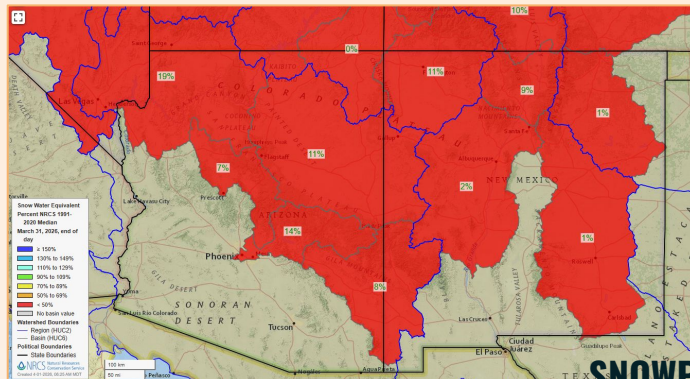
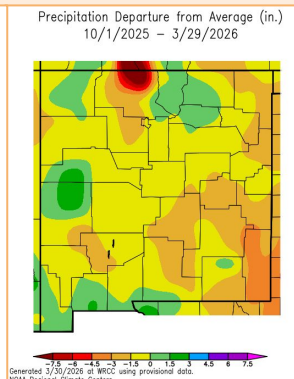
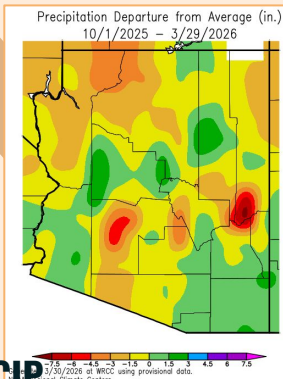


Seasonal Outlook

April – July 2026

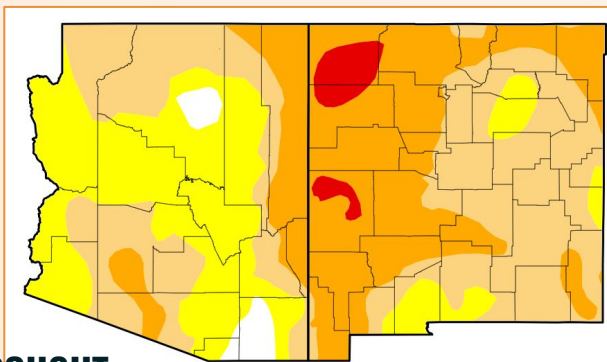


**PRECIP**

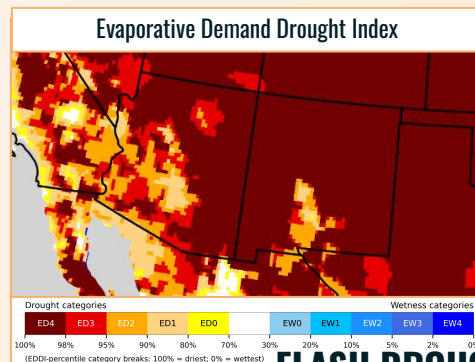
**SNOWPACK**

**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. This situation is worsened in southern PSAs where snowpack is almost NIL. Better monsoonal moisture and a few more robust precipitation events have been the saving grace of the southern PSAs, keeping them a few weeks behind their neighbors in regard to fuel states.



**DROUGHT**

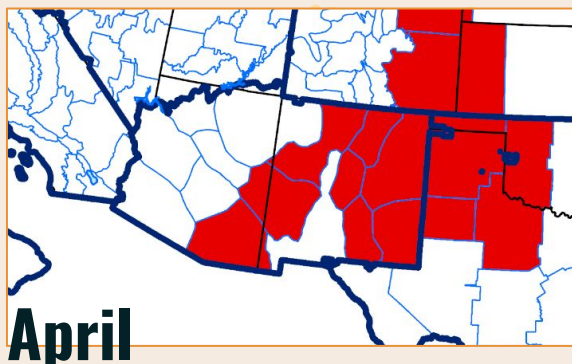


**FLASH DROUGHT**

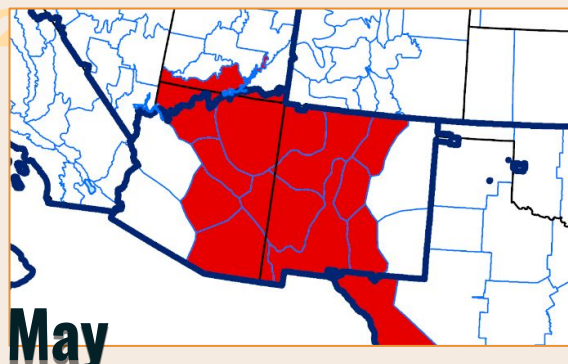
**Fuels**

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, a situation exacerbated 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.

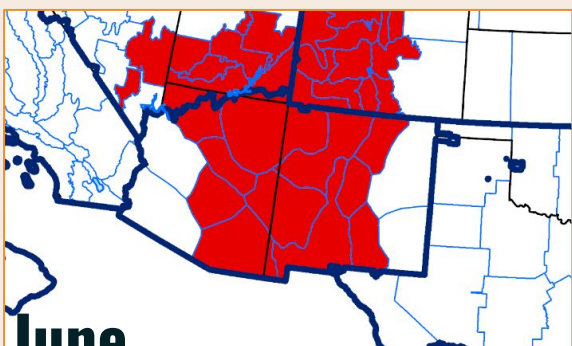
**Fire Potential**



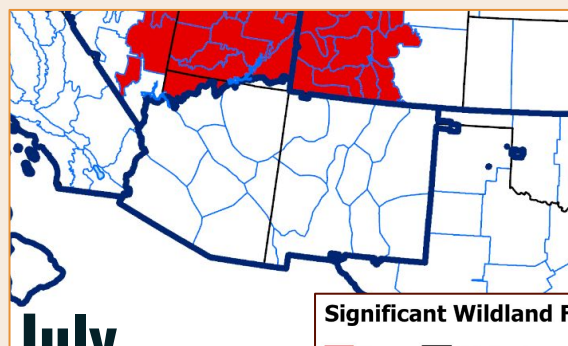
**April**



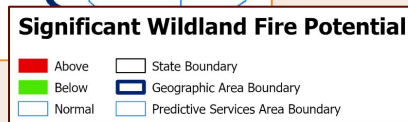
**May**



**June**



**July**



While La Niña continues to weaken, 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. Due to this combination, above normal significant fire potential was continued or added for southeastern Arizona, the Gila Region, the mountain areas of New Mexico, and the New Mexico eastern plains. Not anticipating these conditions to improve moving into the heart of fire season in the Southwest, so did retain the aforementioned areas for May, as well as the addition of all northern and south-central Arizona PSAs, the Mogollon Rim, and New Mexico’s Rio Grande Valley. By June, green up should improve across the New Mexico eastern plains.

Given the expected drought conditions, current state of fuels, and potential for active weather, the SWA should be prepared for increased potential for significant fires over the next three months.