Drought Information Statement for Northeast Oregon and South Central Washington Valid March 20, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Pendleton, OR

Contact Information: nws.pendleton@noaa.gov

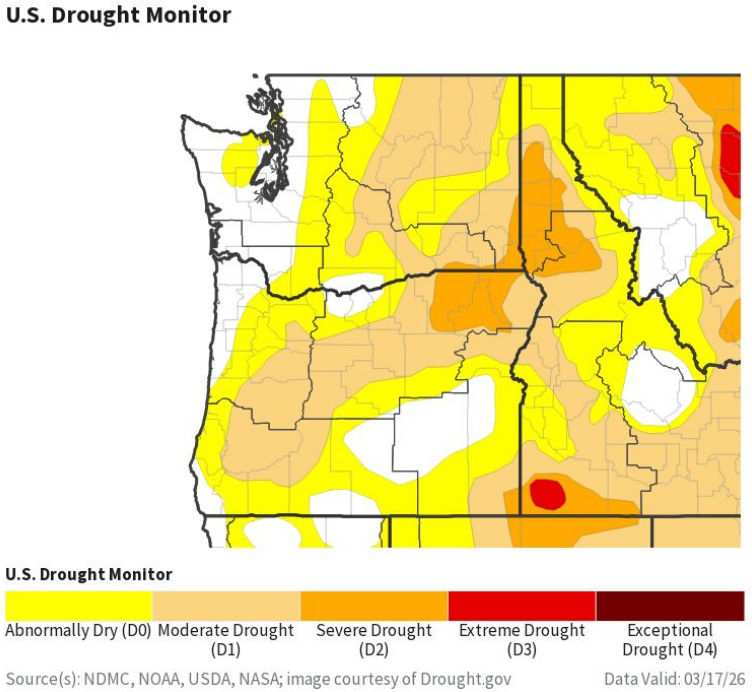
- This product will be updated monthly or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/pdt/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates for regional drought status updates.

- Severe drought continues in northeast Oregon. Normal conditions are present in the Eastern Columbia Gorge area. The rest of the area is in a mix of abnormally dry and moderate drought.
- Near to above normal precipitation (100%-200% of normal) in Washington and northern Oregon and near to below normal (25% to 100% of normal) in the rest of Oregon over the last 30 days
- Drought is expected to either persist or develop over nearly the entire area by the end of June while No Drought conditions are expected in the Cascades of western Kittitas and northwest Yakima counties and in western Franklin and northeast Benton counties through June 2026
- All areas forecast to have normal significant fire potential for mid March - June 2026

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for Northeast Oregon and South Central Washington

- Drought intensity and Extent
  - **D2 (Severe Drought)**: Most of Umatilla and Union, western Wallowa and far southern Walla Walla and Columbia counties
  - **D1 (Moderate Drought)**: Eastern Kittitas, central and northeast Yakima, most of Benton, Walla Walla and Columbia, eastern Franklin, eastern Wallowa, eastern Umatilla, most of Morrow, northern Grant, southern Gilliam, Sherman and Wasco, all of Wheeler and Jefferson, northwest Crook and Deschutes counties
  - **D0: (Abnormally Dry)**: Western Kittitas, much of Yakima, northern Klickitat, western Franklin, portions of Benton, western Morrow, central Gilliam, Sherman and Wasco, southeastern Deschutes and Crook and southern Grant counties
  - **Normal Conditions**: northern Wasco and Sherman, northwest Gilliam and southern Klickitat counties

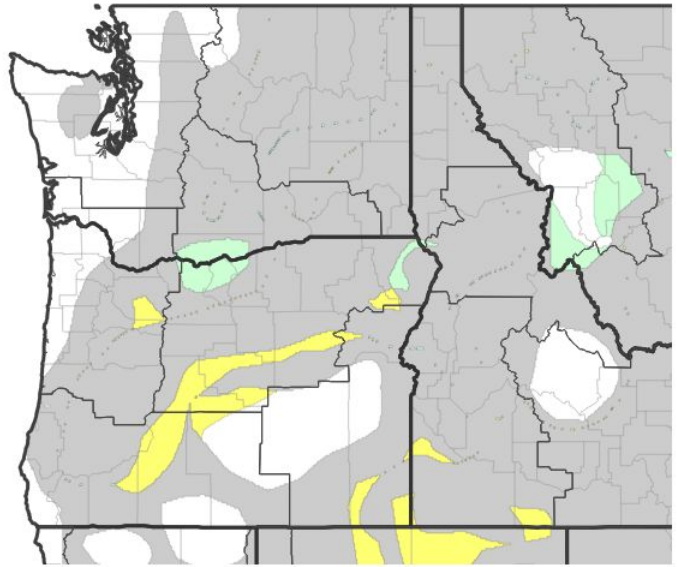


Recent Changes in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 4-week change map for Northeast Oregon and South Central Washington

- Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - **Drought Worsened (1 class)**: far southeast Union and southwest Wallowa, portions of central Grant, far southern Wheeler, north central and southern Crook and southeastern Deschutes counties
  - **Drought Improved (1 class)**: Portions of central Wallowa, northern Wasco and Sherman, northwest Gilliam and southern Klickitat counties
  - **No Change**: All other areas not mentioned above

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map



Drought Change Since Last Week

-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3

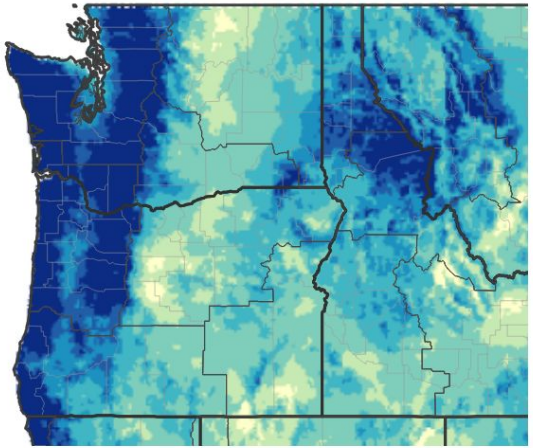
Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/17/26

Precipitation - Last 30 Days

- Near to above normal (100% to 300% of normal) in Washington over the last 30 days
- Near to above normal (100% to 200% of normal) in northern Oregon and in pockets in the mountains and near to below normal (<25% to 100% of normal) in central Oregon, the southern Blue and Ochoco Mountains over the last 30 days
- Highest precipitation amounts were 8+ inches along the WA Cascade crest over the last 30 days
- Generally 2 to 6 inches of precipitation elsewhere over the last 30 days
- Less than 1 inch in central Oregon and parts of the Oregon Columbia Basin over the last 30 days

NWPS 30-Day Precipitation Accumulations (inches)



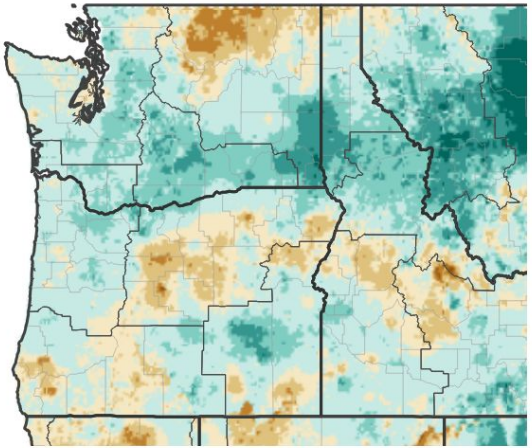
Inches of Precipitation

0 | 0.01 | 0.5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8

Source(s): National Weather Service National Water Prediction Service; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/18/26

30-Day Precipitation: Percent of PRISM Normal



Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

0% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100% | 100% | 150% | 200% | 300%

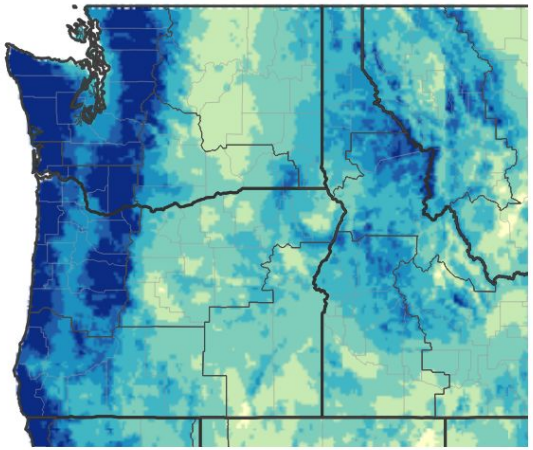
Source(s): National Weather Service National Water Prediction Service; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/19/26

Precipitation - Last 90 Days

- Near to below normal precipitation (25% to 100% of normal) in most mountain areas and central Oregon over the last 90 days
- Near to above normal precipitation (100% to 150% of normal) in most of north central OR and the Columbia Basin over the last 90 days
- Precipitation amounts of 1-12 inches in most areas over the last 90 days
- Wettest locations was 24+ inches over the Cascade crest over the last 90 days
- Driest locations received less than 1 inches in northwest Crook county over the last 90 days

NWPS 90-Day Precipitation Accumulations (inches)



Inches of Precipitation

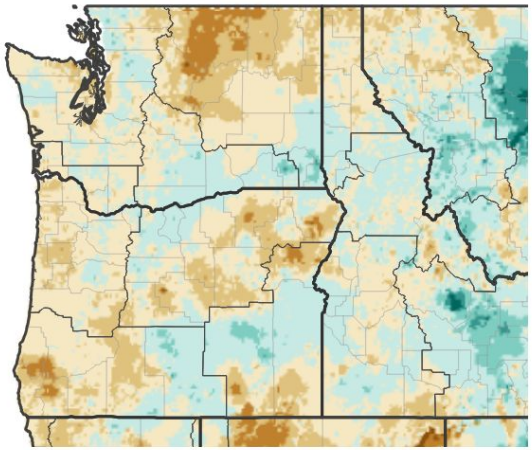
0 0.01 1 3 6

6 12 18 24

Source(s): National Weather Service National Water Prediction Service; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/18/26

90-Day Precipitation: Percent of PRISM Normal



Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

100% 150% 200% 300%

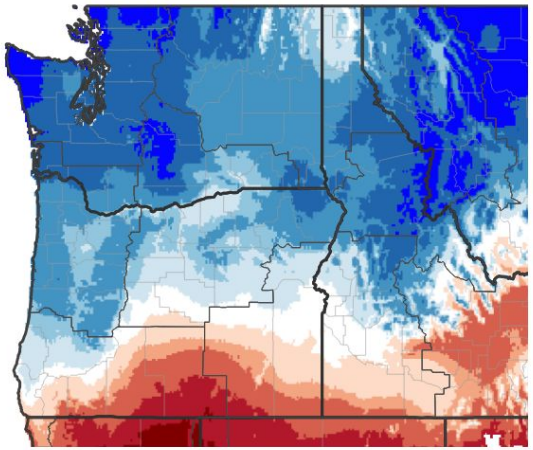
Source(s): National Weather Service National Water Prediction Service ; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/19/26

Temperatures - Last 7 And Last 30 Days

- Near to below normal temperatures (1 degree below to over 8 degrees above normal) over most of the area for the last 7 days
- Near to above normal temperatures (1 degree below to 3 degrees above normal) in portions of Deschutes, Crook and Grant counties for the last 7 days
- Near to above normal temperatures (1 degree below to 3 degrees above normal) in most areas away from the mountains for the last 30 days
- Near to below normal temperatures (1 degree above to 4 degrees below normal) in the Cascades, Yakima Valleys and the eastern Oregon Mountains for the the last 30 days

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)

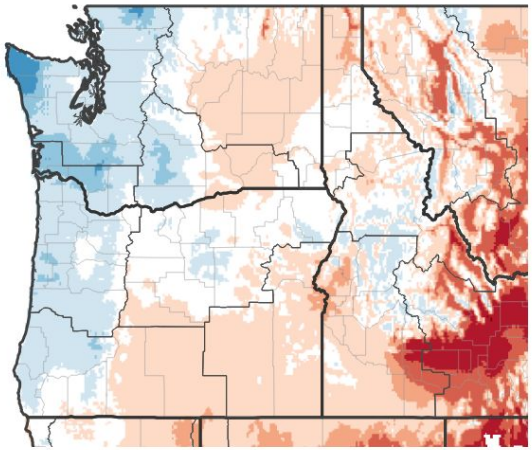
-8 -6 -4 -3 -1 0

0 1 3 4 6 8

Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/16/26

30-Day Temperature Anomaly



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)

-8 -6 -4 -3 -1 0

0 1 3 4 6 8

Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/14/26

Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Above to much above normal streamflows (76th-100th percentile) in WA Cascade and the Walla Walla basins
- Near to above normal streamflows (25th-90th percentiles) in most Columbia Basin basins
- Below to near normal streamflows (10th-75th percentiles) in most Oregon basins

Agricultural Impacts

- Reservoirs in the Cascades are filling (mostly 69% - 98% full - average is 87%) due to recent precipitation. However, mountain snow packs in the Cascades are 65%-71% of normal. Water deliveries to agricultural interests in the Yakima area remain uncertain but will likely be reduced from normal amounts. For other areas, snowpacks are mostly less than 50% of normal. Impacts are uncertain at this time but water availability will likely be below normal.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Normal significant wildland fire potential is present over the entire area from mid March through June 2026.

Other Impacts

- Washington: Washington Drought Emergency Declaration remains in effect through April 7, 2026 for Upper Yakima, Lower Yakima and Naches Watersheds

Mitigation Actions

- Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts as of March 19th, 2026

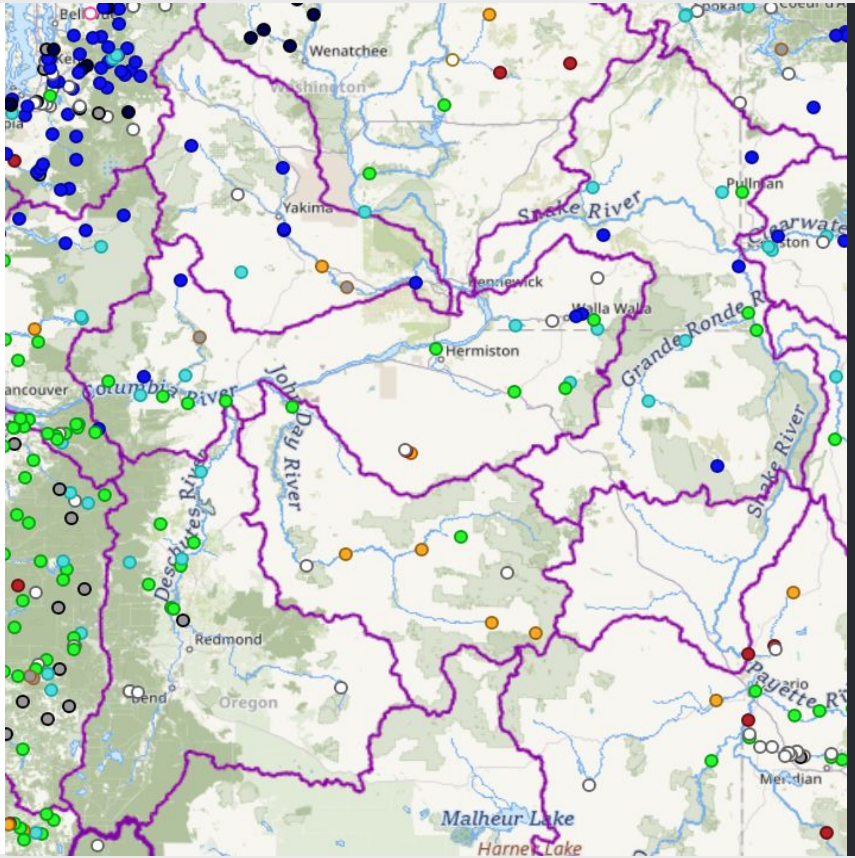
Main Takeaways

- Above to much above normal streamflows (76th-100th percentile) in WA Cascade and the Walla Walla basins
- Near to above normal streamflows (25th-90th percentiles) in most Columbia Basin basins
- Below to near normal streamflows (10th-75th percentiles) in most Oregon basins

Impacts

No known impacts at this time

Reduced streamflow may be detrimental to aquatic species and recreational activities.



Snowpack Conditions and Impacts as of March 17, 2026

Link to the latest Snow Water Equivalent Percent of 1991-2020 Median map

Main Takeaways

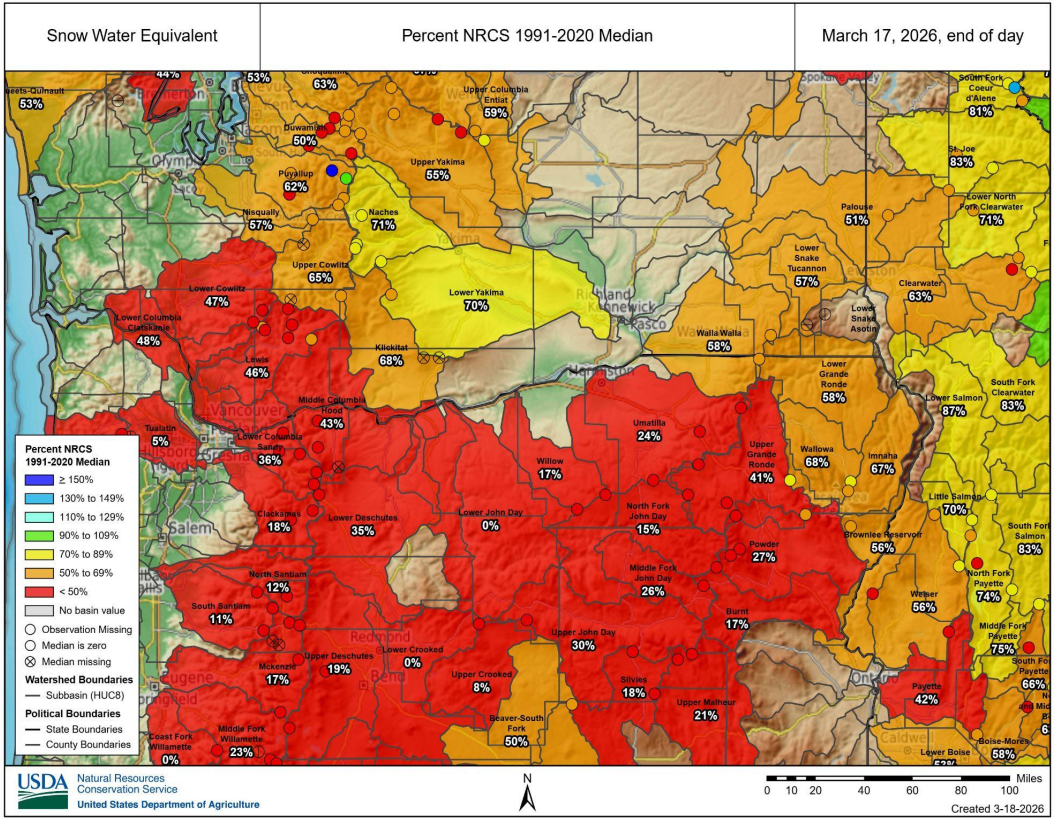
- Snowpacks are below normal (55% to 71%) in WA basin
- Well below normal snowpack values (0%-35%) in most Oregon basins except for below normal snowpacks (58% to 68%) in the Walla Walla and Wallowa County basins

Impacts

No known impacts at this time

Snow water equivalent is related to the amount of water stored in snowpack.

- *Snow can affect the amount of available water for spring and summer snow melt. This can have impacts on water storage, irrigation, fisheries, vegetation, municipal water supplies, and wildfire.*



Water Supply Forecast - April - September 2026

Link to the latest Northwest River Forecast Center Water Supply Forecast.

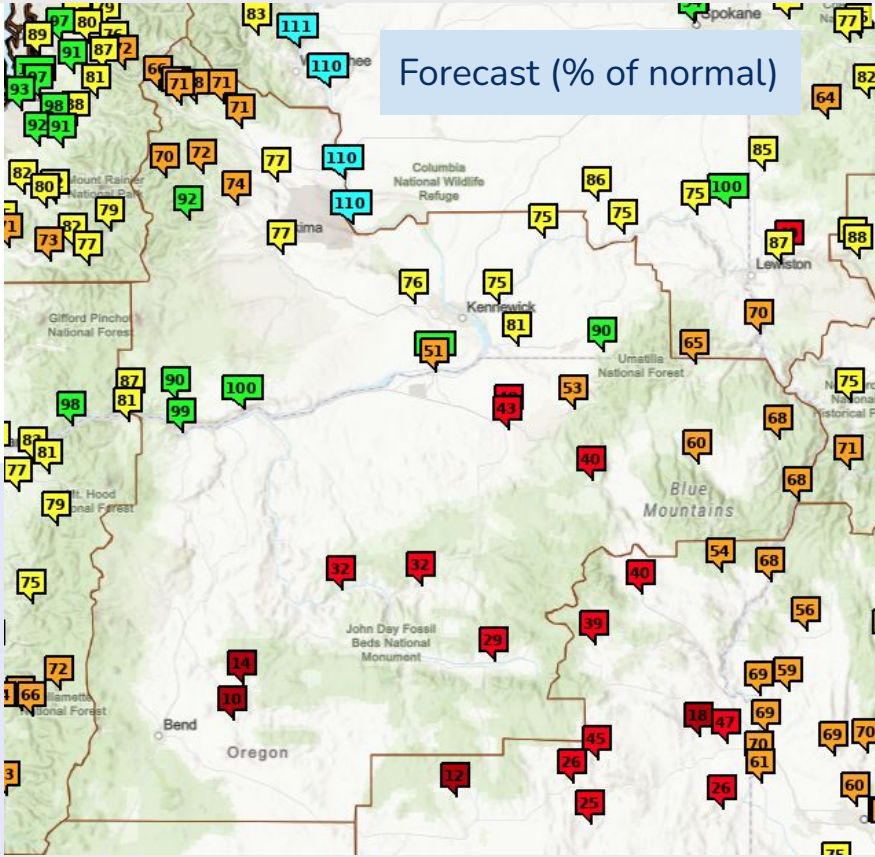
Main Takeaways

- Below to near normal water supply (60% to 110% of the 1991-2020 normal) is forecast over most Washington locations for the April - September 2026 period
- Below normal water supply (50% to 80% of the 1991-2020 normal) is forecast for most locations in Oregon
- Well below normal water supply (10-50% of the 1991-2020 normal) along the John Day River, McKay Creek and in the Crooked River Basin
- These forecasts for 2026 are based on streamflow data from the new water year which started on October 1, 2025

Impacts

No known impacts at this time

Low reservoir levels would be expected to affect agriculture production, fish, and other aquatic species.

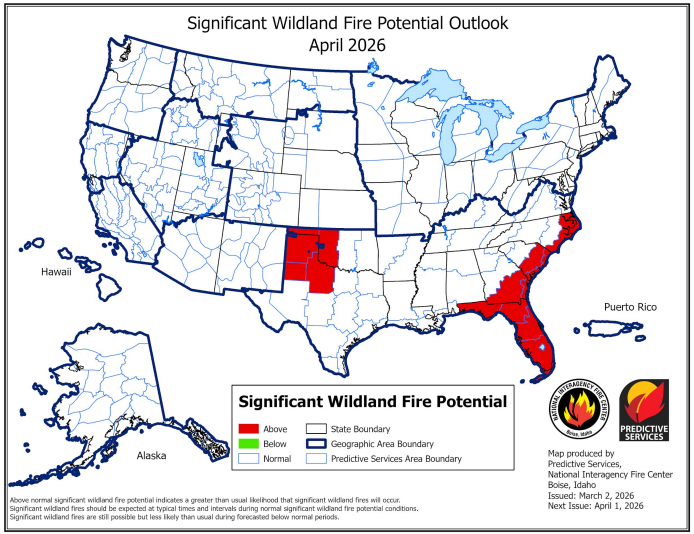


Fire Hazard Impacts

Link to [Wildfire Potential Outlooks from the National Interagency Coordination Center.]

Main Takeaways

- Normal significant wildland fire potential (i.e., normal risk) is forecast for all areas in for March through June 2026



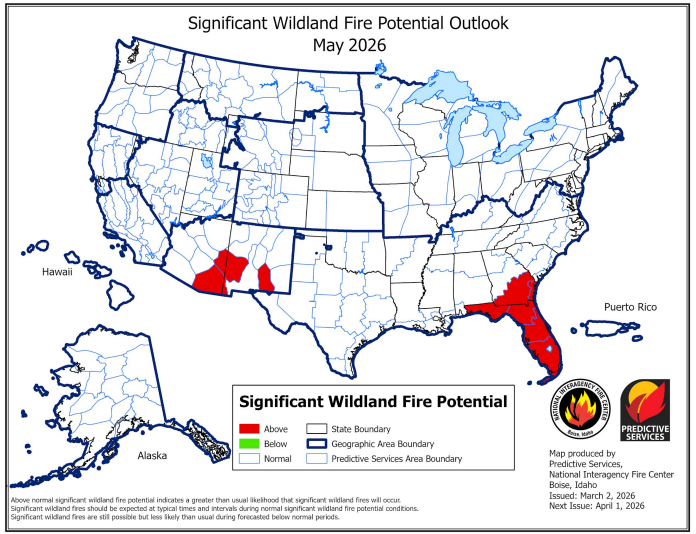
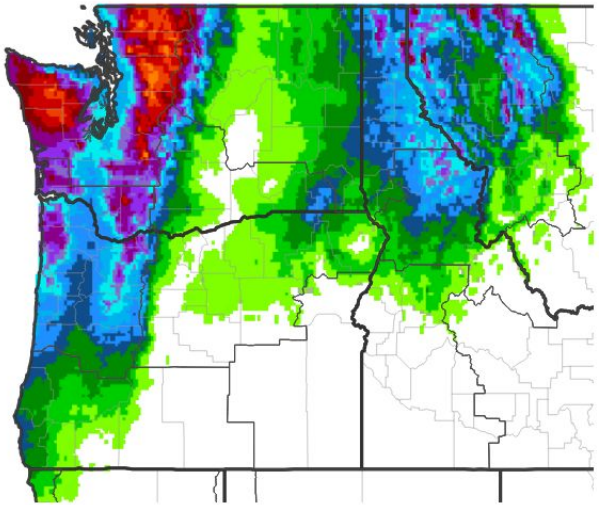


Image Caption:
Left - April 2026
Right - May 2026
Data Courtesy National Interagency Coordination Center
Issued March 2, 2026

Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- A system arriving tonight will bring much cooler temperatures through next week with highs in the mid 50s to mid 60s
- The system will spread moderate rain to the Cascades and northern Blue Mountains and lighter rain to the southern Blue Mountains and eastern Columbia Basin through Saturday night
- After a couple of dry days, another system will bring light rain to the Cascades and northern Blue Mountains Tuesday and Wednesday
- Rain amounts for the week will be 1-2 inches in the Cascades, up to 1 inch in the northern Blue Mountains and a quarter inch or less in the rest of the area

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for March 20, 2026–March 27, 2026



Predicted Inches of Precipitation

0 0.01 0.1 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75

1.75 2 2.5 3 4 5 7 10 15 20

Source(s): National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

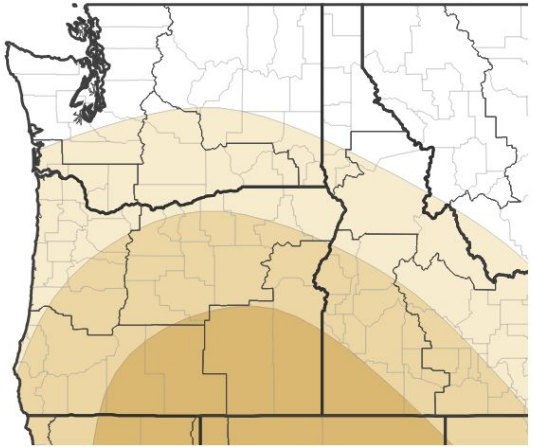
Last Updated: 03/20/26

Monthly Outlook

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

- A 33% to 50% chance of above normal temperatures expected across most of the area except near normal temperatures expected northwest Yakima and most of Kittitas Counties
- A 33% to 60% chance of below normal precipitation except 50% to 60% in far southeast Deschutes and Crook counties and near normal conditions along the Cascades in northwest Kittitas county

Monthly Precipitation Outlook for April 1, 2026–April 30, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

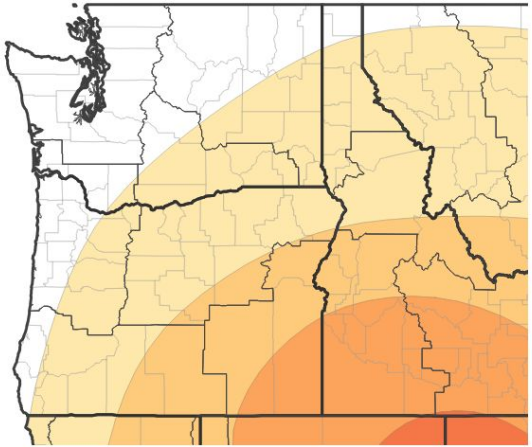
33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 03/19/26

Monthly Temperature Outlook for April 1, 2026–April 30, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50%

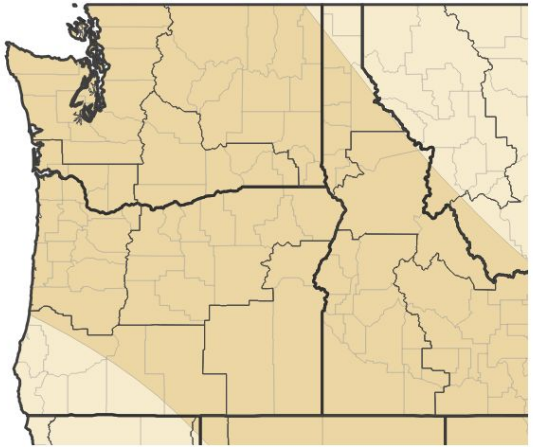
Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 03/19/26

Three Month Outlook

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

- A 40% to 60% chance of above normal temperatures expected across the entire area
- A 40% to 50% chance of below normal precipitation expected across the entire area

Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for April 1, 2026–June 30, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

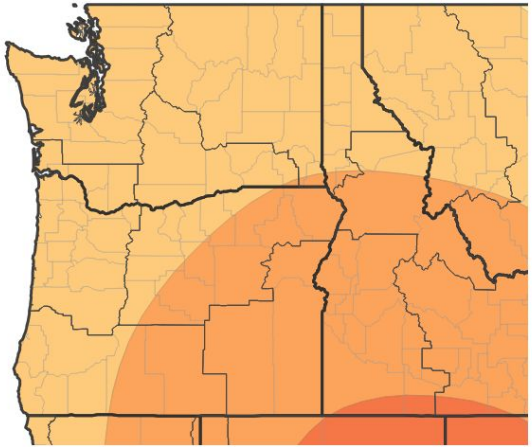
33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 03/19/26

Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for April 1, 2026–June 30, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 03/19/26

Drought Outlook

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

Main Takeaways

- Drought is expected to either persist or develop over most of the area by the end of June
- No Drought conditions are expected to continue in the Cascades of western Kittitas and northwest Yakima counties and in western Franklin and northeast Benton counties during mid March through June 2026

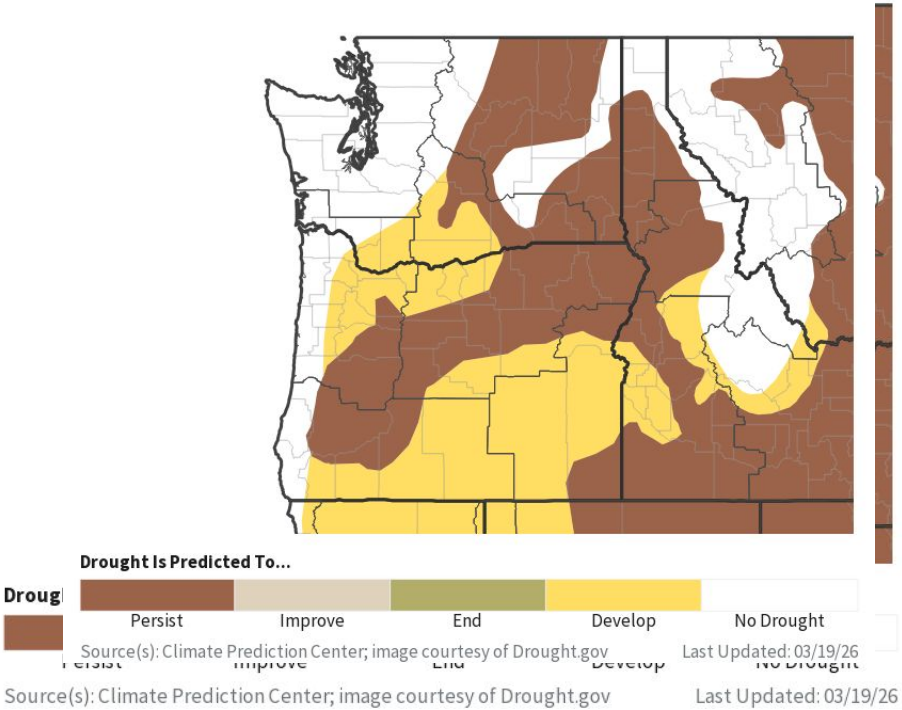
Possible Impacts

- Any lingering drought may result in reduced streamflows and low reservoir levels which may result in a possible reduction of agricultural yield, crop loss, and poor pasture conditions where irrigation water is not available.

Links to the latest:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for March 19, 2026

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for March 19, 2026–June 30, 2026



Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov
Last Updated: 03/19/26