-D4). The U.S. Drought Monitor is a joint effort of the National Drought Mitigation Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA

Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA  
 Data Valid: 08/15/23

[Drought.gov](https://drought.gov)

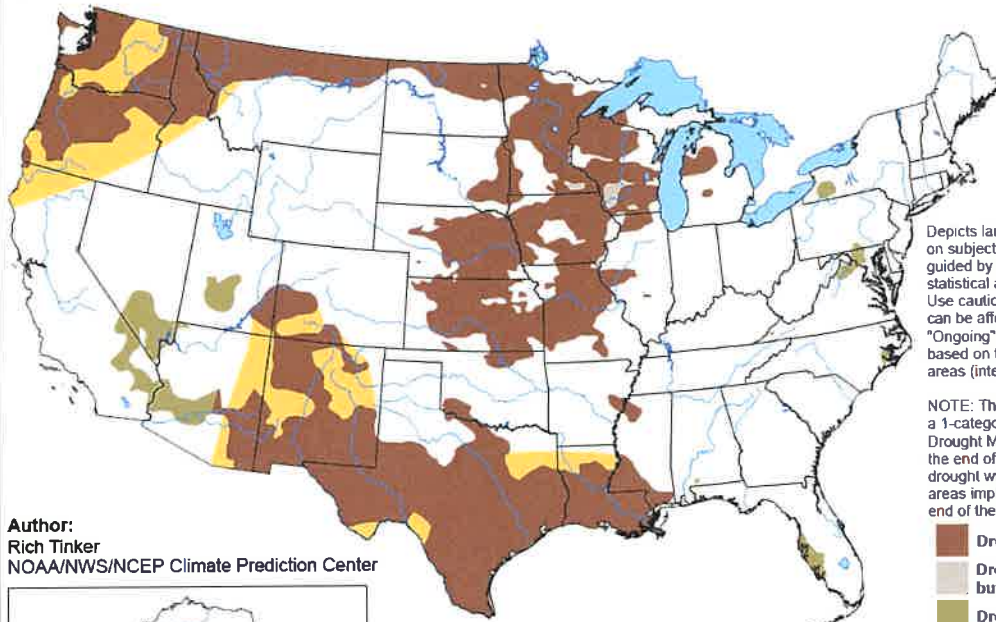




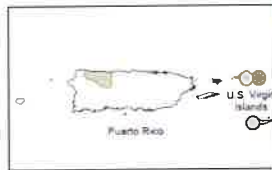
# U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

## Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for August 17 - November 30, 2023  
Released August 17, 2023



Author:  
Rich Tinker  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center



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).

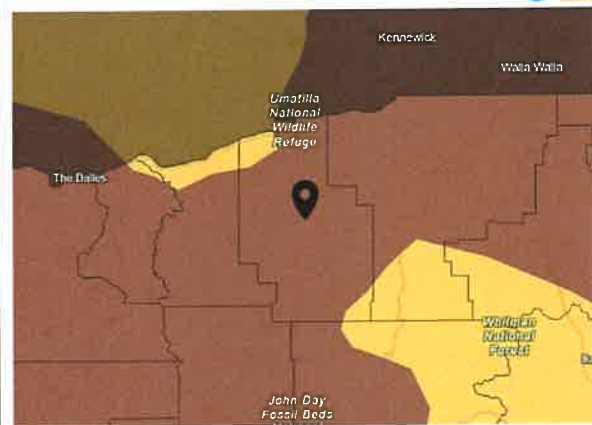
NOTE: The tan areas imply at least a 1-category improvement in the Drought Monitor intensity levels by the end of the period, although drought will remain. The green areas imply drought removal by the end of the period (D0 or none).

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



<https://go.usa.gov/3eZ73>

### Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook



Drought Is Predicted To...

Persist	Improve	End	Develop	N/A

Sources: Climate Prediction Center  
Data Valid: 08/17/23

[Drought.gov](https://drought.gov)





# MORROW COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## CAD INCIDENT REPORT 2308310108

08/31/2023

<b>Location</b> MORROW COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, 325 W WILLOW VIEW DR	<b>Cross Streets</b> NW CANYON DR/NW WATER	<b>City</b> HEPPNER
---	---	------------------------

<b>Incident Type</b> INFO - INFORMATION	<b>Call Taker</b> MCS52536	<b>Dispatcher</b> MCS52536
--	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

<b>Date</b> 08/31/2023	<b>Priority</b> 3	<b>Primary Unit</b> 2501	<b>Beat</b>	<b>Fire Zone</b> 6320	<b>Area</b> 250501	<b>Map</b>	<b>Source</b> TELEPHONE CALL
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<b>Caller Name</b>	<b>Caller Address</b>	<b>Caller Phone</b>
--------------------	-----------------------	---------------------

<b>Dispositions</b> COMPLETED	<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Alm Level</b>	<b>Case Number</b>
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<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>Associated Incidents</b>
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<b>Incident Times</b> Received 10:02:55 Created 10:03:04 Dispatched 10:06:24 En Route On Scene Closed 10:06:35 Rcvd-Closed 03:40	<b>Special Circumstances</b>
<b>Persons</b>	<b>Sex DOB Race DL</b>

<b>Unit Times</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	<b>Dispatched</b>	<b>Enroute</b>	<b>On Scene</b>	<b>Clear</b>	<b>Disp-On Scene</b>	<b>Enrt-On Scene</b>	<b>On Scene-Clear</b>	<b>Disp-Clear</b>
2501	MCS41943	10:06:24			10:06:35	N/A	N/A	N/A	00:11

**Incident Comments**  
OERS # obtained for drought.

TIME	#	EVENT	BY
10:03:04	1	Incident initiated at Morrow County Sheriff's Office, 325 W Willow View3	MCS52536
10:03:42	2	25-01 requested OERS number for drought in Morrow County	MCS52536
10:05:59	3	OERS number is 2023-2209	MCS52536
10:06:24	4	2501 ADV.D. Morrow County Sheriff's Office, 325 W Willow View Dr, Heppner	MCS52536
10:06:35	5	2501 10-8.	MCS52536
10:06:36	6	2501 Closed - Disposition 24	MCS52536

## Oregon

[Home](#) / [Oregon](#)

**Map released: Thurs. August 31, 2023**

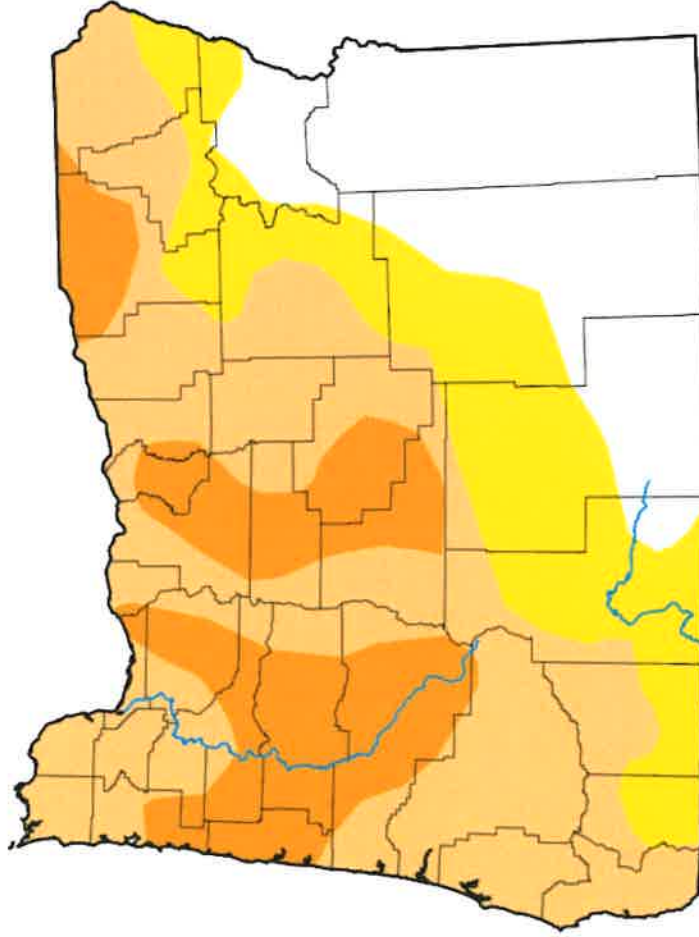
Data valid: August 29, 2023 at 8 a.m. EDT

### Intensity



### Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):  
[David Simeral](#), Western Regional Climate Center  
Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):  
[Rocky Bilotta](#), NOAA/NCEI



## STATISTICS

Statistics type	Cumulative Percent Ar	?	Export Table		View More Statistics			
Week	Date	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4	DSCI
Current	<a href="#">2023-08-29</a>	24.02	75.98	56.32	17.70	0.00	0.00	150
Last Week to Current	<a href="#">2023-08-22</a>	24.02	75.98	50.89	17.70	0.00	0.00	145
3 Months Ago to Current	<a href="#">2023-05-30</a>	15.15	84.85	46.05	11.50	0.00	0.00	142
Start of Calendar Year to Current	<a href="#">2022-12-27</a>	8.58	91.42	59.76	46.04	26.18	1.40	225
Start of Water Year to Current	<a href="#">2022-09-27</a>	0.42	99.58	68.05	52.42	30.73	1.40	252
One Year Ago to Current	<a href="#">2022-08-30</a>	24.93	75.07	65.71	52.22	30.73	1.40	225

**Estimated Population** in Drought Areas: **3,555,420**

## Current Impacts

To see or report current drought impacts, please visit the [Drought Impacts Toolkit](#), where you can find impacts from media in the [Drought Impact Reporter](#) and from citizen scientists and other volunteer observers under [Condition Monitoring Observations](#).

## Historic Impacts

experienced in Oregon in the past. To view a more complete record, and to filter impacts by drought severity, sector and season, check out the interactive [State Impacts Tool](#).

## Category

## Examples of historically observed impacts

- D0** Ski season is impacted
- Some fields are left fallow
- D1** Water levels begin to decline; recreation and other uses impacted
- Fire risk increases
- Marshes are drying up, little water is available for waterfowl and wildlife; bears are moving into urban areas
- D2** Pastures are brown; hay yields are down and prices are up; producers are selling cattle
- River flows are low and tributaries are running dry; conservation efforts begin in irrigation districts
- Low oxygen and high river water temperatures are affecting fish
- Planting is delayed
- Pumping well water increases; wells are going dry; homeowners are trucking in potable water
- D3** Reservoirs and lakes are very low compared to normal; irrigation water is scarce
- Waterfowl disease outbreaks increase
- Wildfire activity is high

## How is drought affecting you?

Use the Condition Monitoring Observer Report (CMOR) system to let us know how dry, wet or normal conditions are affecting you, and see what others are saying.

[Submit report](#)