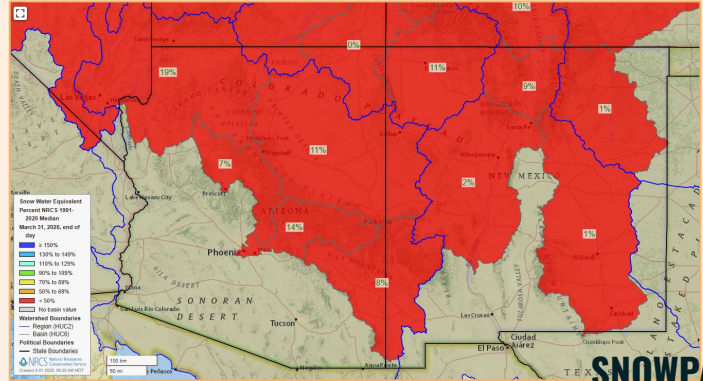
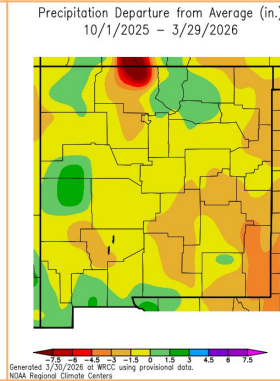
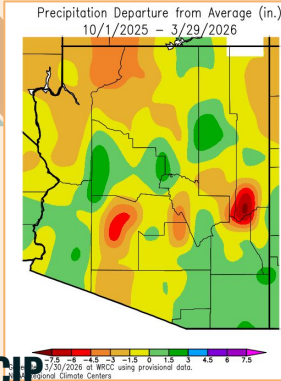


Monthly Outlook

April 2026

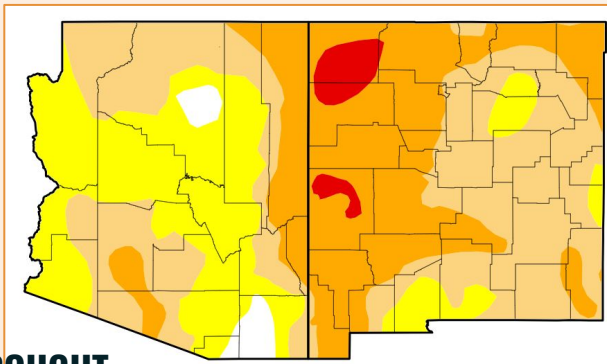


PRECIP

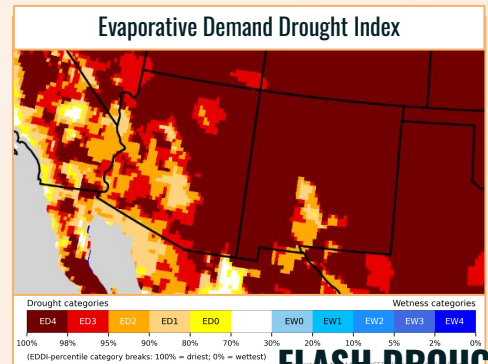
SNOWPACK

weather

The Desert Southwest was held in the clutches of persistent well-below average precipitation throughout March in concert with historic heat. While localized instances of wetting precipitation were noted across portions of central and southern areas, extreme atmospheric thirst has caused quick vegetative rebound and subsequent stress. These events occurred on a stage set by a lackluster winter, with much below average snowpack. While La Niña continues to degrade, active troughing will continue to deliver breezy to windy conditions across the SWA. Occasional slugs of moisture will give rise to isolated to scattered storms in April, but incredibly dry air at lower levels will inhibit precipitation reaching the ground, enhancing the risk of dry lightning.



DROUGHT



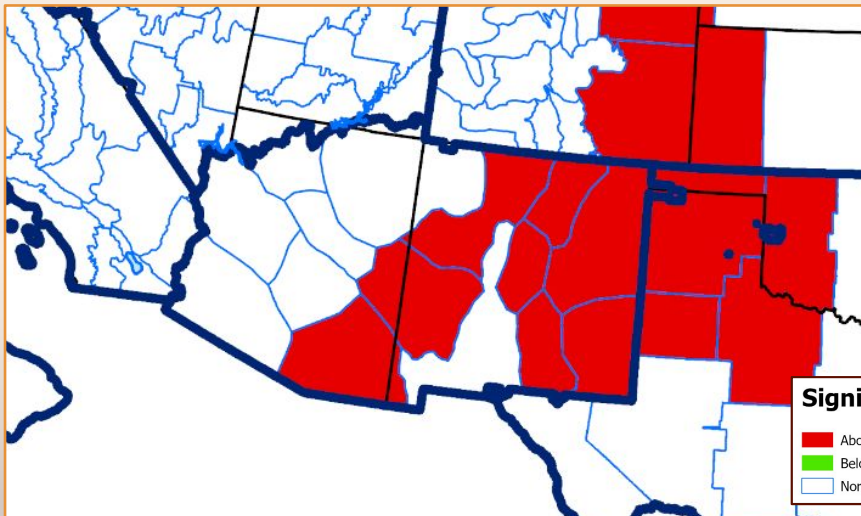
FLASH DROUGHT

Fuels

The dry conditions resulted in the continuation and expansion of drought across the SWA, with all of New Mexico entering Moderate Drought or worse on the U. S. Drought Monitor. Areas of Severe Drought have expanded in coverage to include areas along and west of the Continental Divide in New Mexico, with additional development across the southern mountains and lowlands. Arizona retains localized areas where drought is not present, but it is anticipated that drought conditions will form. Larger fuel classes hit record dryness for March, especially across the northern PSAs. Above normal fuel loading continues to also be an issue across the eastern plains, where little green up has been seen amongst the grasslands. In addition to drought stress, multiple forests with expansive mortality of pinyon-juniper and Ponderosa pine have been identified in portions of the Lincoln, Coronado, and Gila NFs. Mortality, dry fuels, continuity, and fuel loading are contributing to high fire danger.

<p>Significant Fire Potential</p>	<p>A few large fires (> 100 acres) occurred in March across New Mexico, where there is above normal fine fuel loading and enhanced dryness in heavier fuels. Any significant wind event with minimum humidity below 30% will have the potential to cause large fires.</p>
<p>Rx Fire Implications</p>	<p>Despite occasional moisture, Rx planners should monitor increasing fire danger in the unseasonably warmer/ drier weather that is likely in April. Low snowpack and widespread mortality exist in many mid-higher elevations and will need to be factored into any large-scale burn plans.</p>

Fire Potential



April

With fuels tracking 4 to 6 weeks ahead of schedule through March, addition of Significant Fire Potential was included for April across portions of eastern Arizona and much of New Mexico. While a few moisture-rich events will occur, they are not likely to offset such considerable fuel dryness, as seen by ERC rebounds after events in late March. Fire danger will be further exasperated across the Gila, Coronado, and Lincoln National Forests, where PJ and Pine mortality is widespread.

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