

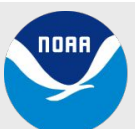
Winter Outlook for northern Michigan

October 22, 2026
3:05 PM EDT

A strong El Nino impacts weather patterns across the Great Lakes

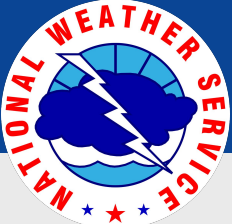
2026-2027 Winter Outlook

National Weather Service Gaylord Michigan



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Gaylord, MI



El Niño Status & Outlook

October 22, 2026
3:05 PM EDT

Favoring warmer and drier winter conditions in the Great Lakes

El Niño Advisory

Favored Effects in **Great Lakes**

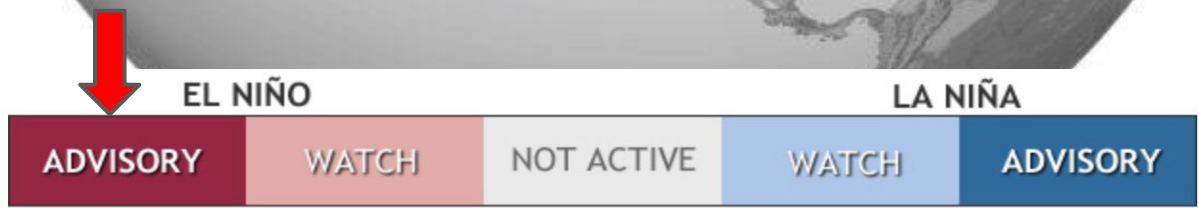
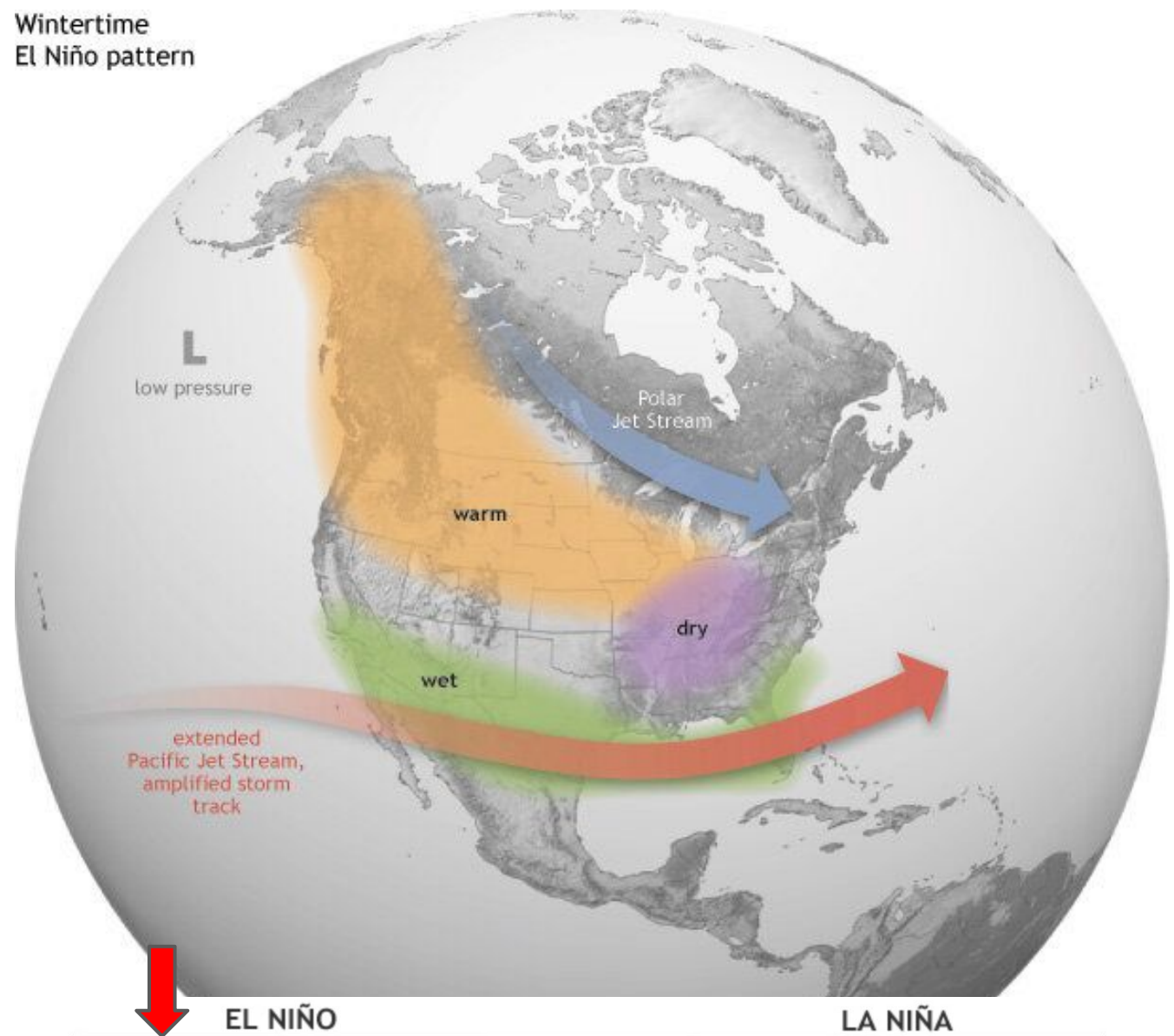
⚠ No two years are alike

Warmer than average

Drier than average

- El Niño continues to strengthen, with a strong-to-very strong El Niño likely through January-March 2027.
- The current relative Niño index value is the second warmest behind 1997 based on ranked September monthly values since 1950.
- Impacts in U.S. generally lag peak of event → El Niño peaks in Oct-Dec, but impacts can continue through Dec-Jan-Feb-Mar

Wintertime
El Niño pattern

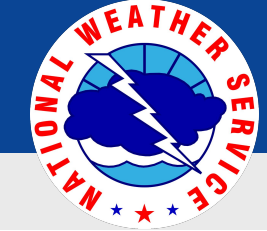


NOAA Climate.gov



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National Weather Service
Gaylord, MI



El Niño Impacts

October 22, 2026
3:05 PM EDT

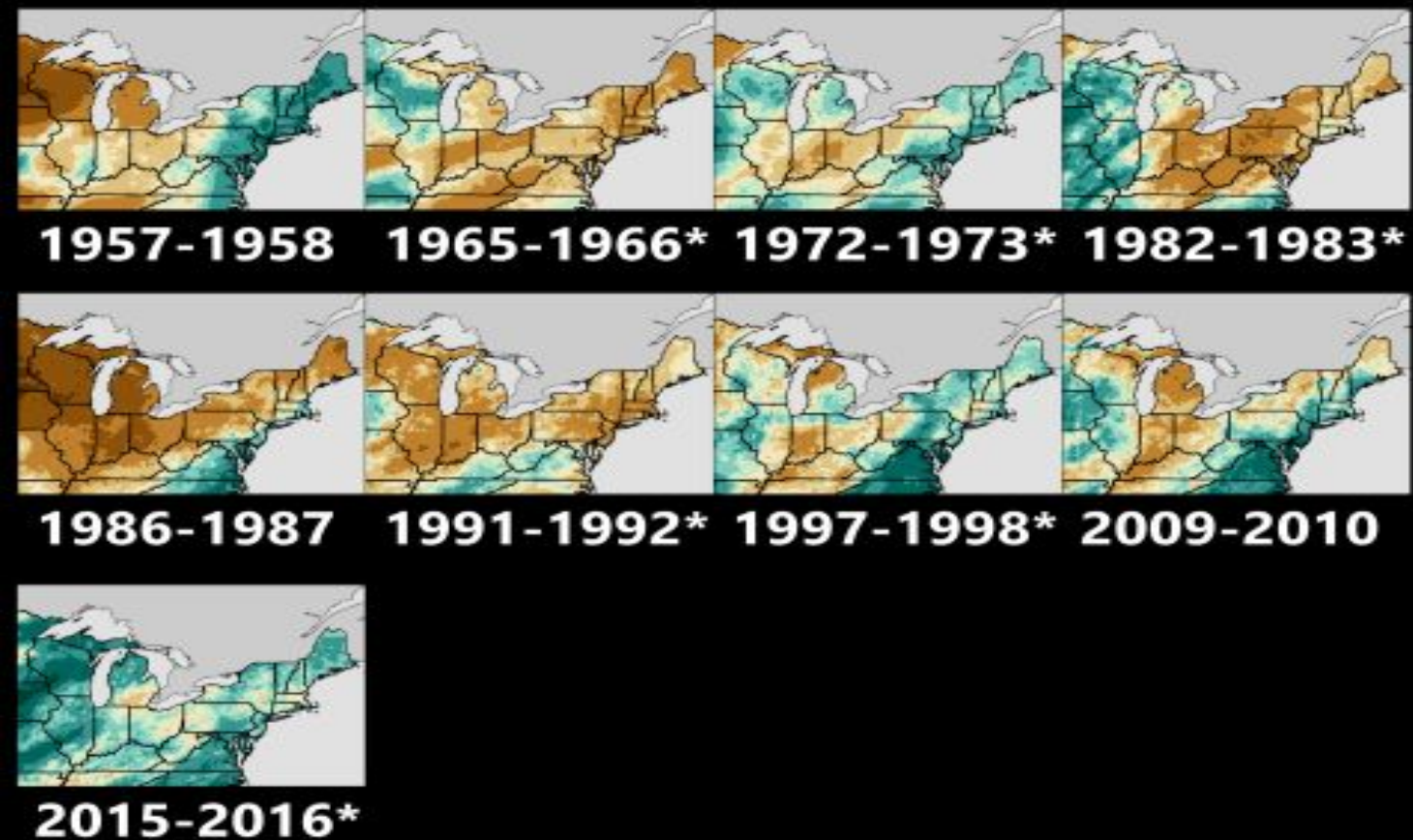
A majority of the past strong El Niño cases trended warmer and drier in the Great Lakes



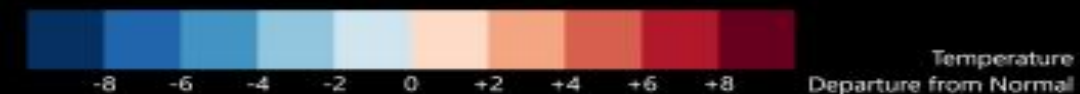
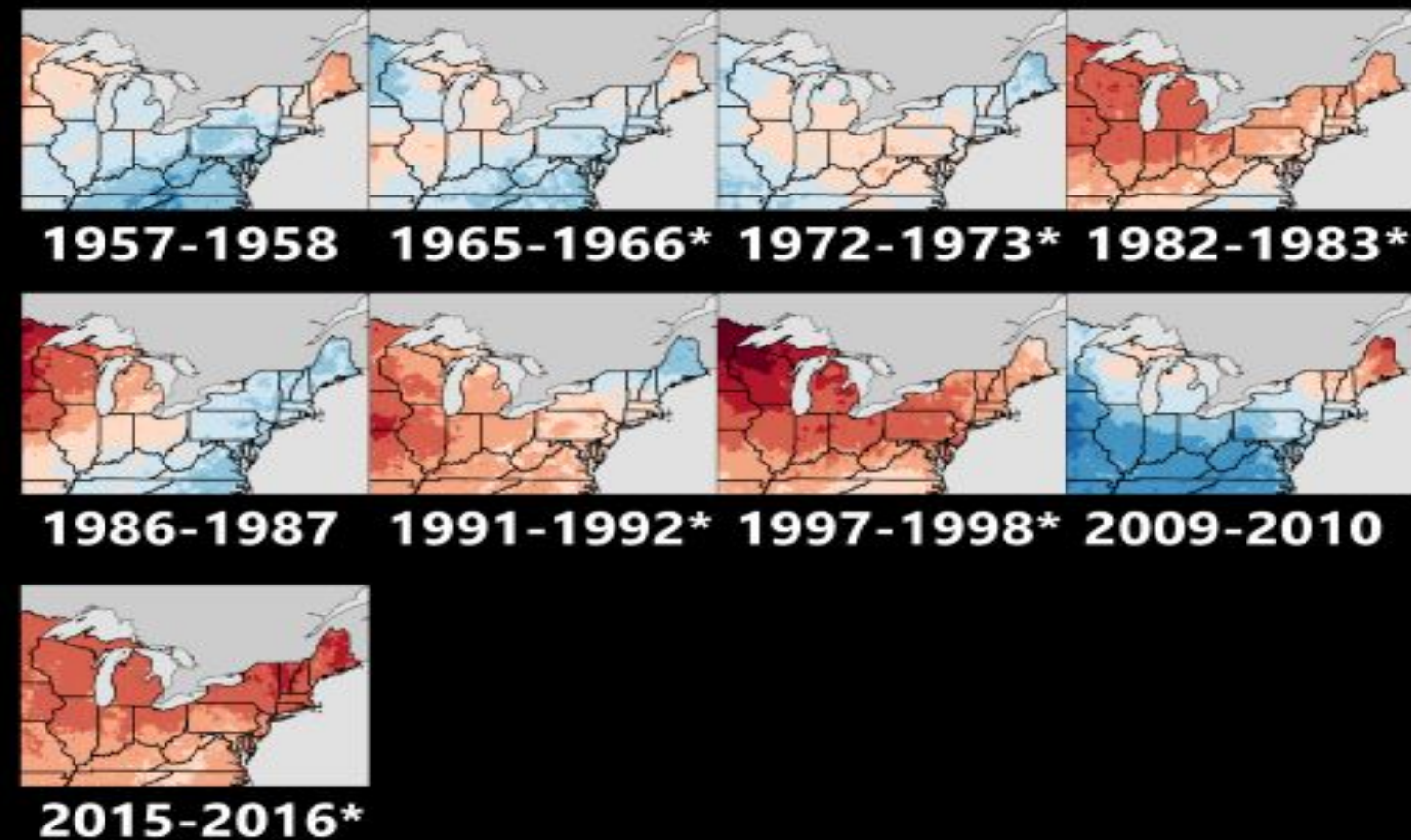
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

STRONG EL NIÑO CASES

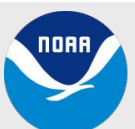
Precipitation



Temperature

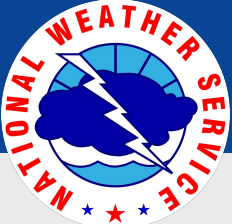


Data: PRISM, Oregon State University
*Very Strong El Niño Cases



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El Niño Impacts

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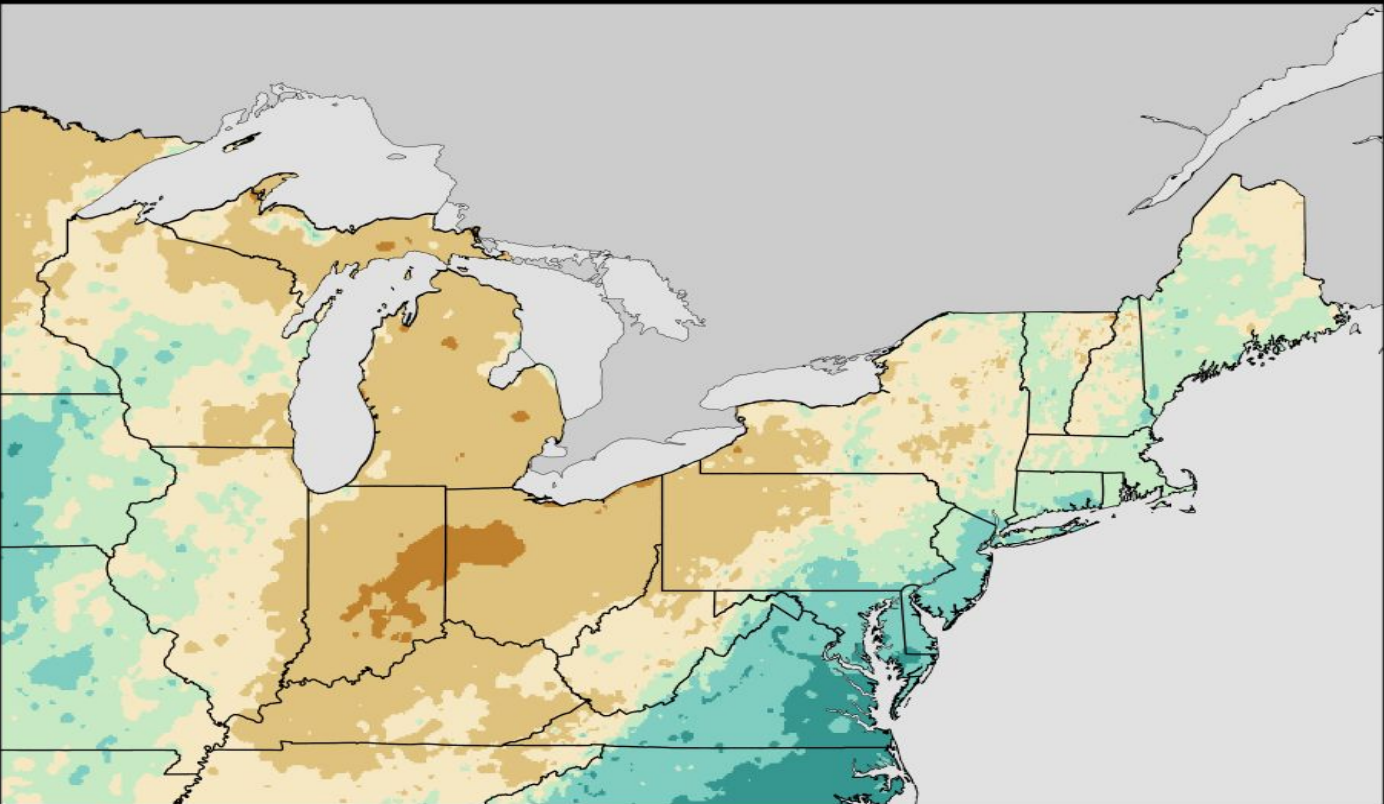
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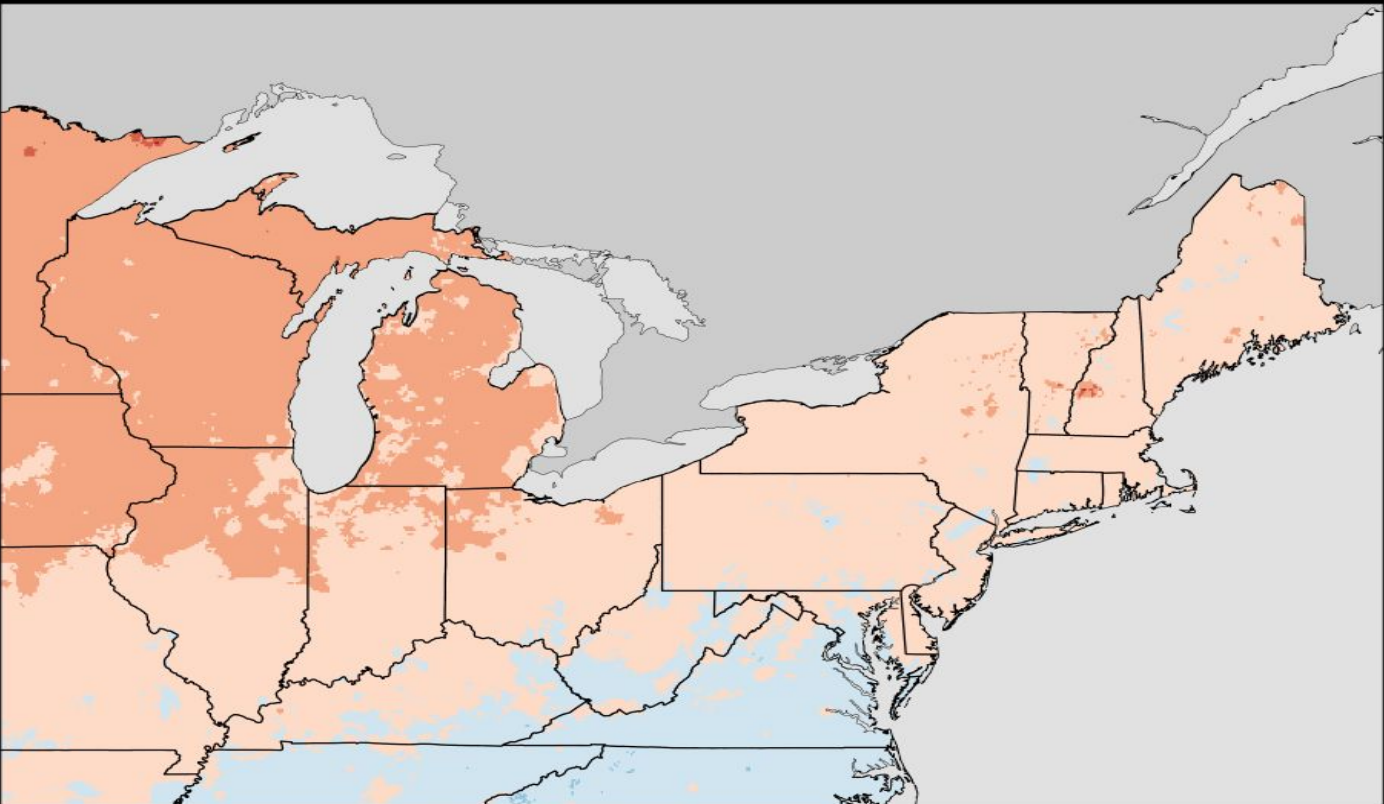
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

STRONG EL NIÑO CASES

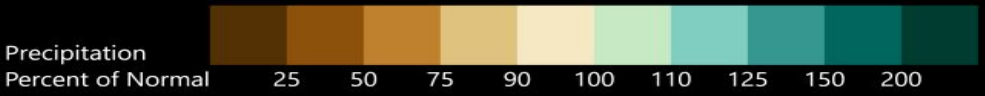
Precipitation Mean



Temperature Mean



Based on 9 Strong El Niño cases since 1950

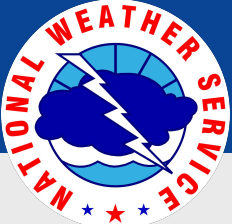


Data: PRISM, Oregon State University



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Winter Outlook: December-January-February

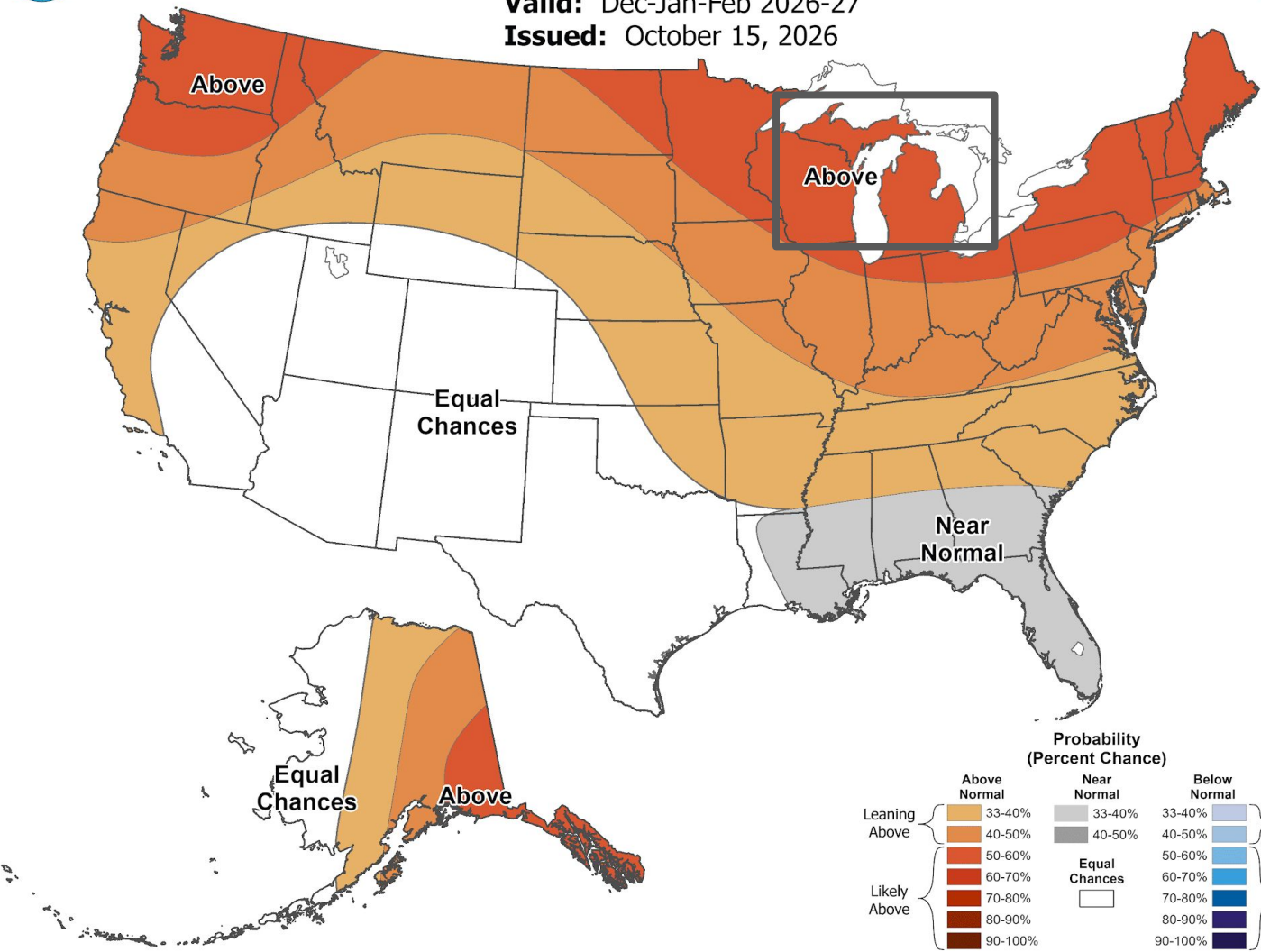
October 22, 2026
3:05 PM EDT

Above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation across the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest

Above Normal Temperatures

Seasonal Temperature Outlook

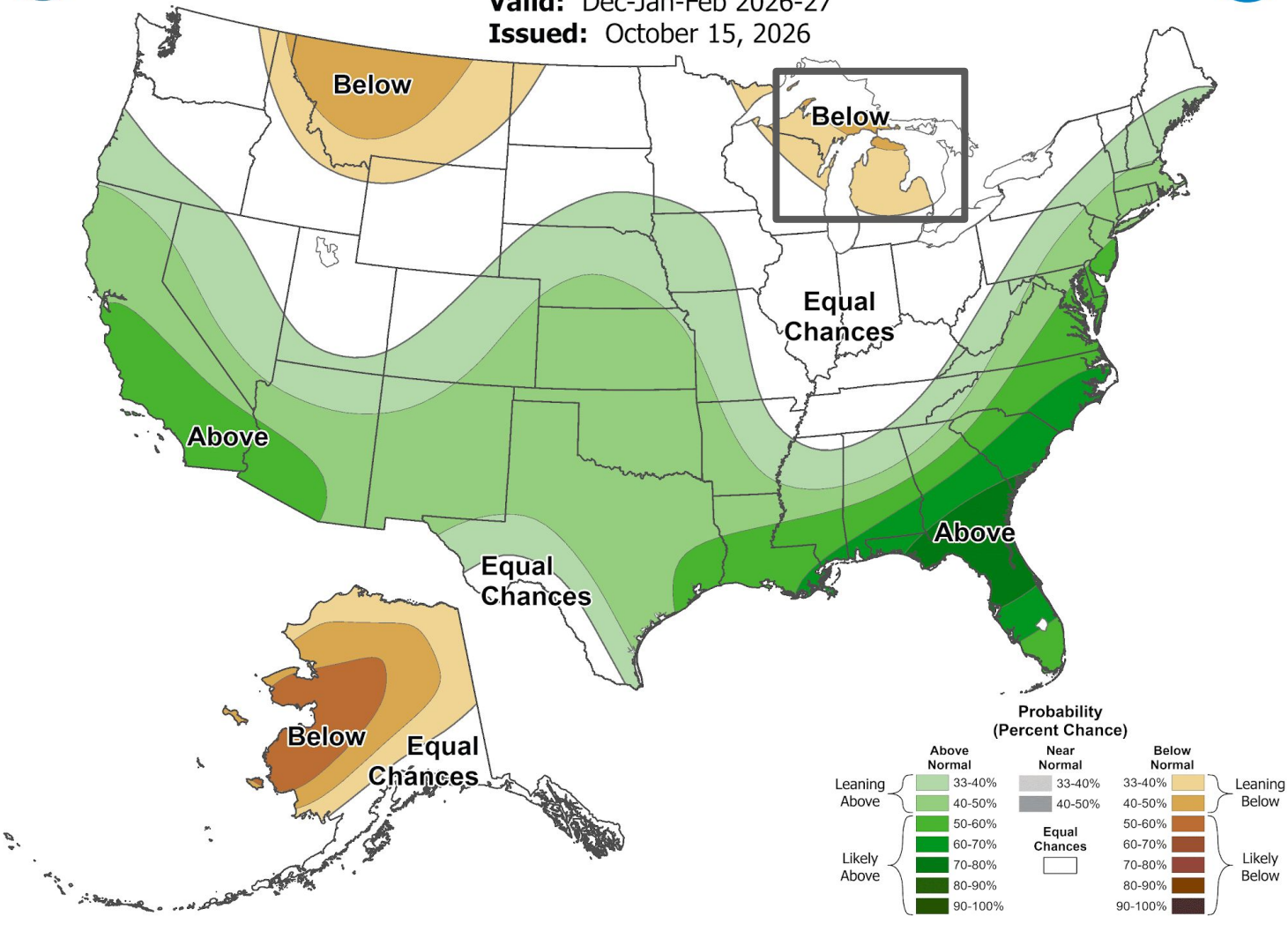
Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2026-27
Issued: October 15, 2026

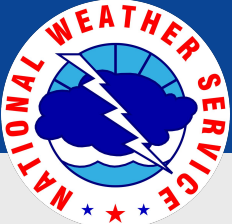


Below Normal Precipitation

Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2026-27
Issued: October 15, 2026



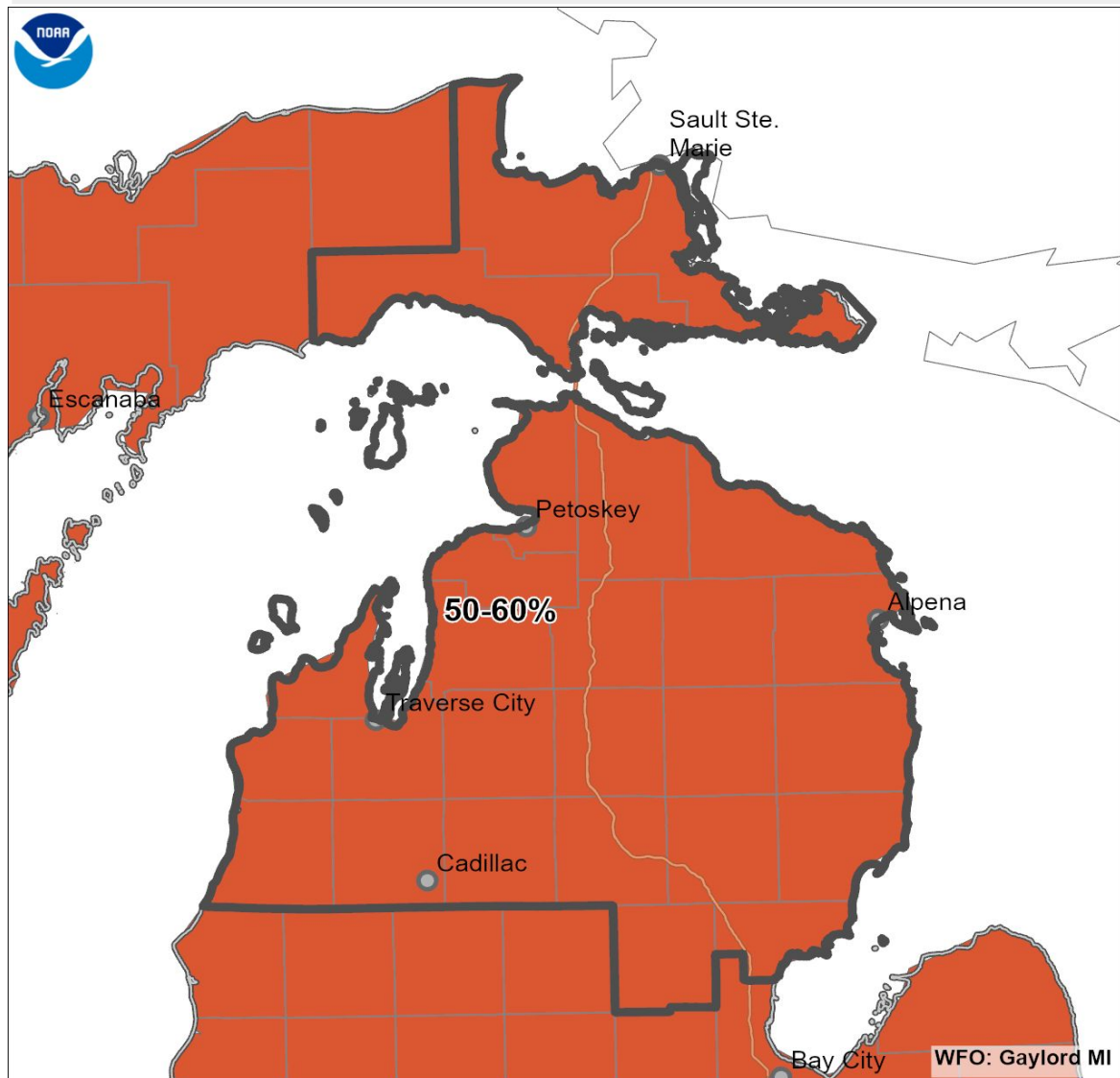


Winter Outlook: December-January-February

October 22, 2026
3:05 PM EDT

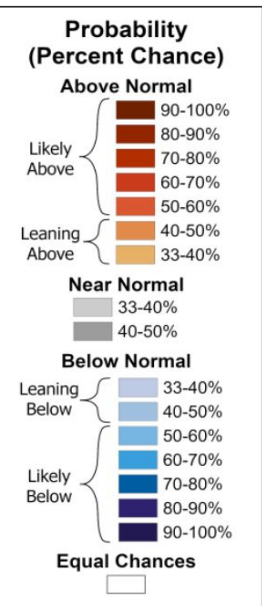
Likely above normal temperatures, leaning below normal precipitation

Likely Above Normal Temperatures



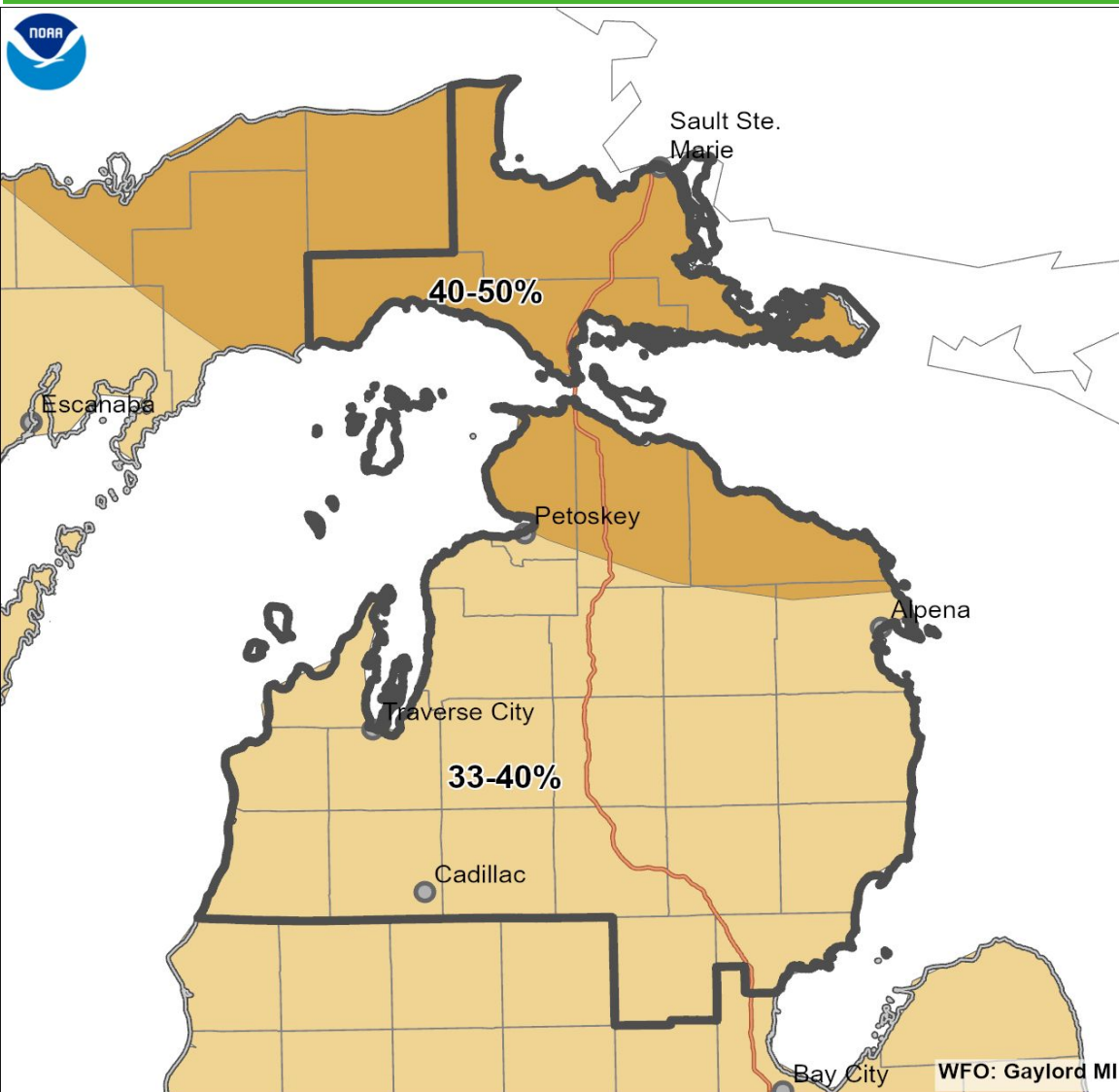
Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid:
December, 2026 - February, 2027



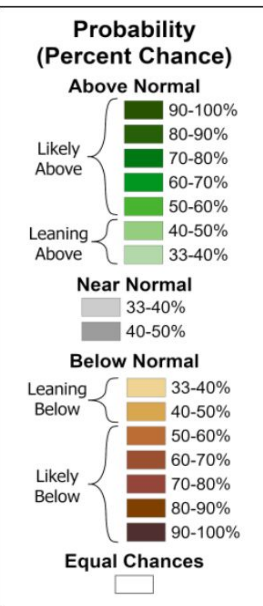
Climate Prediction Center
Issued:
October 15, 2026
www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

Leaning Below Normal Precipitation



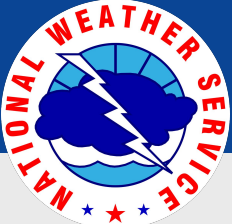
Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

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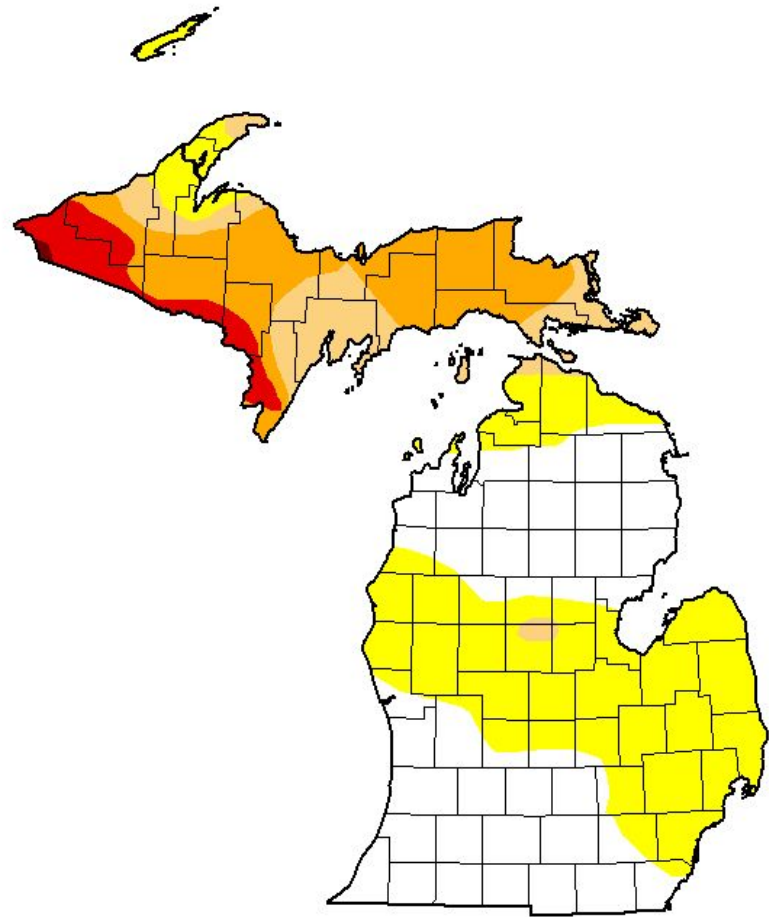


Current Drought Conditions and Outlook

October 22, 2026
3:05 PM EDT

Slowly expanding drought conditions across portions of Michigan, especially upper Michigan

U.S. Drought Monitor Michigan



October 20, 2026
(Released Thursday, Oct. 22, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	37.38	62.62	27.41	18.72	4.19	0.12
Last Week 10-13-2026	37.38	62.62	27.41	18.72	4.19	0.12
3 Months Ago 07-21-2026	89.90	10.10	2.54	1.26	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	37.56	62.44	34.52	0.91	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-29-2026	37.56	62.44	20.84	3.87	1.18	0.00
One Year Ago 10-21-2025	31.92	68.08	39.99	6.03	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

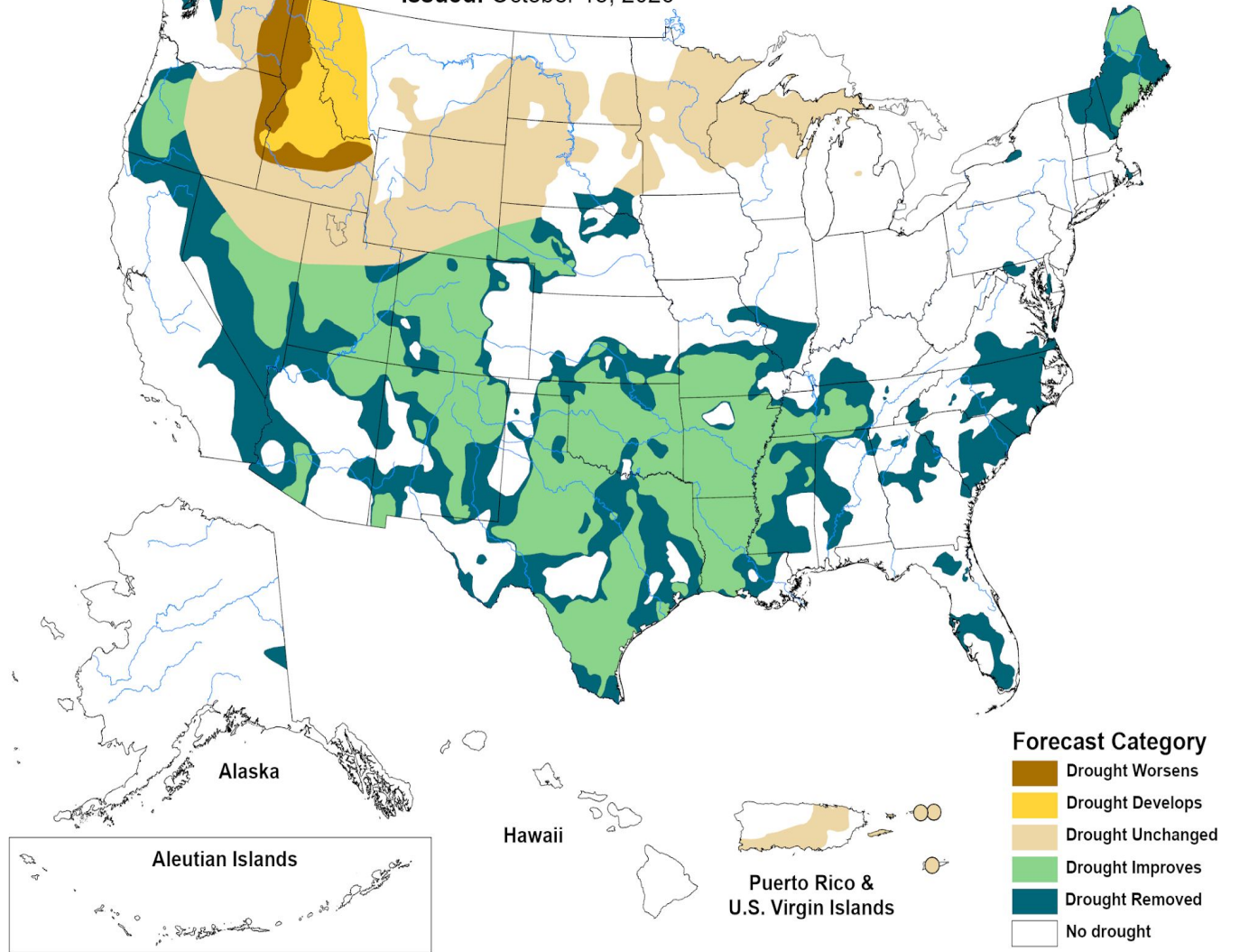
Author:
Lindsay Johnson
High Plains Regional Climate Center

droughtmonitor.unl.edu



Seasonal Drought Outlook

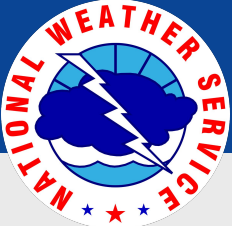
Valid: October 15, 2026 - January 31, 2027
Issued: October 15, 2026



Forecast Category

Drought Worsens
Drought Develops
Drought Unchanged
Drought Improves
Drought Removed
No drought





Seasonal Outlook: Bottom Line

October 22, 2026
3:05 PM EDT

A majority of the past strong El Nino cases trended warmer and drier in the Great Lakes

Northern Michigan Winter Outlook 2026-2027

Temperatures

- Likely above normal temperatures - especially through the first half of the winter.

Precipitation

- Leaning below normal precipitation across the northern Great Lakes. This may result in worsening drought conditions in some areas, especially upper Michigan.

Snow/Ice

- Trends favor below normal snowfall. This may be most evident in lake effect areas, where warmer temperatures may limit lake effect snow events.

Bottom Line

Strong signal in El Niño for winter 2026/2027

While conditions are favored, **El Niño shifts the odds rather than guarantees an outcome.**

No two **El Niño** events are the same. Although historical events can give us insight into this winter, each event is different and may yield different outcomes.

