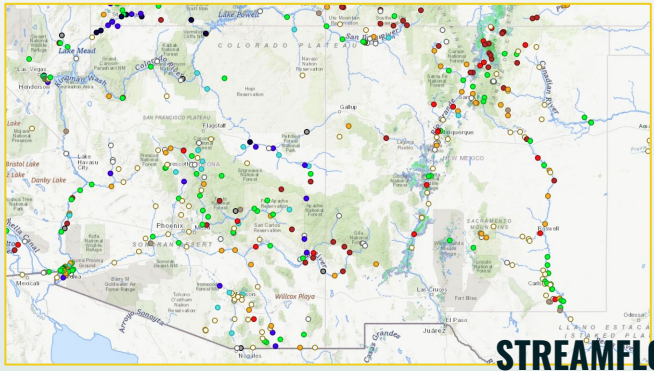
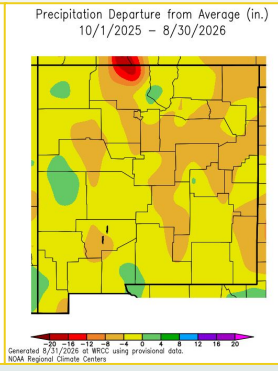
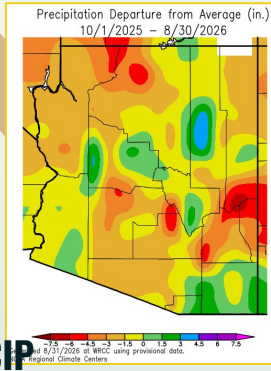


Monthly Outlook

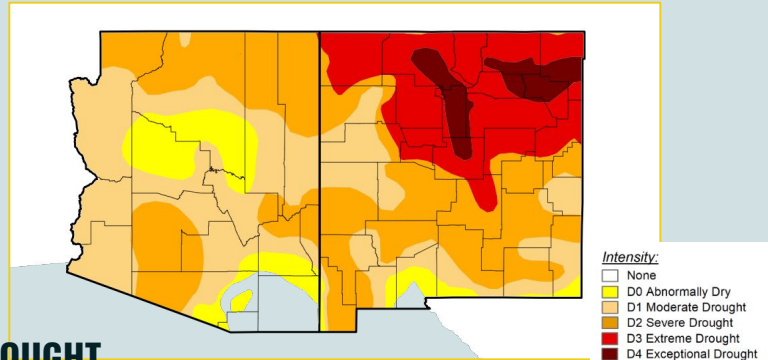
September 2026



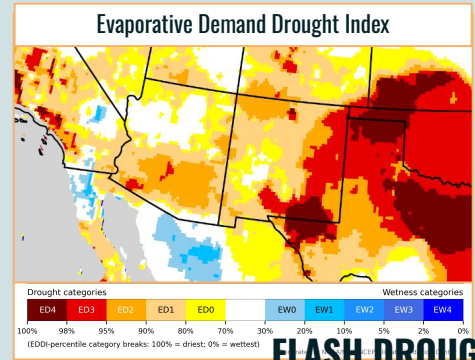
PRECIP

STREAMFLOW

El Niño continued to strengthen in August and weather remained uncharacteristic of late monsoon season. While much of the high terrain in Arizona saw near to above normal precipitation, the majority of New Mexico experienced below to well below normal accumulations. Even with a more robust event or two, coverage of precipitation remained relatively isolated, perpetuating the hit-or-miss scenario experienced in monsoons over the last several years. Strengthening of El Niño will occur in the fall and early winter months, potentially bringing it to the strongest on record. While this is likely to create an active fall and winter season, expectations should remain managed that while some areas receive robust precipitation, others may remain near to below average.



DROUGHT



FLASH DROUGHT

Portions of New Mexico saw an expansion of Extreme Drought and the addition of Exceptional Drought on the U. S. Drought Monitor, especially across northern New Mexico. Arizona retains a localized area in the southeast where drought is not present. Even after bouts of moisture, fuels have been quick to rebound into the higher percentiles, with some station exceeding record dryness for the month of August. While the Southwest Geographic area often sees its fire season end by mid to late August, much of the area—especially in New Mexico—held onto fire effective fuelscapes. Long-standing drought and anomalous early season conditions worked to exasperate this scenario. Toward the end of August, fuels did begin to trend down toward average in New Mexico (save for the eastern plains), while fuels in Arizona largely trended toward minimums. While some low intensity rebounds in periods of drying conditions is likely, ERCs will relax throughout September, becoming more characteristic of fall.

Monthly Outlook

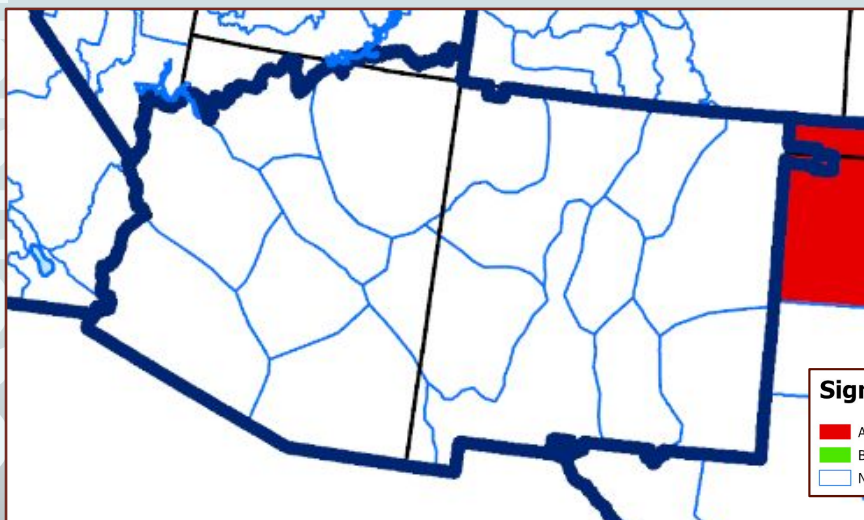
September 2026

Significant Fire Potential

A few large fires (> 100 acres) occurred in August, where above normal fine fuel loading and dryness in heavier fuels persisted. New starts remain possible in early September as bouts of dry air persist, enhancing the risk of dry lightning in receptive fuels, as well as gusty winds.

Rx Fire Implications

Despite occasional moisture, Rx planners should monitor increasing fire danger in the warmer/drier weather, as well as the persisting threat of lightning into dry fuels.



Sept

Significant Wildland Fire Potential

- Above
- Below
- Normal
- State Boundary
- Geographic Area Boundary
- Predictive Services Area Boundary

While fuels are still rebounding in periods of dry weather, ERCs should relax moving into early and mid September. As the ridge begins to breakdown throughout the month, additional bouts of tropical remnants will help to assist in tempering the fuelscape, as well as put a damper on fire effective weather. Lightning will still be occasionally problematic, but with increasing fuel moistures, fires will be limited in their spread.

*Significant Fire Potential: The likelihood a fire situation will require mobilization of additional resources from outside the area in which the fire situation originates.