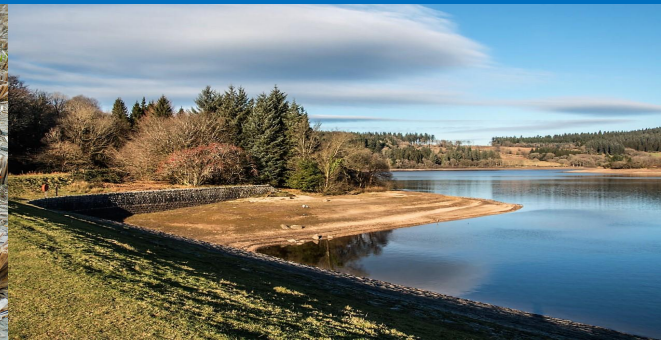
Drought Information Statement for Eastern Washington & North Idaho

Valid December 14, 2023

Issued By: NWS Spokane, WA
Contact Information: w-otx.webmaster@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated when drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/otx/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.

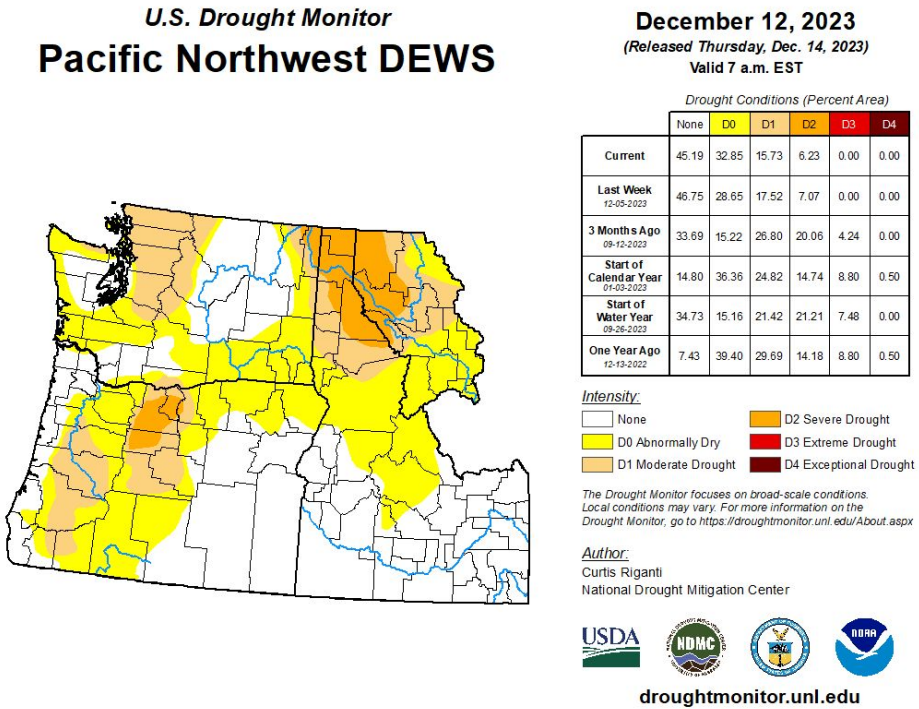


U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for eastern Washington and north Idaho

GRADUAL IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS THE INLAND NW

- Drought intensity and Extent
  - D2 (Severe Drought): Northeast WA and the Idaho Panhandle, **decreased to 6%**
  - D1 (Moderate Drought): Near the Cascade Crest, parts of northeast WA, and areas of the southern ID Panhandle, **decreased to 16%**
  - D0: (Abnormally Dry): Parts of east slopes of Cascades, LC Valley, Blue Mountains, and rest of extreme eastern WA, **near 33%**
  - NONE: **Increased to 45%** in central WA!



	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	45.19	32.85	15.73	6.23	0.00	0.00
Last Week 12-05-2023	46.75	28.65	17.52	7.07	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 09-12-2023	33.69	15.22	26.80	20.06	4.24	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-03-2023	14.80	36.36	24.82	14.74	8.80	0.50
Start of Water Year 09-26-2023	34.73	15.16	21.42	21.21	7.48	0.00
One Year Ago 12-13-2022	7.43	39.40	29.69	14.18	8.80	0.50

Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor valid 7am EDT December 12, 2023

Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 4 week change map for eastern Washington and north Idaho

- Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - No Change: Extreme northeast WA and parts of the Idaho Panhandle.
  - Drought Improved: East slopes of the Cascades, southeast WA, LC Valley, and parts extreme WA.
  - Drought degraded: A sliver of the central ID Panhandle.

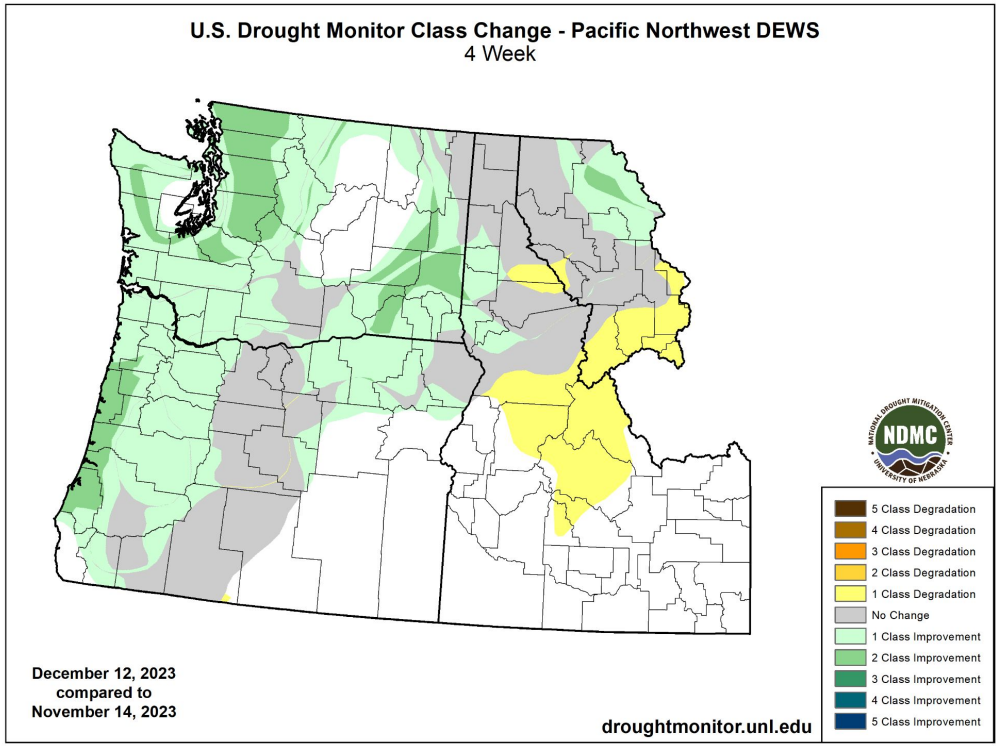


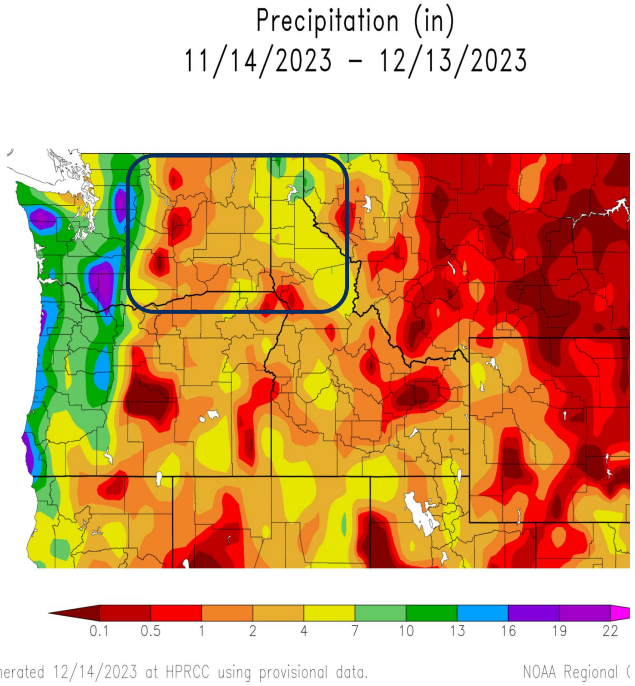
Image Caption: U.S. Drought Monitor 3-week change map valid 7am EDT December 12, 2023.

Precipitation

Last 30 Days

- Rounds of precipitation occurred since mid November, especially with the mild and wet period in early December. This brought above normal precipitation across much of eastern WA.

  Still pockets of below normal precipitation persist in the Idaho Panhandle.



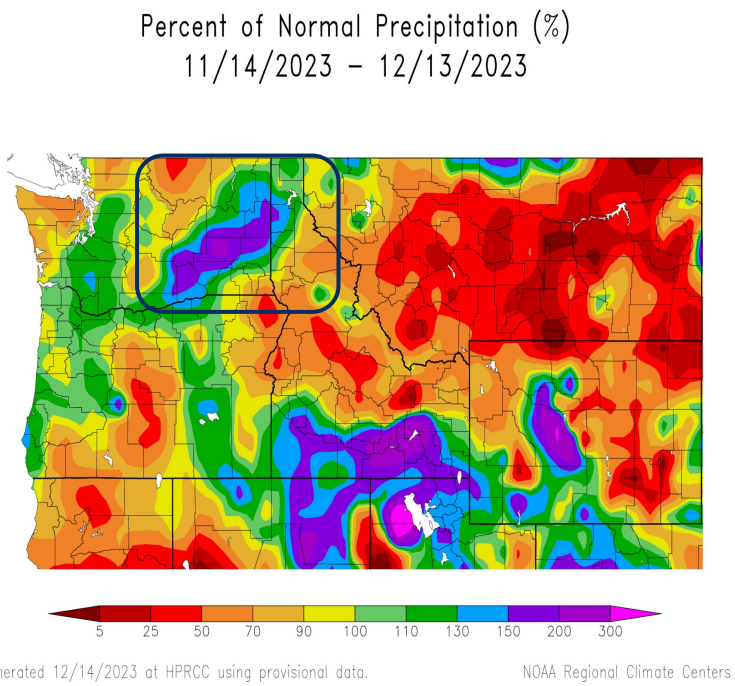
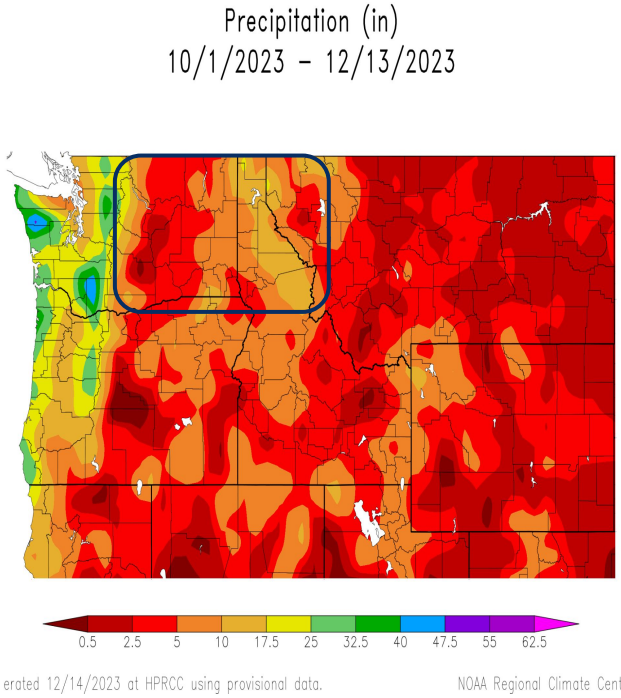


Image Captions:
Left - Precipitation Amount for Pacific NW
Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation for Pacific NW
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center
Data over the past 30 days ending December 13, 2023

Precipitation

For the Water Year - since Oct 1, 2023

- The precipitation of the last month was the main driver for the current Water Year totals, with range from above normal precipitation in eastern Washington and below normal values in north Idaho.



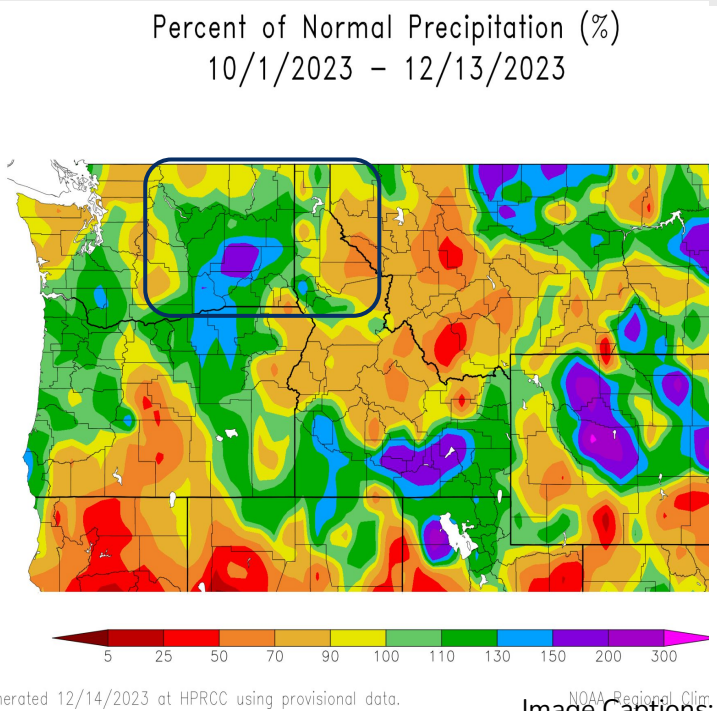
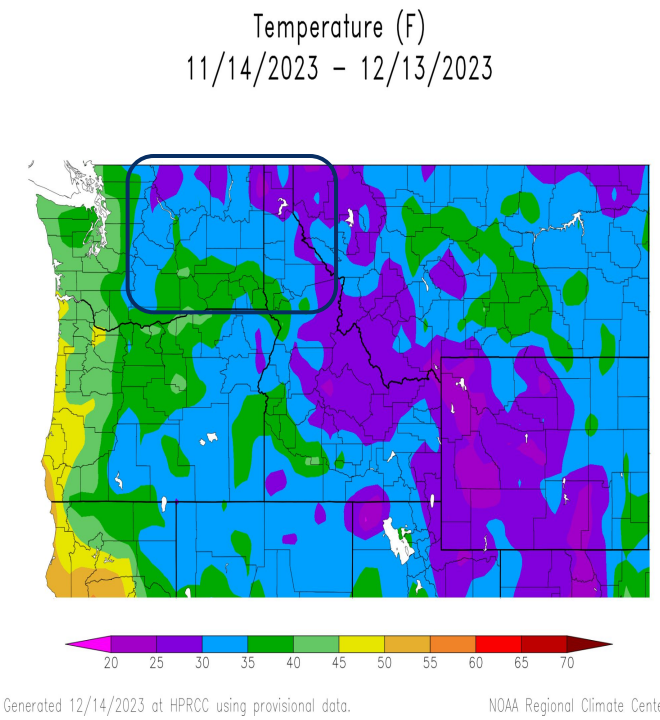


Image Captions:
Left - Precipitation Amount for Pacific NW
Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation for Pacific NW
Data Courtesy [High Plains Regional Climate Center]
Data over the past 30 days ending December 13, 2023

Temperature

Last 30 Days

- The mild trend continued for the last 30 days with temperatures running slightly above normal regionwide.



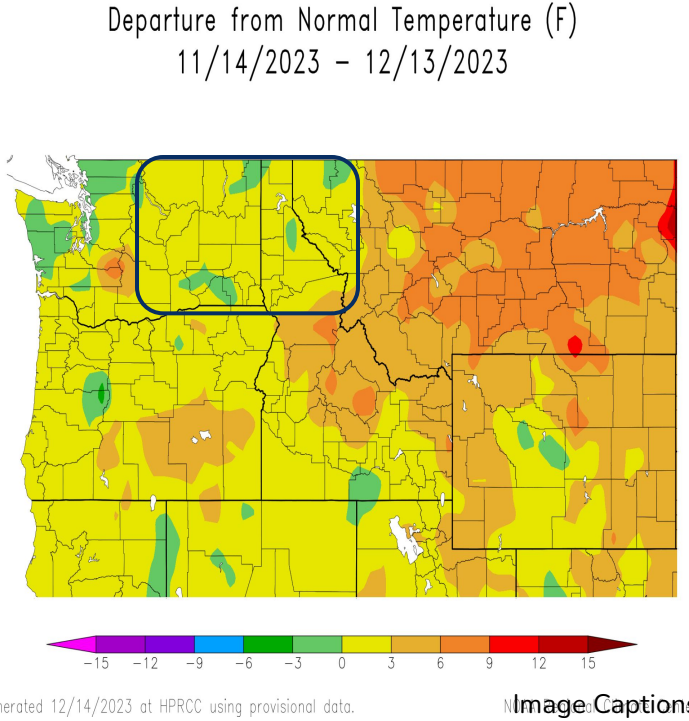


Image Captions:
Left - Average Temperature for the Pacific NW
Right - Departure from Normal Temperature for the Pacific NW
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center
Data over the past 30 days ending December 13, 2023

Summary of Impacts

Links: See/submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) and view the Drought Impacts Reporter

Hydrologic Impacts

- Stream flows have returned to normal levels on many of the unregulated rivers and streams in the region.

Agricultural Impacts

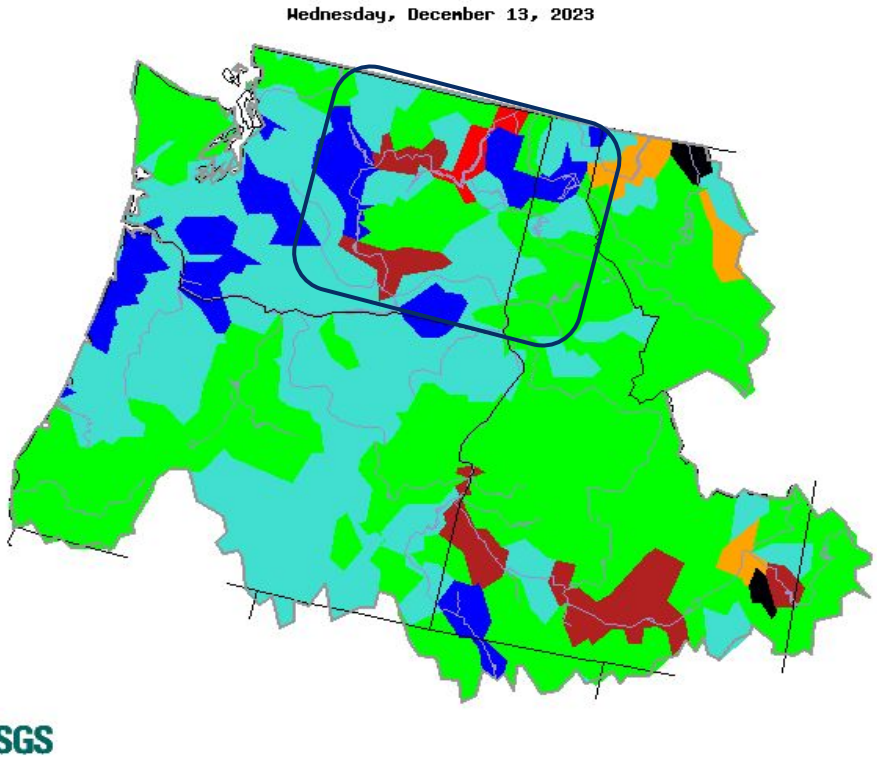
- Recent precipitation increased soil moisture and crop moisture across the region to above normal levels. According the crop reports, all fall work was wrapped up in late November. Winter wheat conditions were good, ranged from 40% to 80% across the region.

Snowpack Impacts

- Local ski resorts aimed for Thanksgiving openings, yet mild and wet weather led to delays and partial openings region-wide.

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Streamflows over the past 7 days have seen an increase, ranging from normal to above normal across most of the unregulated rivers and streams across the region. More variable steam flows are seen on the controlled rivers especially along the mid Columbia River.



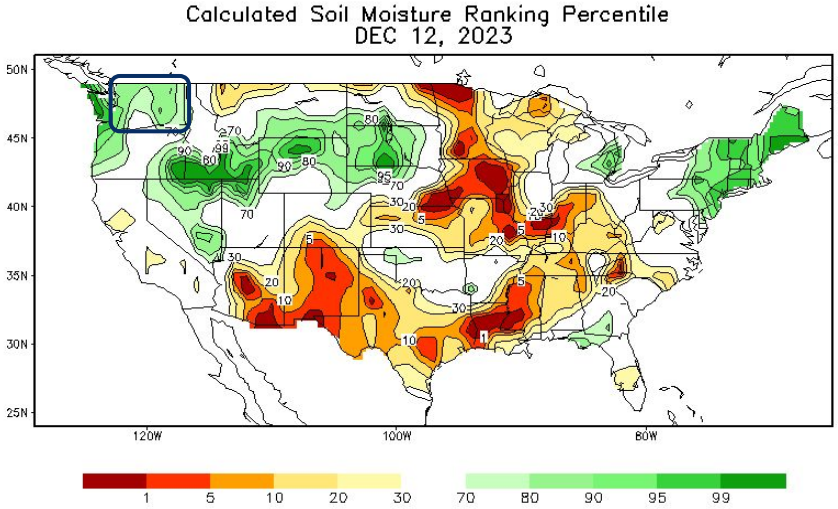
Explanation - Percentile classes							
Low	<10	10-24	25-75	76-90	>90	High	No Data
	Much below normal	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above normal		

Image Caption: [USGS 7 day average streamflow HUC map](#) valid December 13, 2023

Agricultural Conditions and Impacts

- Soil moisture has greatly improved over the last month with above normal levels, especially across Washington state.

- Crop moisture has also improved across the region with above normal levels in the east slopes of the Cascades and northern Idaho Panhandle. According to crop reports, all fall agricultural work was complete.



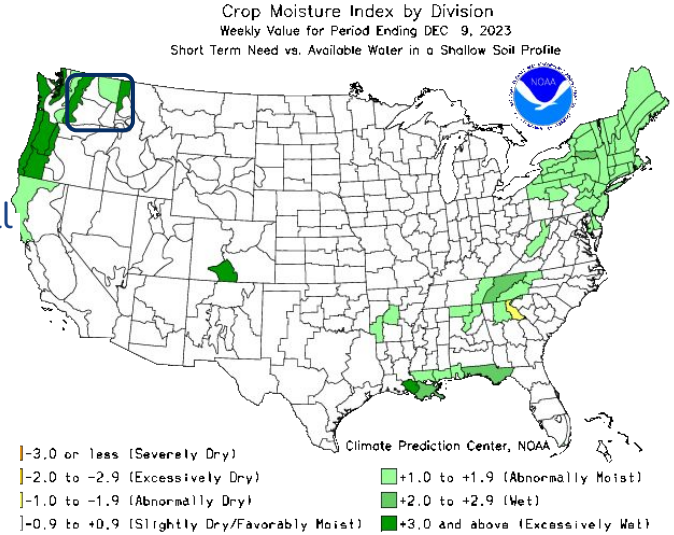


Image Captions:
Left: CPC Calculated Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile valid December 12, 2023
Right: Crop Moisture Index by Division. Weekly value for period ending December 9, 2023

Mountain Snowpack Conditions and Impacts

- The early snowpack from the autumn decreased, especially due to the mild and wet weather of early December.
- Much of the snowpack lingers below normal across the Inland NW spanning from 65% to 85%.
- Local ski resorts are partially open with on average half of the skis run available.

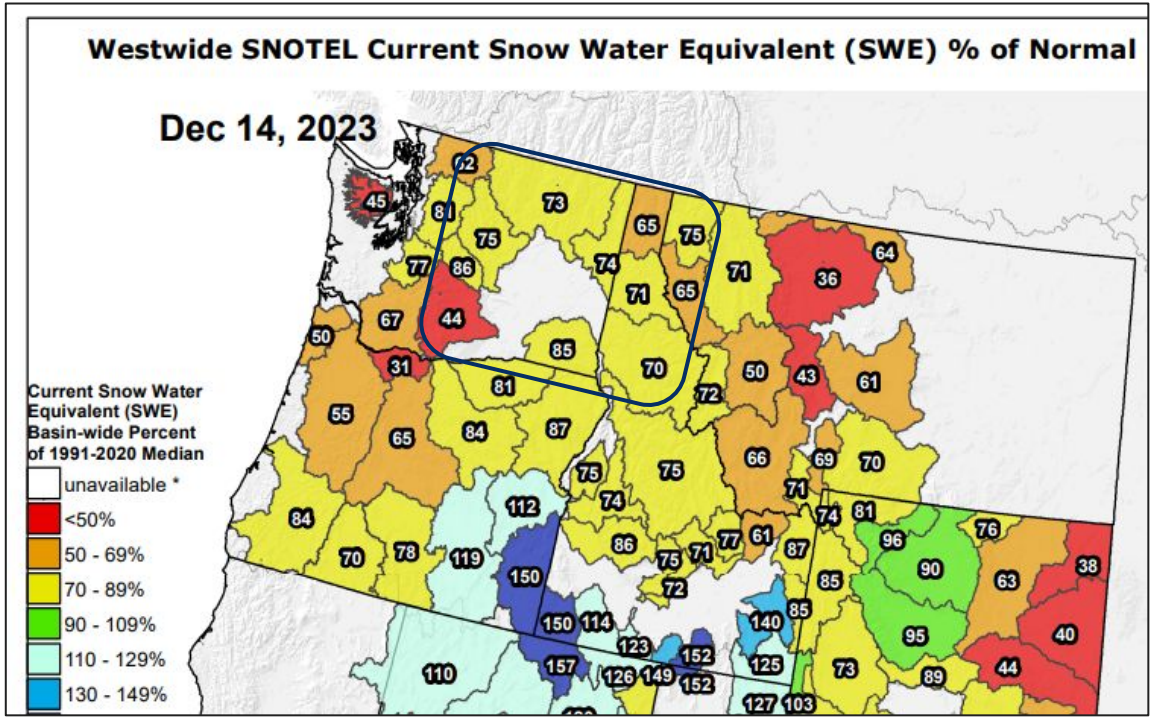


Image Captions:
Westwide SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent percentage .
Daily value ending December 14, 2023

Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- Here is a forecast of precipitation for the Inland NW for the upcoming week.
- Light precipitation will track across the Inland NW the week before the Christmas weekend in the form of lowland rain and mountain snow.
- The 8-14 day outlook leans toward seasonal chances of precipitation through the end of the month with above normal temperatures.
- The threat for heavy precipitation across the Inland NW remains low.

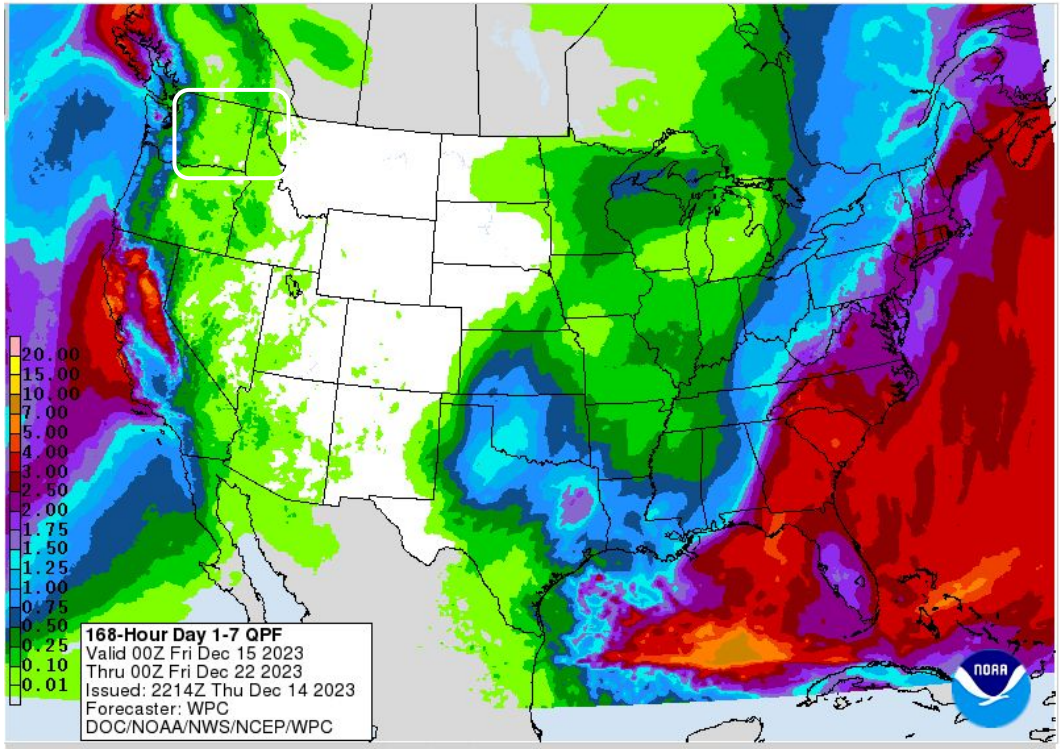


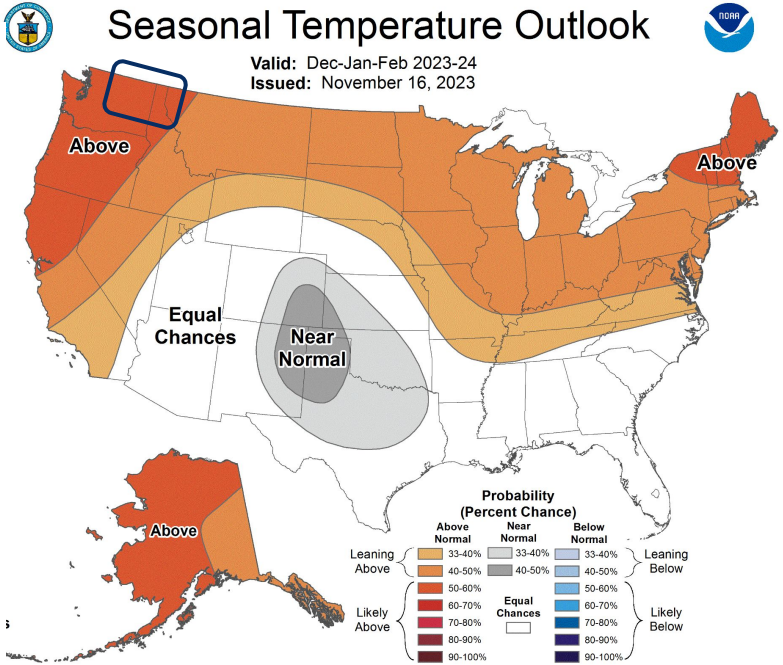
Image Caption: Weather Prediction Center 7-day precipitation forecast valid December 15 through December 22, 2023

Long-Range Outlooks

The latest seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

The DEC-JAN-FEB outlook leans toward a 50-60% chance of above normal temperatures.

Precipitation is leaning toward Equal Chances to a 33-50% of below normal region wide.



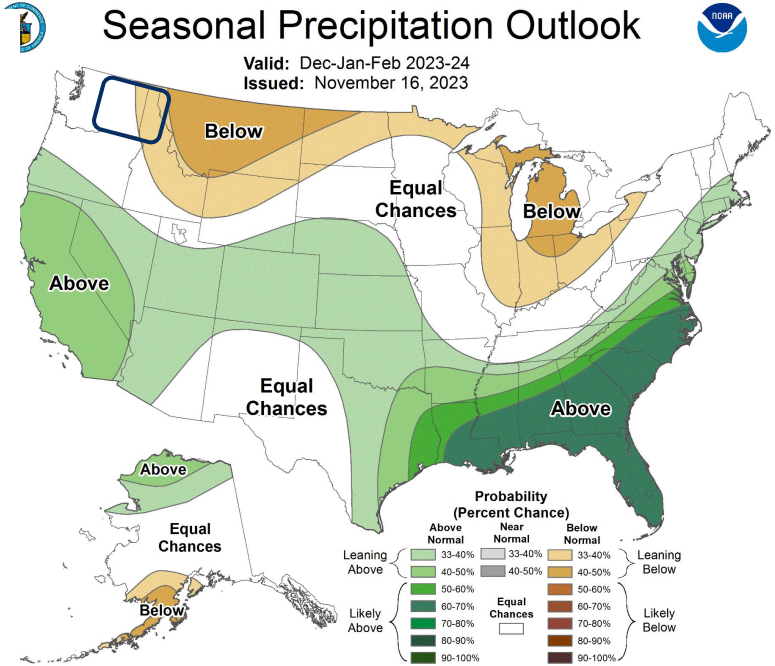


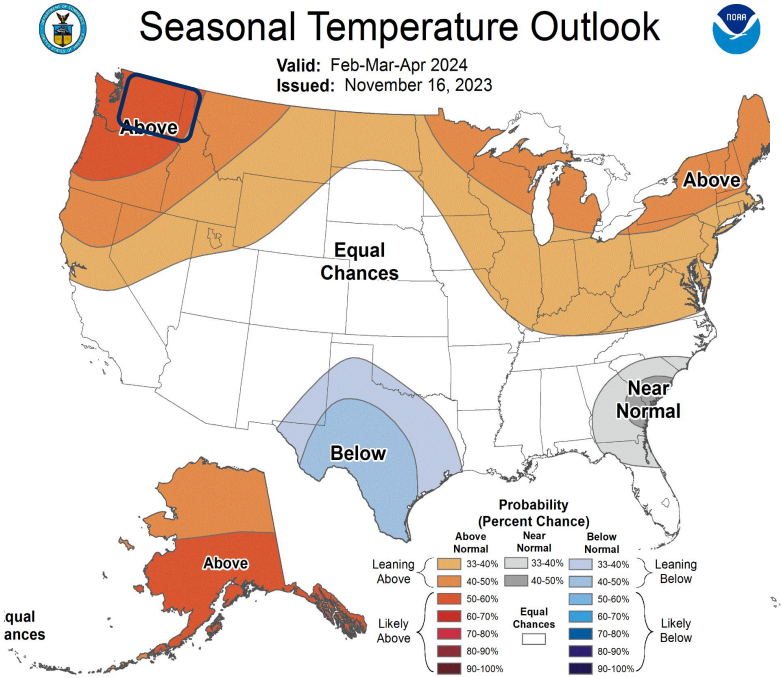
Image Captions:
Left - Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Temperature Outlook.
Right - Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Precipitation Outlook.
Valid Dec-Jan-Feb 2023-24

Long-Range Outlooks

The latest seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

The FEB-MAR-APR outlook continues the mild trend with a 50-60% chance of above normal temperatures.

Precipitation is leaning toward a 33-50% of below normal or more region wide.



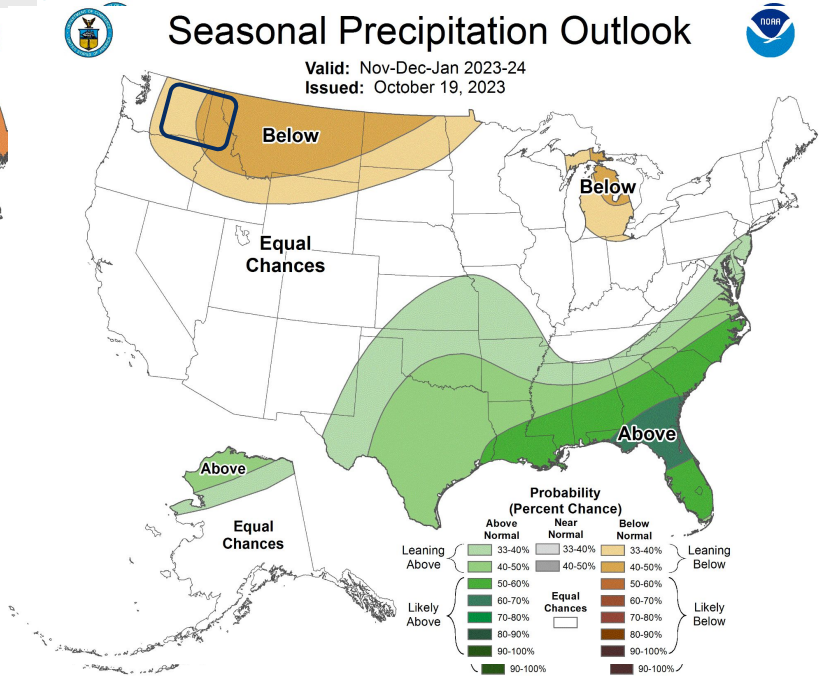


Image Captions:
Left - Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Temperature Outlook.
Right - Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Precipitation Outlook.
Valid Feb-Mar-Apr 2023-24

Drought Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

Areas of drought will persist for the month and the season especially across north Idaho and southeast WA.

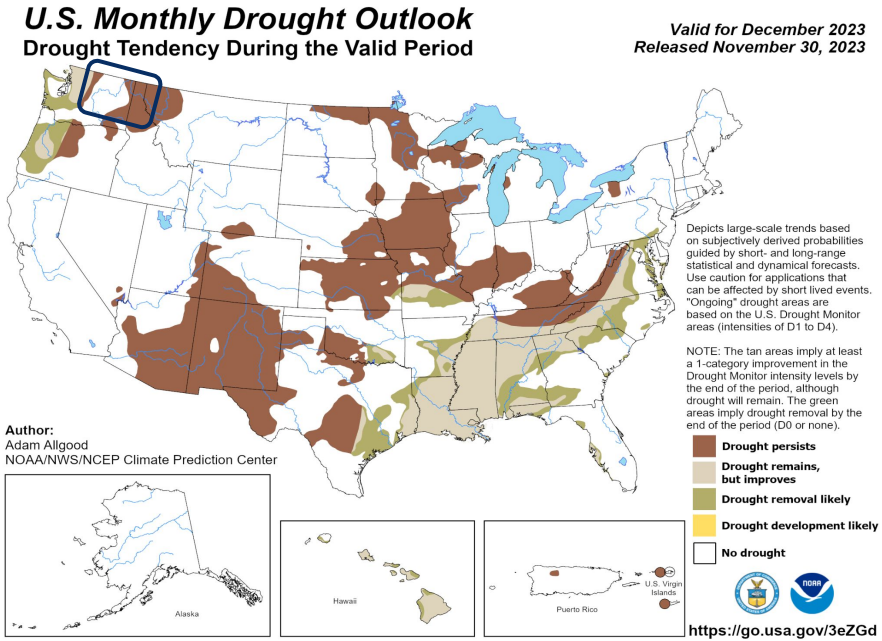


Image Caption:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook Released November 30, 2023 and valid for December 2023

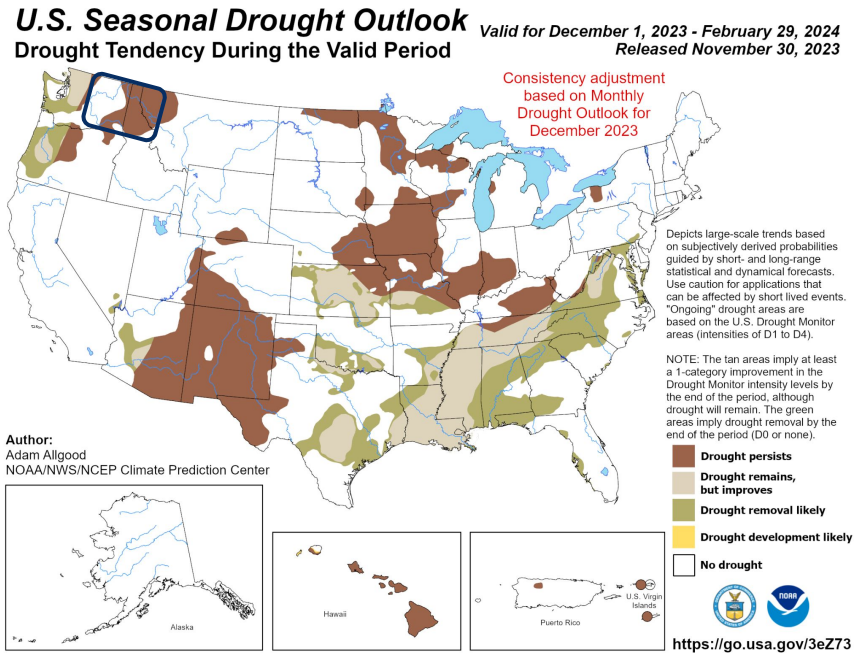


Image Caption:
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook Released November 30, 2023 and valid through February 2024