



Monthly Climate Report

NWS Reno NV

Issued: 5/7/2026



Weather Synopsis & Highlights:

April 2026 was a stark departure from the record warm March with temperatures near average across all areas, which were several degrees cooler than March. Northeast CA, northwest NV and southern Churchill County leaned a bit (up to ~2 °F) warmer than average, while parts of Mineral, Lyon, Storey and Douglas counties and the eastern Sierra (Alpine and Mono counties) leaned a bit (up to ~2 °F) cooler (Figure 1). Precipitation varied across the region with many areas near average. The exceptions were central Mono County and much of Mineral and Lyon counties which were drier than average (50-70%, with a few sites near 25% of average). Meanwhile, northeast CA, northwest NV and the Tahoe basin were wetter than average (110-150% with a few sites near 200% of average), resulting in modest improvements to the Sierra snowpack by mid-April, after being nearly depleted toward the end of March (Figure 2).

The storm that arrived at the end of March continued through the first two days of April, bringing an additional 6-12" of snow above 7000 feet around the Tahoe basin (Photo 1), with spotty light rain across parts of northwest NV and northeast CA. High winds were the main impact for far western NV and around the Tahoe basin for April 1-2, with peak gusts of 60-95 mph, and Sierra ridge gusts up to 135 mph. A 78 mph gust at Reno Airport on the 1st was one of the strongest gusts (tied for 6th) measured in the airport's history.

Below average temperatures continued through the 3rd, followed by warmer temperatures from the 4th through 7th (highs mainly in the 70s for lower elevations) with dry weather prevailing during these days.

The weather pattern then became more active from the 8th through mid-April (Photo 2). Showers and isolated thunderstorms returned mainly to eastern CA and northwest NV on the 8th-9th with spotty light rainfall. The strongest storms formed on the afternoon of the 10th across parts of west central NV, with three Severe Thunderstorm Warnings issued (the only such warnings so far this year) for parts of Churchill, Lyon, Storey and Washoe counties (Photos 3-4). Frequent lightning, accumulations of small hail, bursts of heavy rainfall up to 0.50", and outflow gusts of 50-60 mph were reported with the strongest storms.

Snow began in the Sierra during the late afternoon and night of the 10th, with accumulations of 4-8" mainly above 7000 feet. Persistent bands of heavier snow spread across the Sierra through the weekend of the 11th and 12th, with overall storm totals of 1-2 feet down to lake level in the Tahoe basin and 2 to 3.5 feet above 7000 feet (Photo 5). Scattered light snow with accumulations up to 2" extended into far western NV on the morning of the 12th. Precipitation totals from this storm were light (generally less than 0.25") across lower elevations, while 1.5-3 inches fell in the eastern Sierra/Tahoe basin with locally up to 5" near the crest.

A short break in storm activity followed on the 13th-14th, although a magnitude 5.7 earthquake centered about 12 miles ESE of Silver Springs NV just before 630 PM produced notable shaking across much of western NV but minimal damage was reported. Multiple weaker aftershocks continued near this initial quake location through late April, with the most notable being a magnitude 4.8 shortly before 1030 AM on the 23rd.

A cold front brought wind gusts of 45-55 mph to the Surprise Valley, northwest and far western NV for the afternoon-evening of the 15th, with colder than average temperatures (highs mainly in the 50s) prevailing through the 17th. Most communities in western NV and northeast CA saw sub-freezing temperatures on the morning of the 17th, with a relatively rare Freeze Warning issued in April due to an early start to gardening, agriculture and irrigation resulting from the March heat event.

Warmer temperatures quickly returned from the 18th through 20th (70s in lower elevations) with dry conditions prevailing. The next storm moved into the Sierra and western NV on the 21st, bringing strong wind gusts of 50-65 mph across west central NV and Mono County. Around 1 foot of snow with liquid amounts up to 1.2" fell along the Sierra crest near and above 7000 feet, with lighter amounts up to 3" down to lake level in the Tahoe basin and up to 4" along higher elevations of US-395 in Mono County. An area of rain moved across much of western NV, with totals ranging from a few hundredths up to 0.40". Lingering rain and mountain snow showers and chilly temperatures with highs only in the 50s for lower elevations and 40s near the Sierra continued through the 22nd.

A short break in storm activity followed on the 23rd, then a series of weak spring-type storm systems moved across the region from the 24th through 28th. Showery and breezy conditions with light mountain snow and isolated lightning occurred mainly in the afternoon and evening hours during this time frame, with temperatures cooling to below average from the 26th-28th. Most areas received spotty light rainfall amounts (trace amounts to 0.20"), except for heavier totals of 0.50-1.00" across parts of northern Lassen County and southern Mono County during the weekend of the 25-26th.

April closed out on a dry and warmer note, with temperatures climbing to the lower 70s for western NV and lower-mid 60s for Sierra valleys by the 30th.

Hydrology:

No flooding occurred in April. The best hydro news for the month of April is that it was not a repeat of March! Cooler and wetter conditions delayed the rapid meltout, at least for the higher elevations in the Sierra. Mountain precipitation for April as measured by SNOTEL was nearly double normal in the Sierra and near normal in northern Nevada (Figure 3). While the higher elevation Sierra SNOTEL sites actually gained water equivalent in April, all basins still remain well below normal as of May 1st, with the driest conditions persisting in N. Nevada (Figure 4). April opened with a cooler storm adding a bit of snow, followed by a stronger storm around mid-month especially in the Sierra (Figures 5, 6 and 7). Benefits of these storms were short lived outside of the Sierra, but the snow covered area had an increase from late March into the 3rd week of April (Figure 8).

There has been a very stark contrast this year between the water year mountain precipitation to date which has been near normal (Figure 9), and the very low snowpack conditions due to warm conditions, more rain than snow that was exacerbated by the early melt in late February through March. Mountain soil moisture has tapered off with most SNOTEL sites snowfree, but remains near normal for the E. Sierra, and has dropped below normal for the Humboldt (Figure 10). Satellite derived soil moisture shows most areas outside of higher mountains dropping below normal with a few exceptions, most notably to the south in Esmeralda and N. Nye counties (Figure 11). Water year to date flows are mostly well above normal for streams draining the Sierra (Figure 12 left side) due to early snowmelt and more rain than snow over the winter. Since most of this streamflow occurred before April 1st, the April to July water supply outlook is well below normal throughout the area and much of that flow occurred during April (Figure 12 right side). On a more positive note, reservoir

storage is generally in excellent condition with the notable exception of Rye Patch on the lower Humboldt which is only about 14% of capacity and 47% of median (Figure 13).

Drought Update:

While April helped a bit to delay the inevitable, early snowmelt will lead to a prolonged snow free and low flow season and will make 2026 one for the record books as a warm snow drought. Some modest high flows are likely to return to high elevation basins south of Lake Tahoe in early May, other areas are well past their snowmelt peak flows. The US Drought monitor introduced moderate drought into most of the northern half of the service area in April due to early snowmelt and drying conditions (Figure 14). The lack of snow is at least partially balanced by favorable precipitation, and in some areas streamflows. The drought monitor is intended to reflect current conditions and not future forecast conditions, but may see significant changes if warm and dry conditions continue through the spring and early summer. The very warm water year temperatures (Figure 15) are in a large part to blame for the limited snowpack. Area wide water year precipitation is displayed in Figure 16.

Additional Information on Drought and Climate:

[Report Drought conditions here](#)

[Nevada statewide Drought update](#)

[NV State Climate Office](#)

[NV Living with Drought](#)

[Drought Monitor](#)

[New Drought.gov](#)

[California Nevada Drought Early Warning System](#)

[NOAA CPC Drought page](#)

[CNAP Drought tracker](#)

[California Nevada River Forecast Center](#)

[WRCC Drought Tracker](#)

[WRCC Enso page](#)

[WRCC Monthly Climate Summaries](#)

[Evaporative Demand Drought Index](#)

[US Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

Contact NWS Reno Climate Team

rev.climate@noaa.gov 775-673-8100

<https://www.weather.gov/rev/>

Photos:

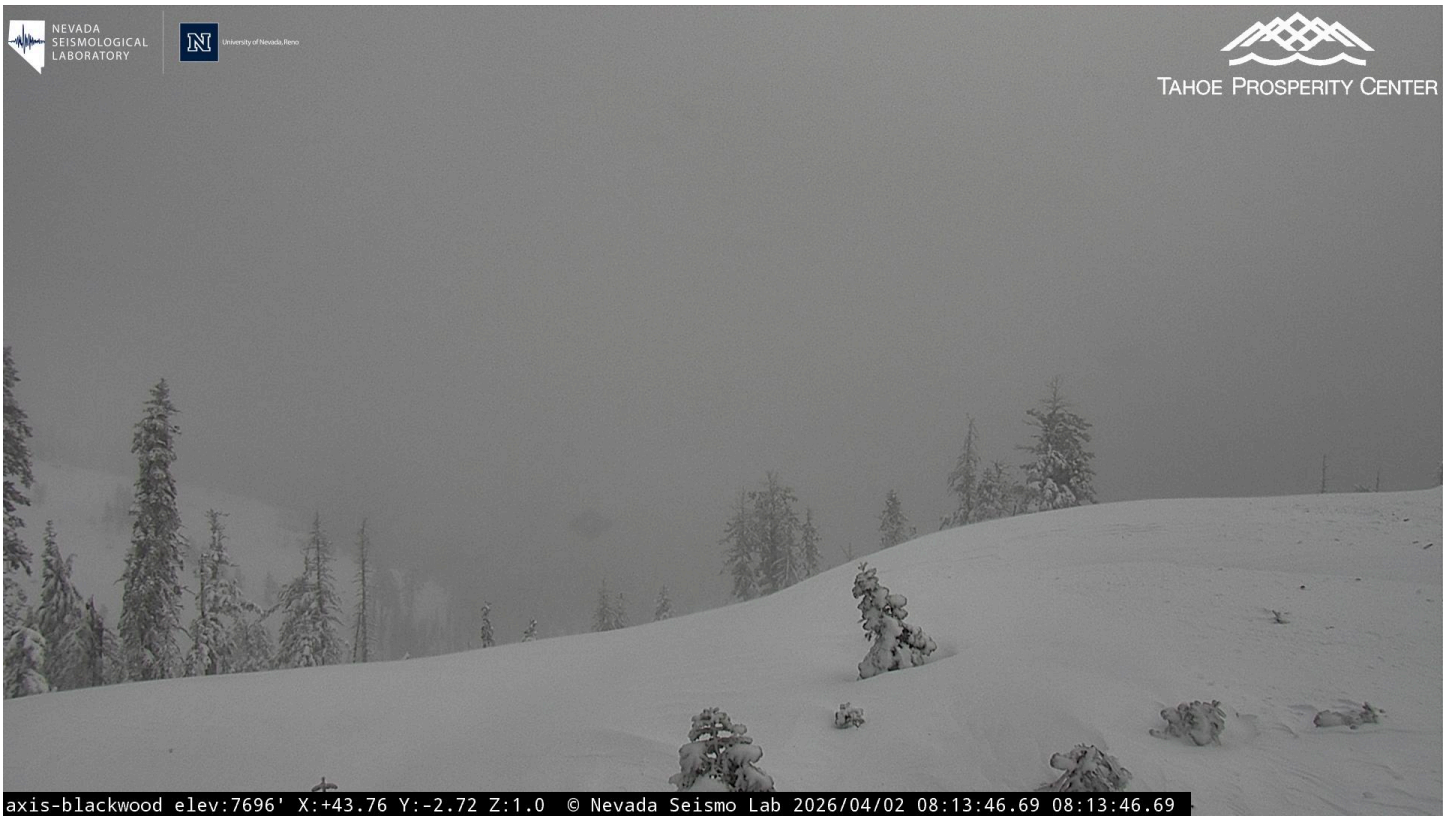


Photo 1: Fresh snowfall west of Homewood CA, 4/2 (University of NV).



Photo 2: Sunset outside NWS Reno, 4/9 (NWS Reno web camera)



Photo 3: Spanish Springs double rainbow, 4/10 (NWS Reno Facebook page)



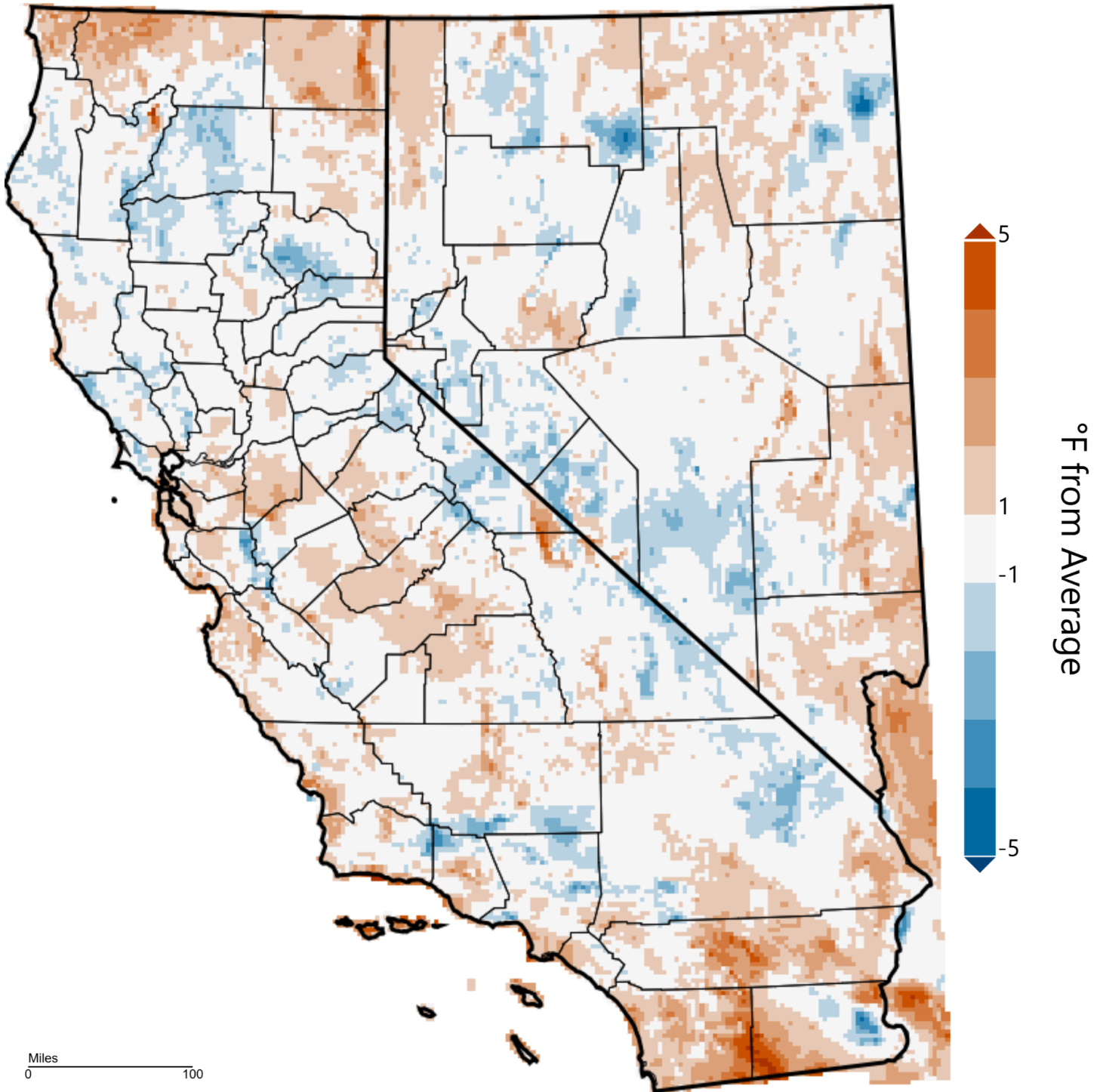
Photo 4: Accumulating small hail in Dayton NV, 4/10 (NWS Reno Facebook page)



Photo 5: Mt. Rose Highway snow-covered road, 4/12 (NV DOT)

Figures:

California-Nevada - Mean Temperature April 2026, Departure from 1991-2020 Average

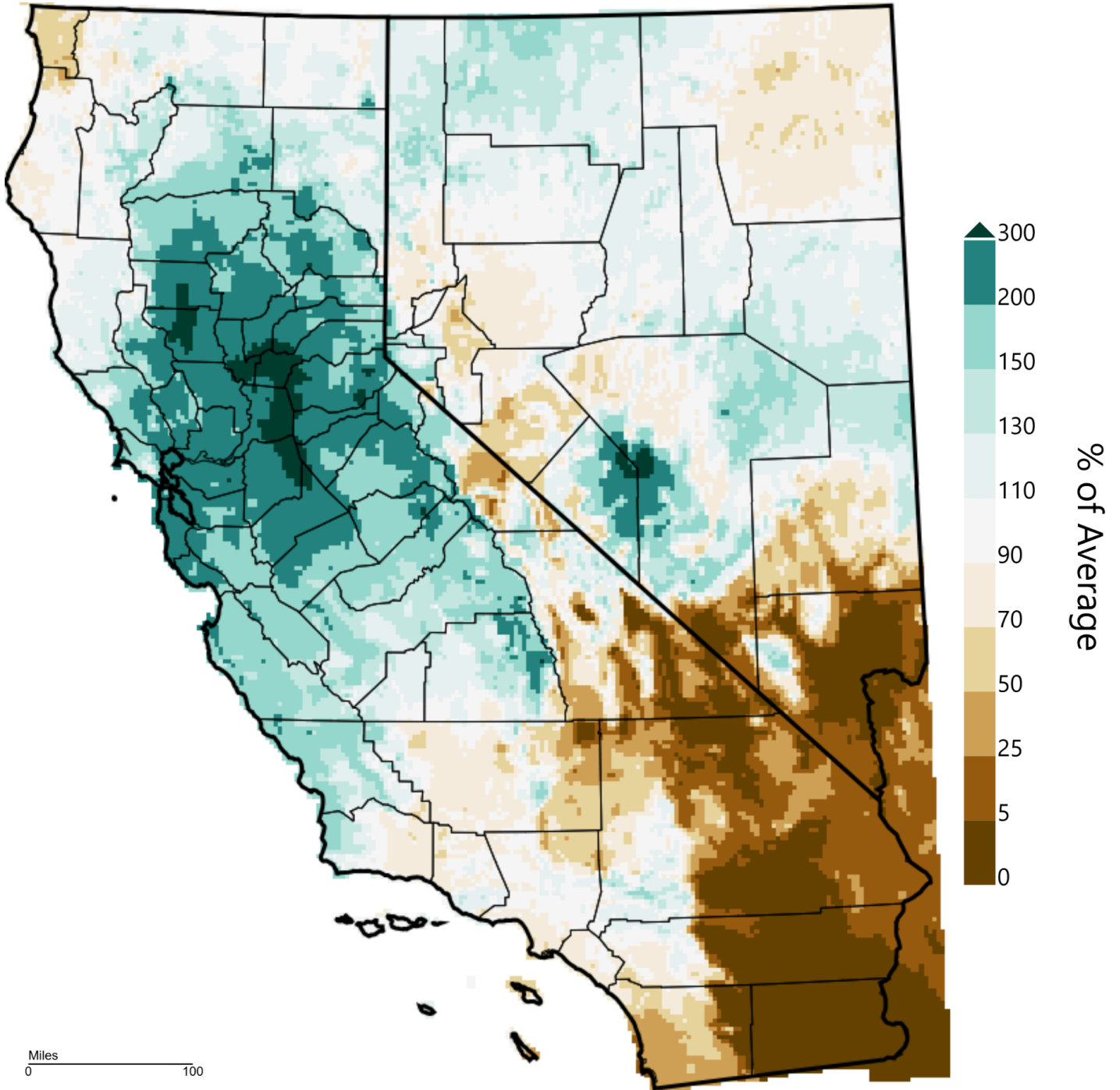


WestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 May 2026

Figure 1: Departure from normal temperatures for April 2026. ([WWD T](#))

California-Nevada - Precipitation

April 2026, Percent of 1991-2020 Average



WestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 May 2026

Figure 2: Percent of normal precipitation for April 2026. ([WWDI](#))

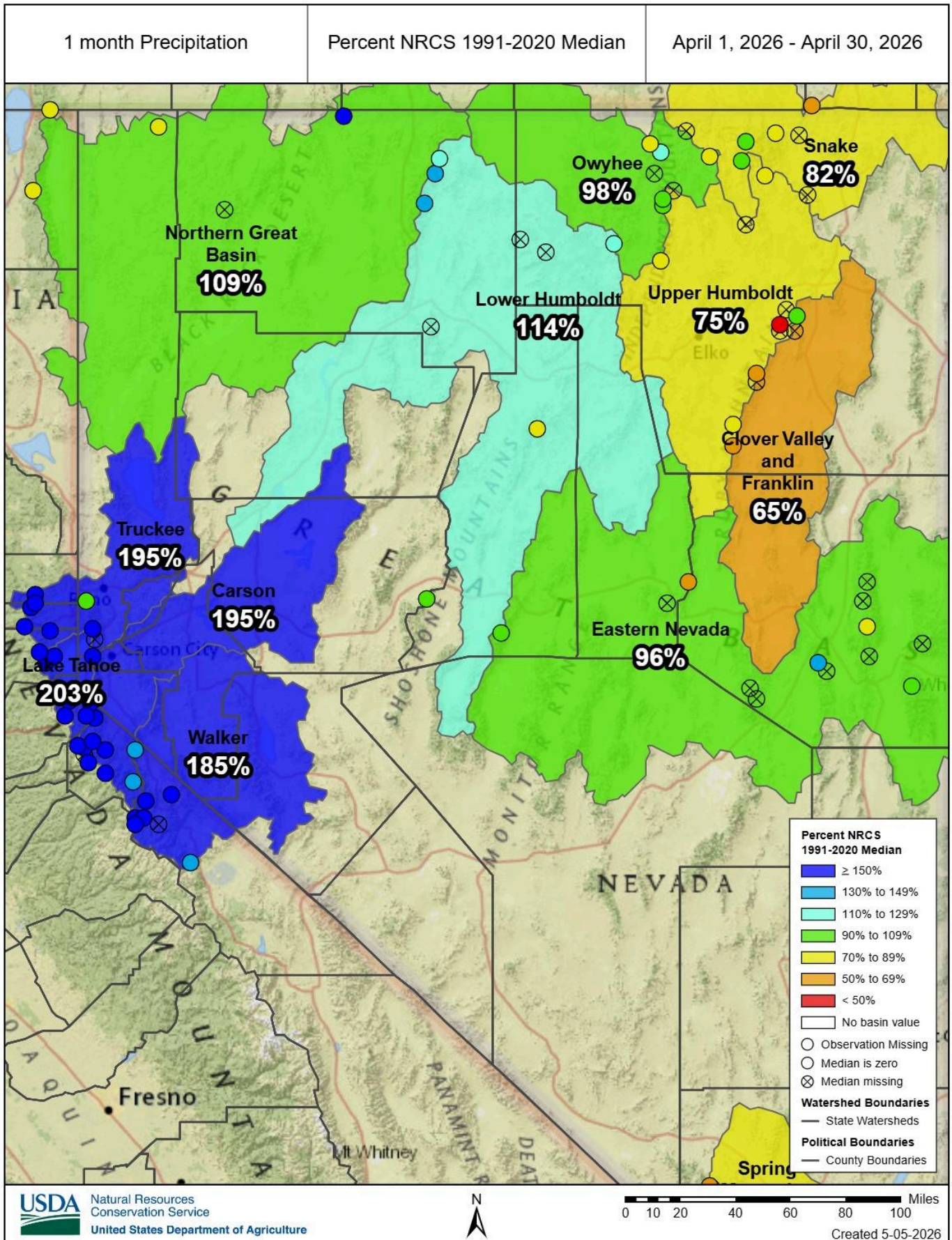


Figure 3. SNOTEL mountain precipitation for April 2026.

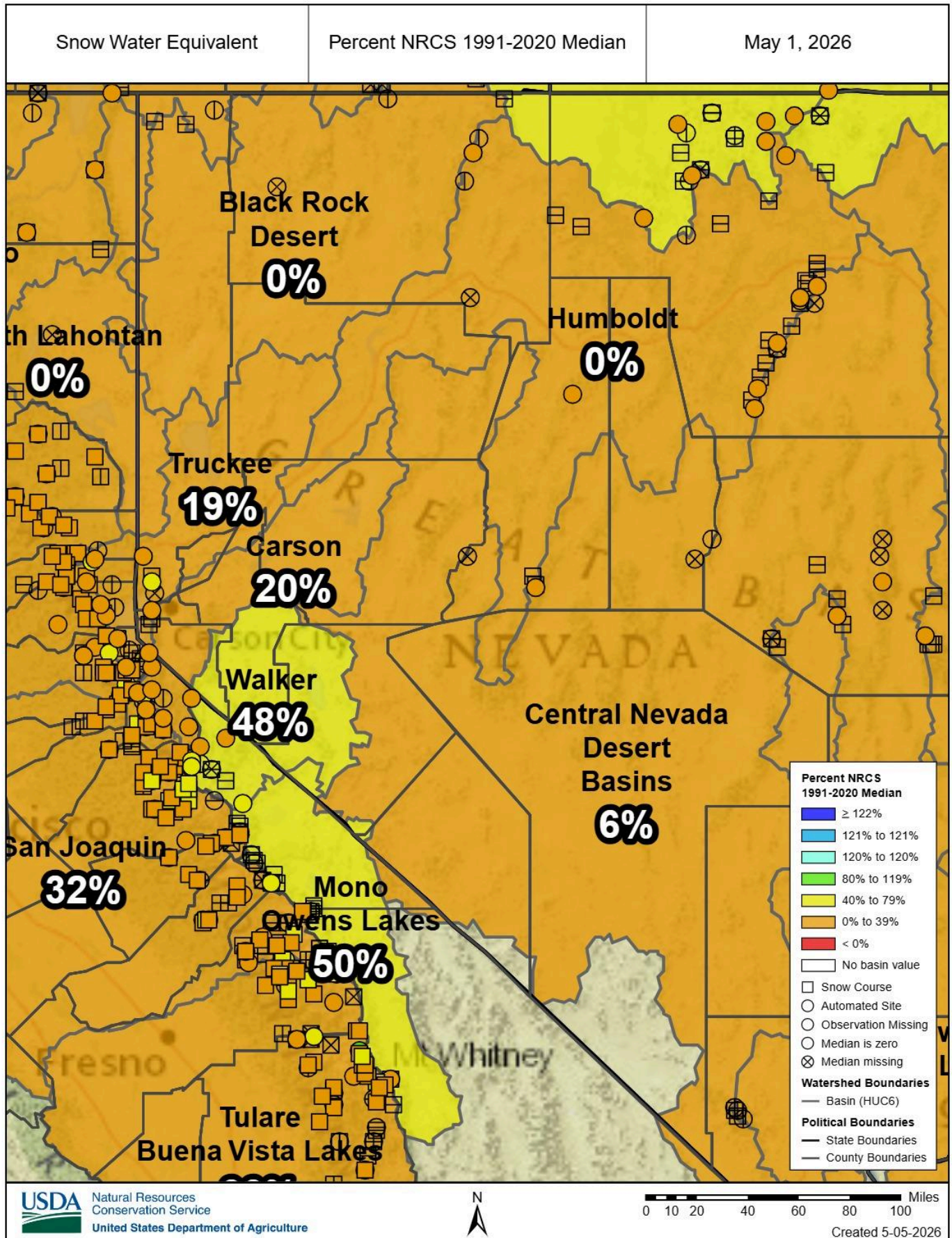


Figure 4: May 1st SNOTEL snow water equivalent (SWE) percent of median.

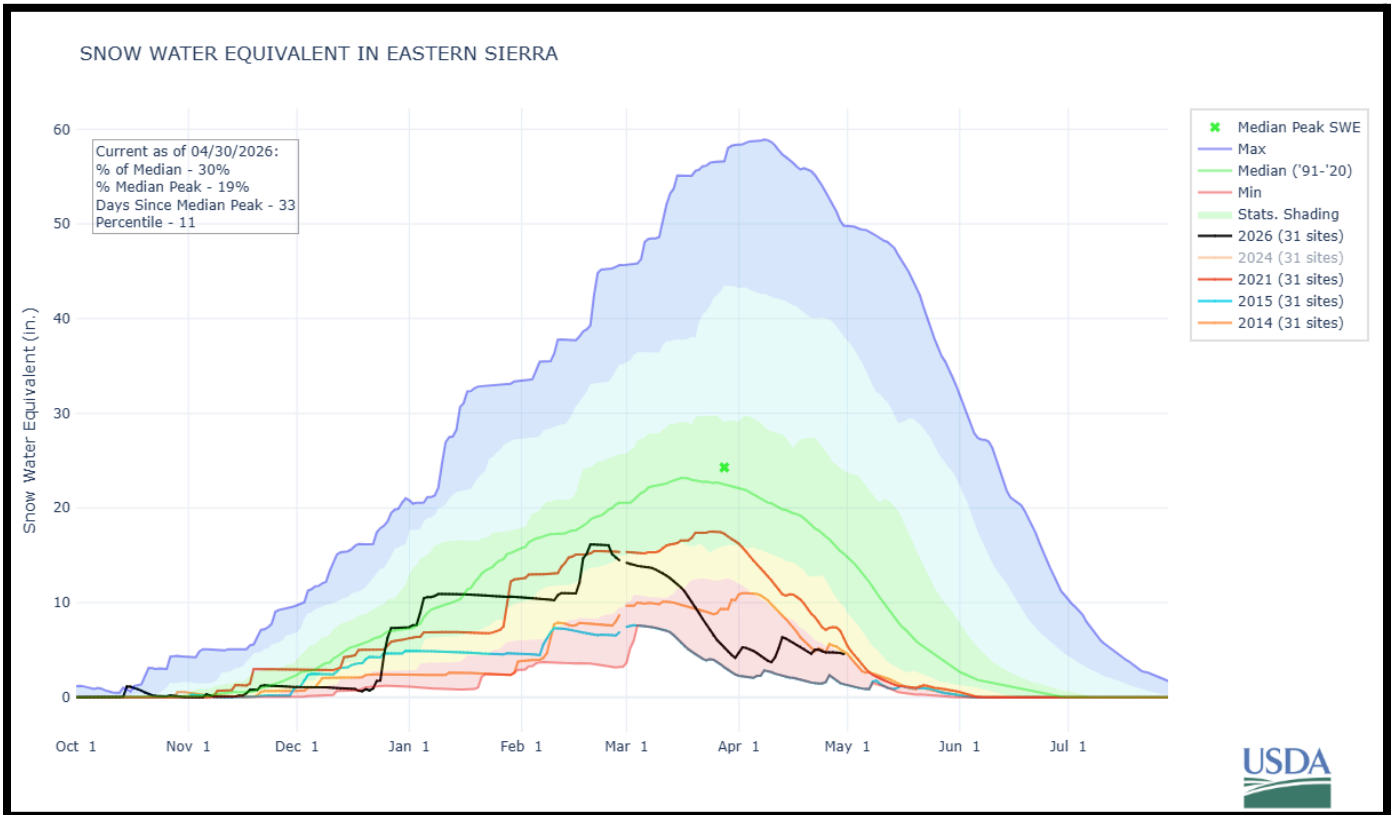


Figure 5. [NRCS SNOTEL snow water equivalent \(SWE\)](#) for the combined Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins. This year in black with several other recent below normal years for reference. Note this area has the lowest snowpack conditions as of the end of April since 2015, but is now very similar to 2021 and 2014.

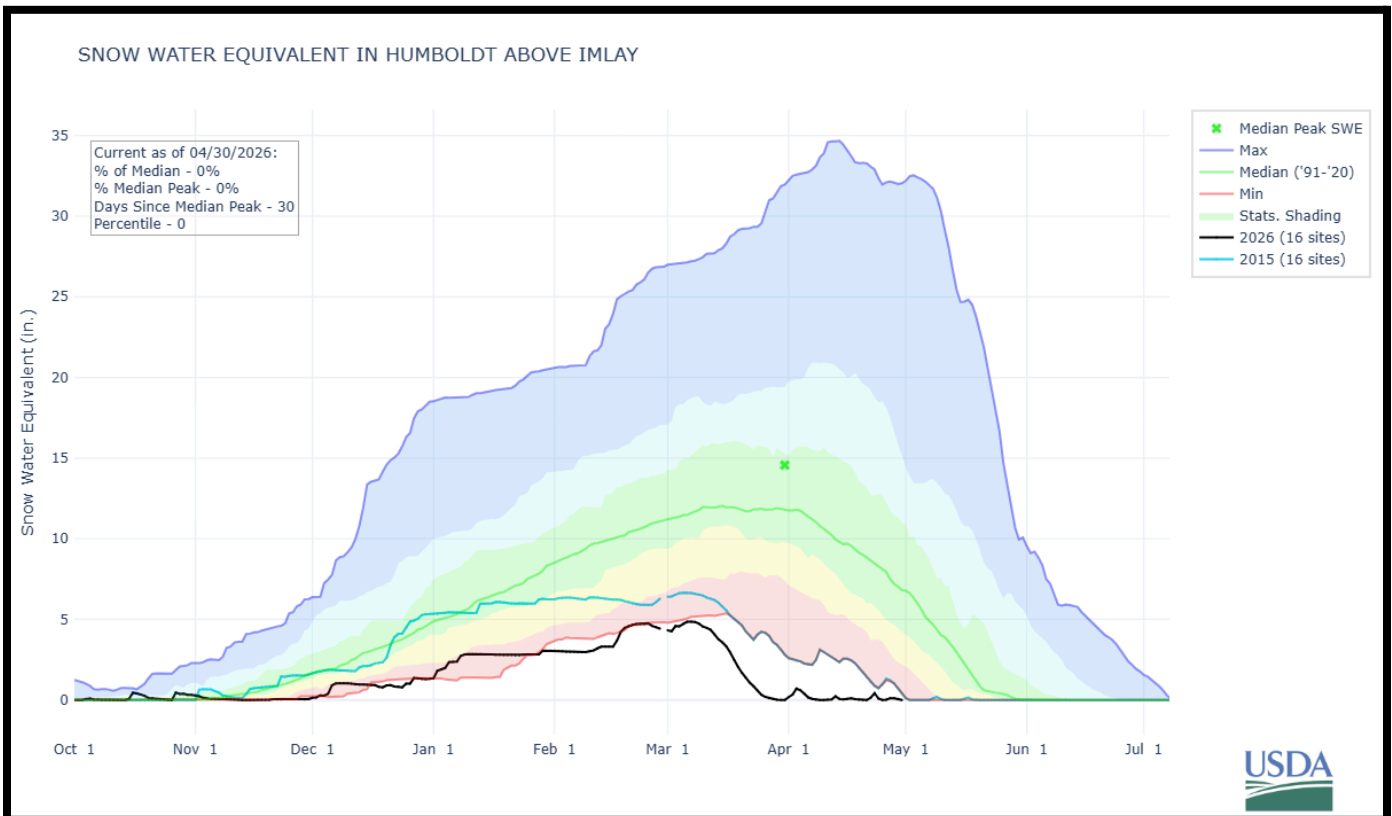


Figure 6. [NRCS SNOTEL snow water equivalent \(SWE\)](#) for the Humboldt with this year in black, and other very dry years for comparison. Snowpack melted out before April 1st, about a month earlier than the previous record early melt out of 2015! A few small April storms briefly added some shallow snow to the basin.

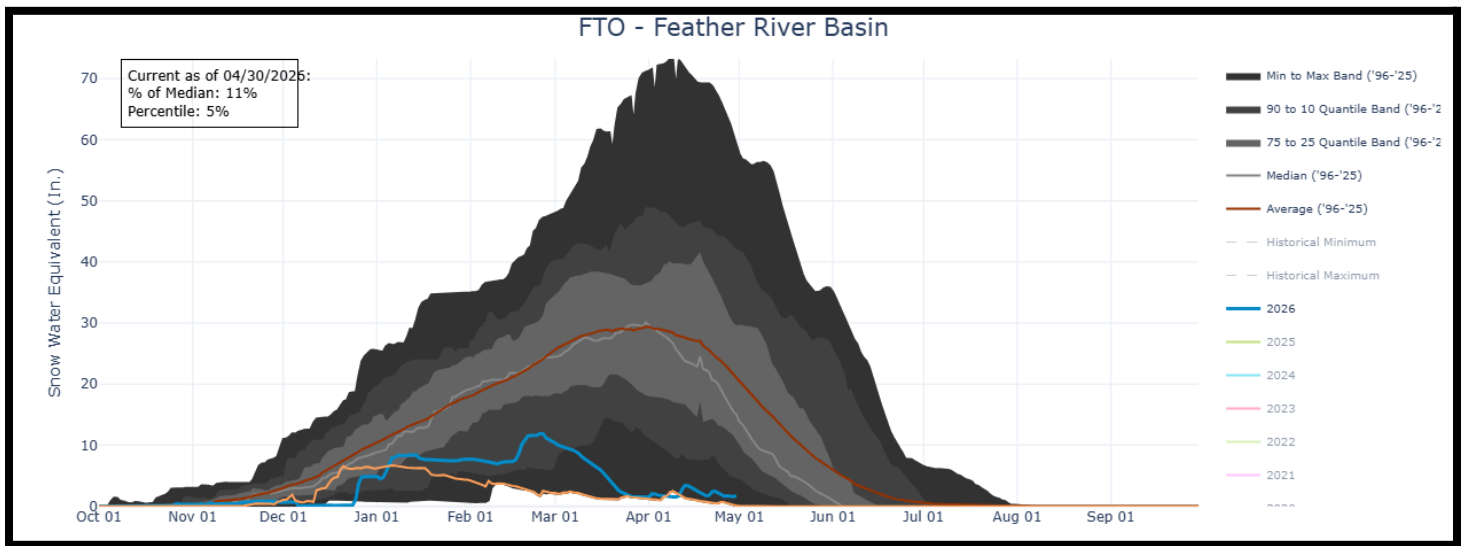


Figure 7. [Feather Basin California Cooperative Snow Survey snow water equivalent \(SWE\)](#). 2026 water year in blue and 2015 water year in orange.

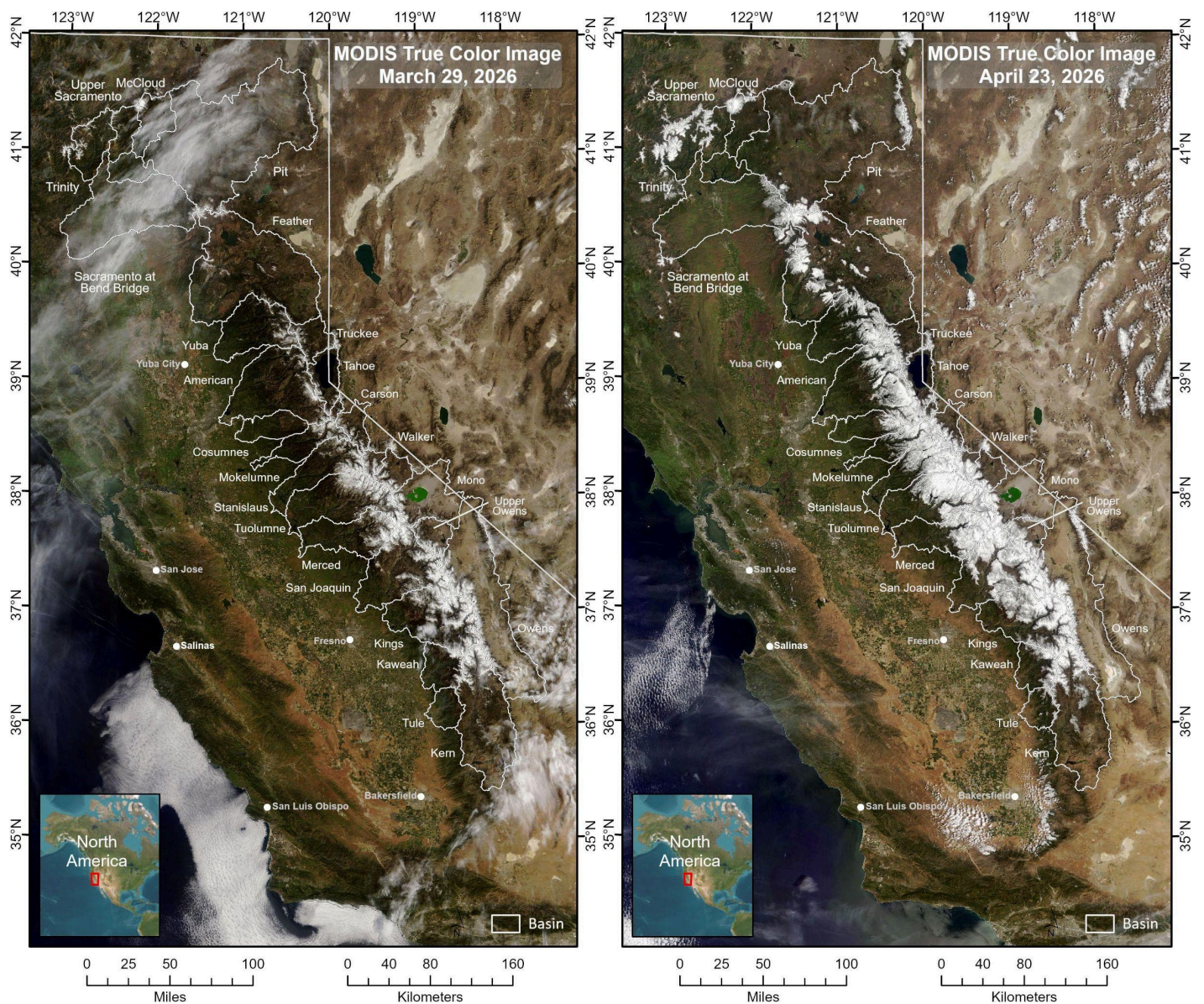


Figure 8. True color near cloud free MODIS imagery for 3/29/26 and 4/23/26 from [University of Colorado/INSTAAR Real-Time Spatial Estimates of Snow-Water Equivalent reports](#)

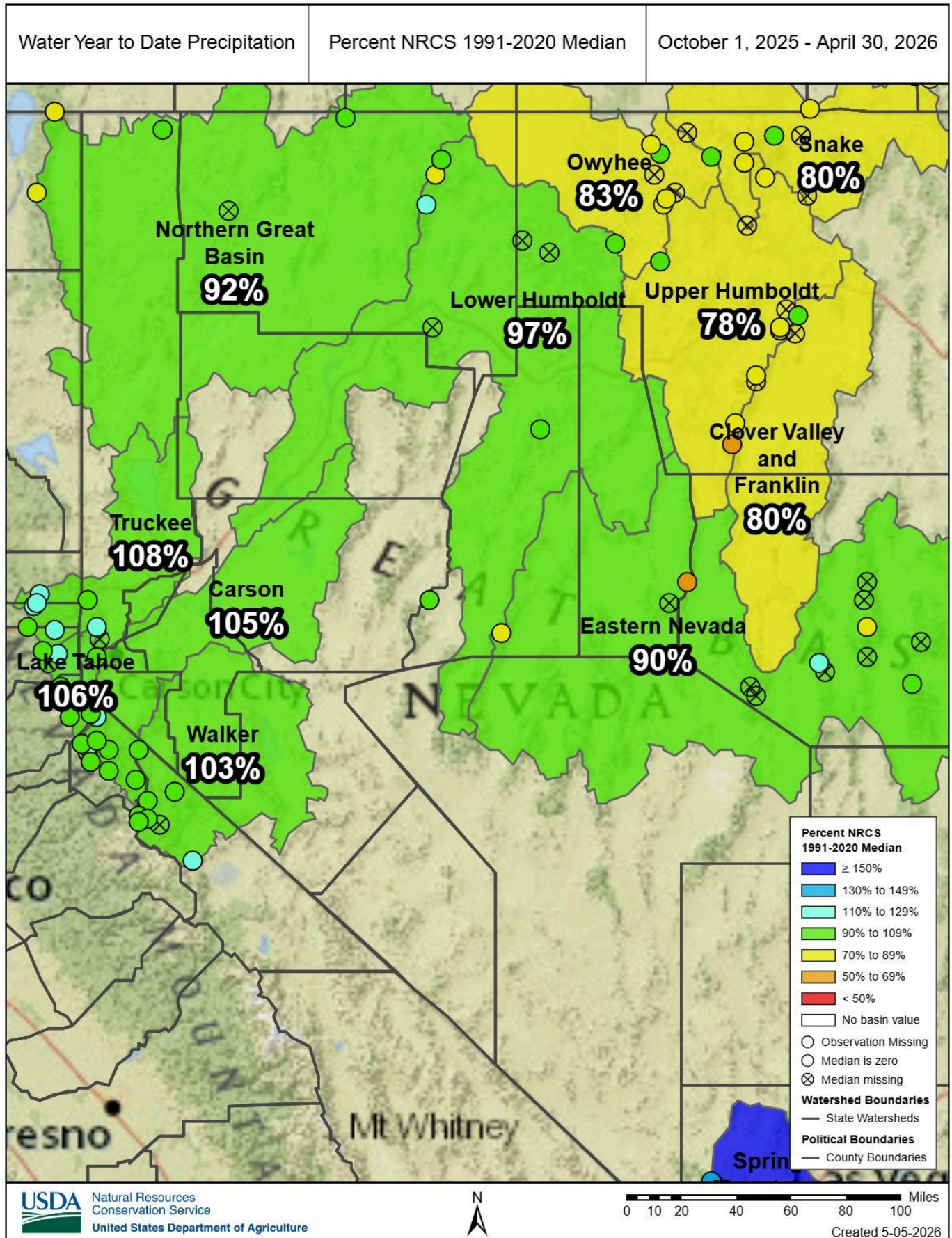


Figure 9. [NRCS SNOTEL basin Water year precipitation as % of Median](#) through April 30th, 2026

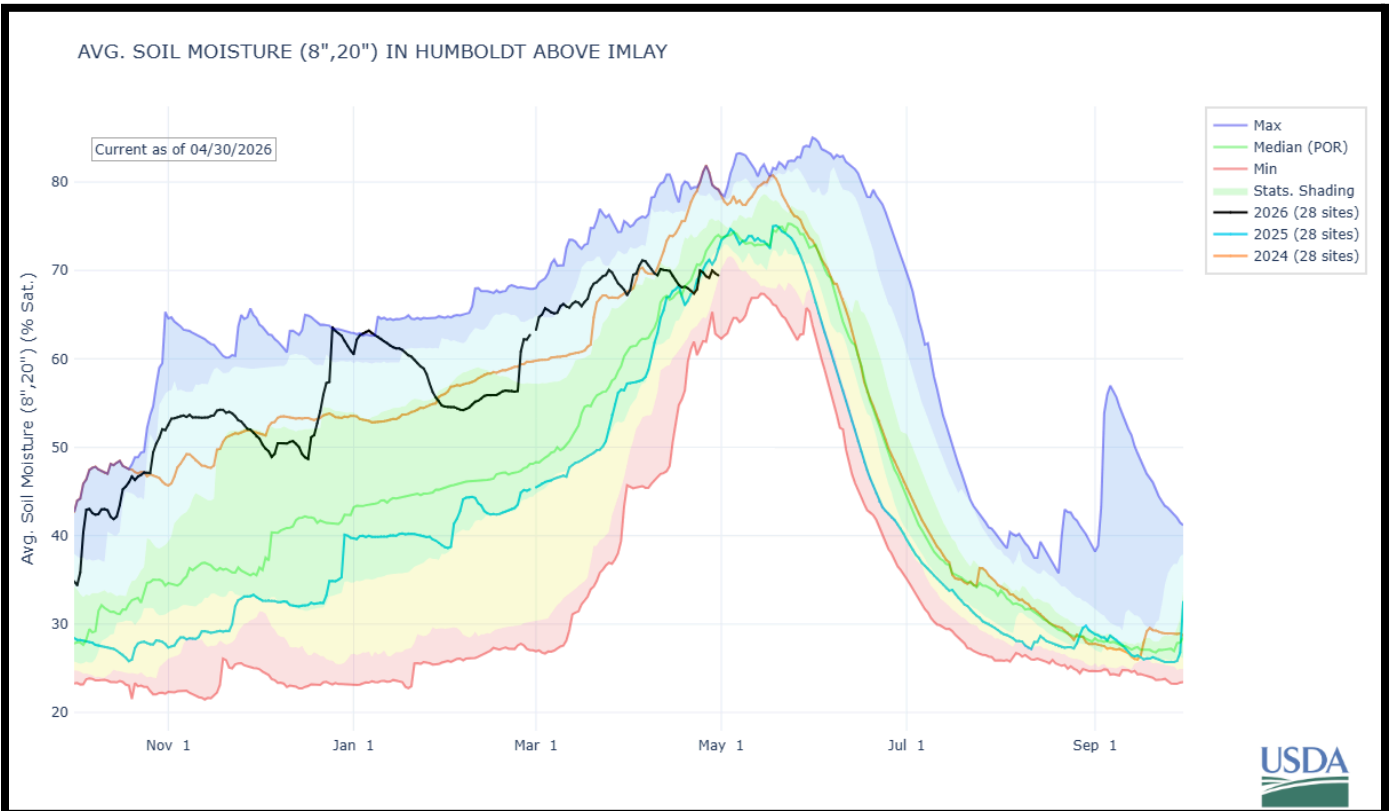
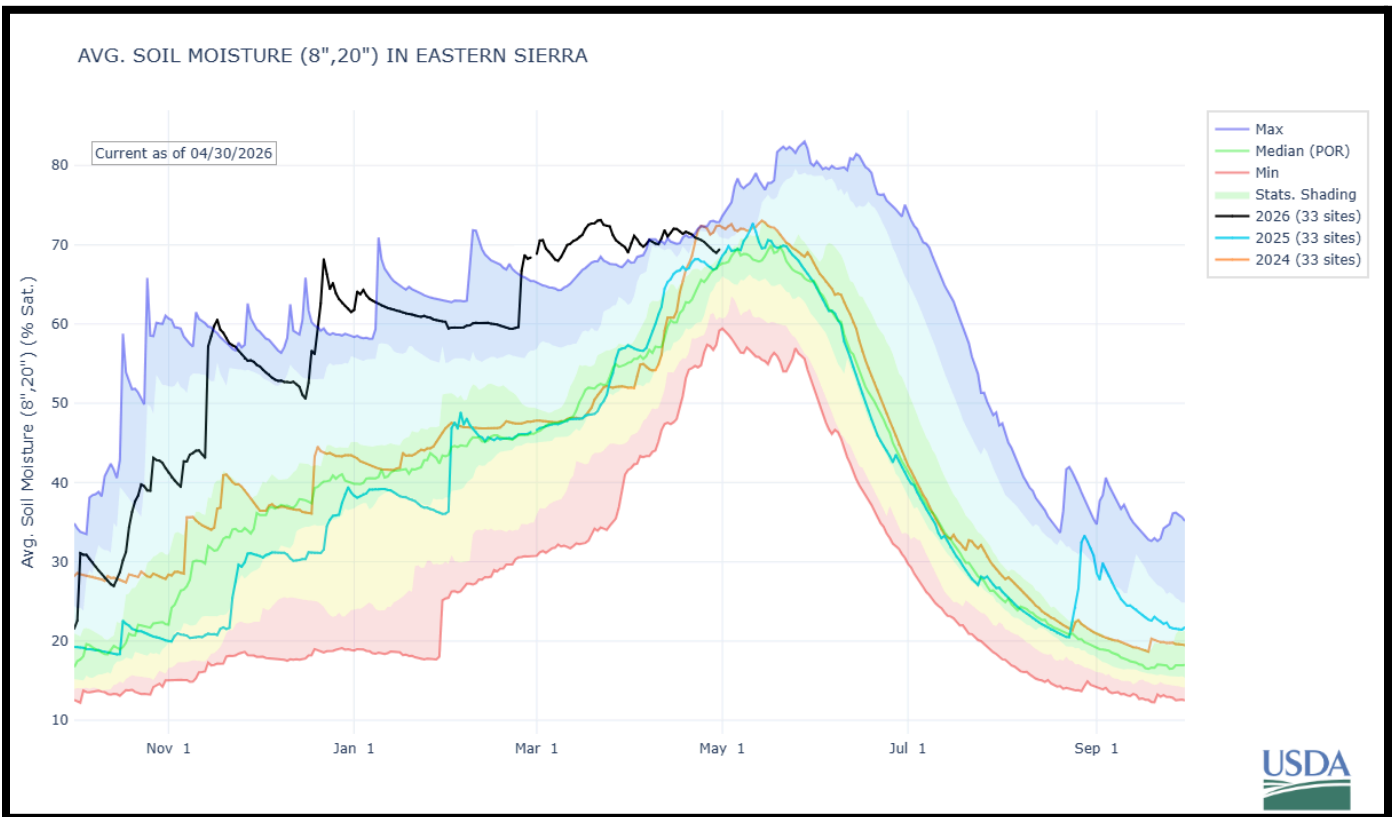


Figure 10. [NRCS SNOTEL soil moisture](#) for the combined Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins (top), and Humboldt basin (bottom) indicated in black for the water year 2026. Water years 2025 and 2024 are plotted in blue and orange respectively for additional perspective.

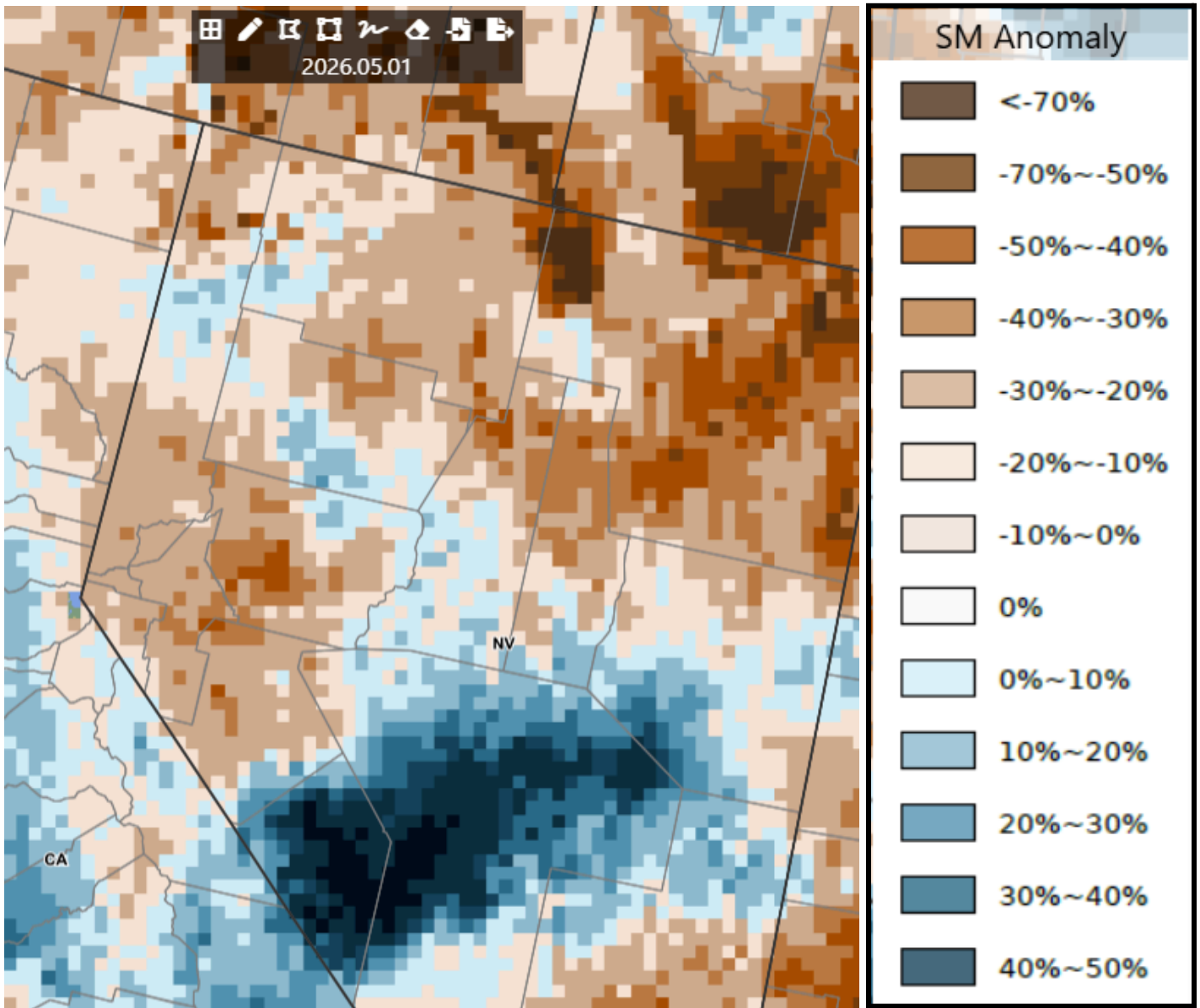


Figure 11. [Crop-CASMA](#) Soil Moisture Anomaly 05/01/2026

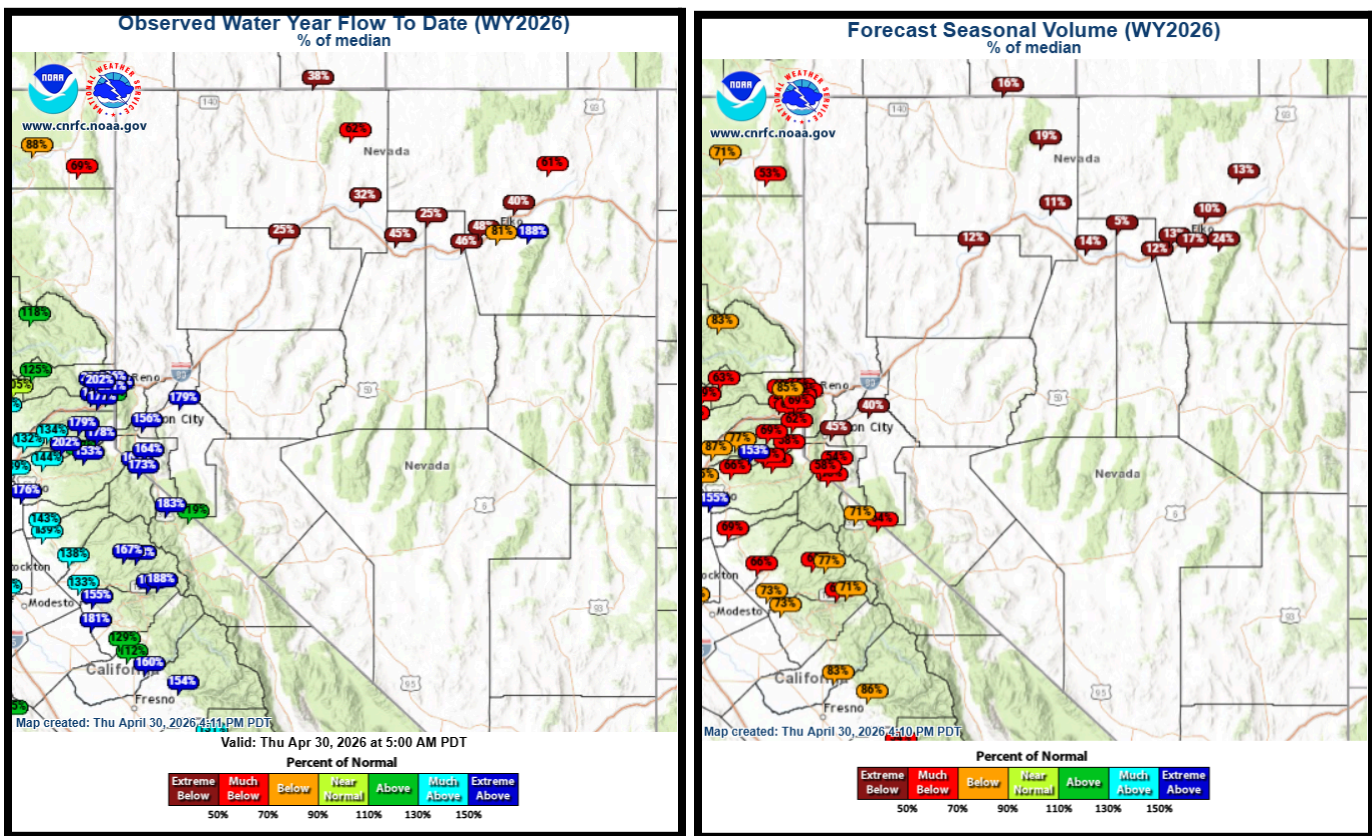


Figure 12. [CNRFC](#) Water year 2026 observed flow to date and right figure [CNRFC April-July forecast volume](#) both as % of median and as of April 30th.

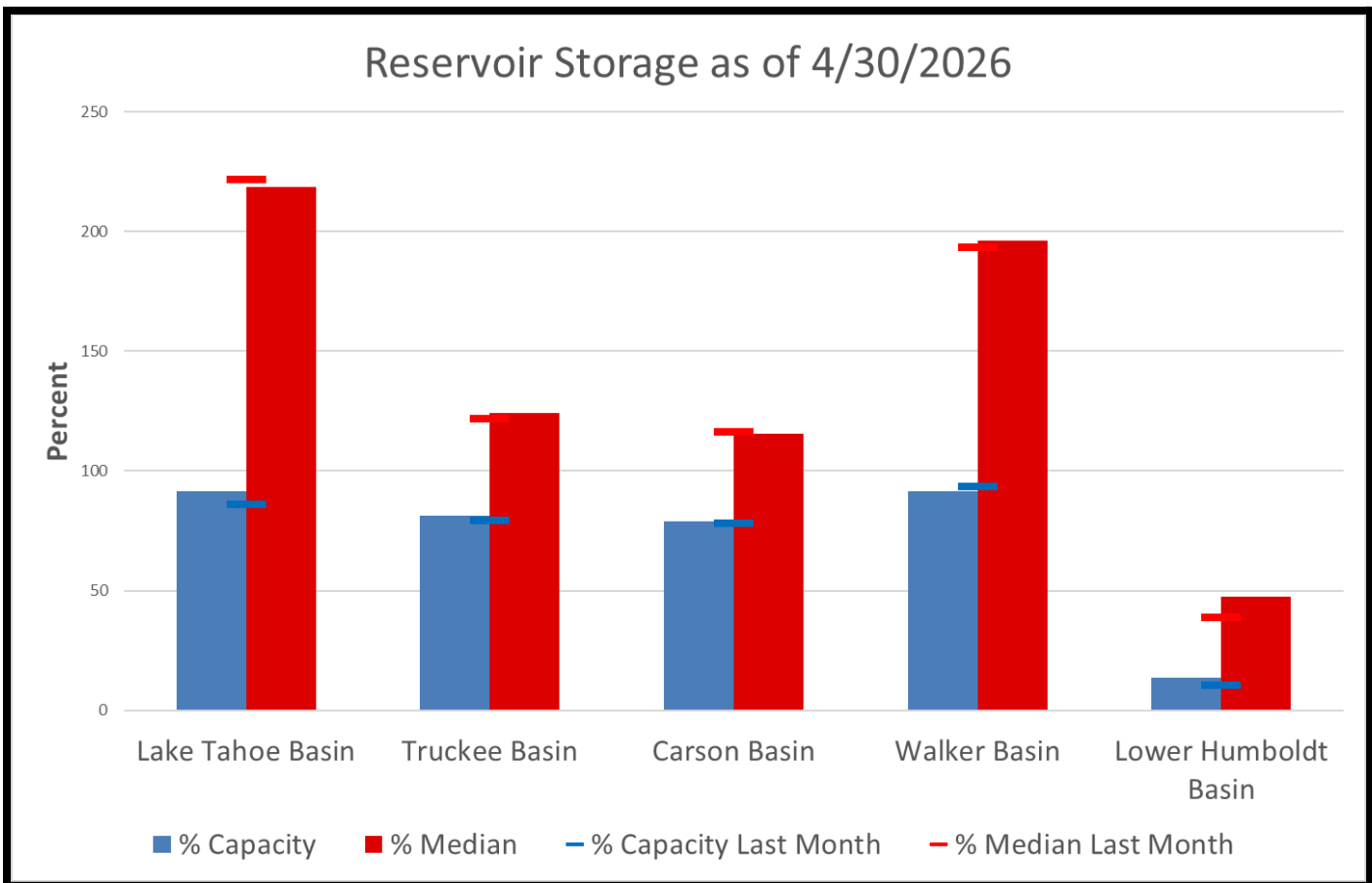
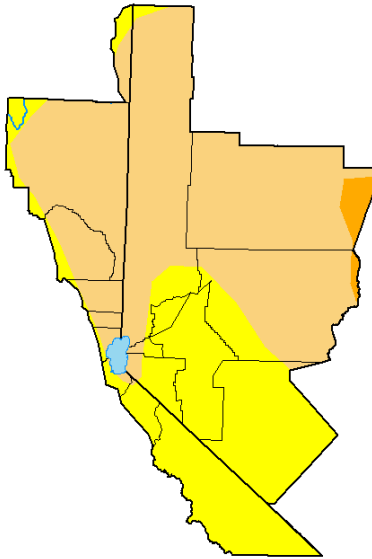


Figure 13. End of April reservoir storage relative to capacity and **median*** for this month and last month.

U.S. Drought Monitor Reno, NV WFO

April 28, 2026
(Released Thursday, Apr. 30, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	63.82	1.70	0.00	0.00
Last Week 04-21-2026	0.00	100.00	63.82	1.70	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 01-27-2026	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2026	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	17.75	82.25	26.99	0.38	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 04-28-2025	59.49	40.51	15.01	0.40	0.00	0.00

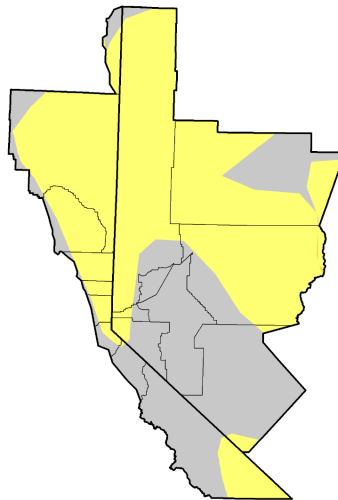
Intensity:
 None
 D0 Abnormally Dry
 D1 Moderate Drought
 D2 Severe Drought
 D3 Extreme Drought
 D4 Exceptional Drought

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>

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U.S. Department of Agriculture



U.S. Drought Monitor Class Change - Reno, NV WFO 4 Week



April 28, 2026
compared to
March 31, 2026

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

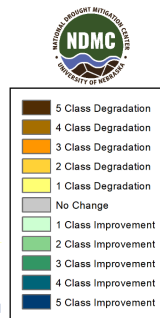
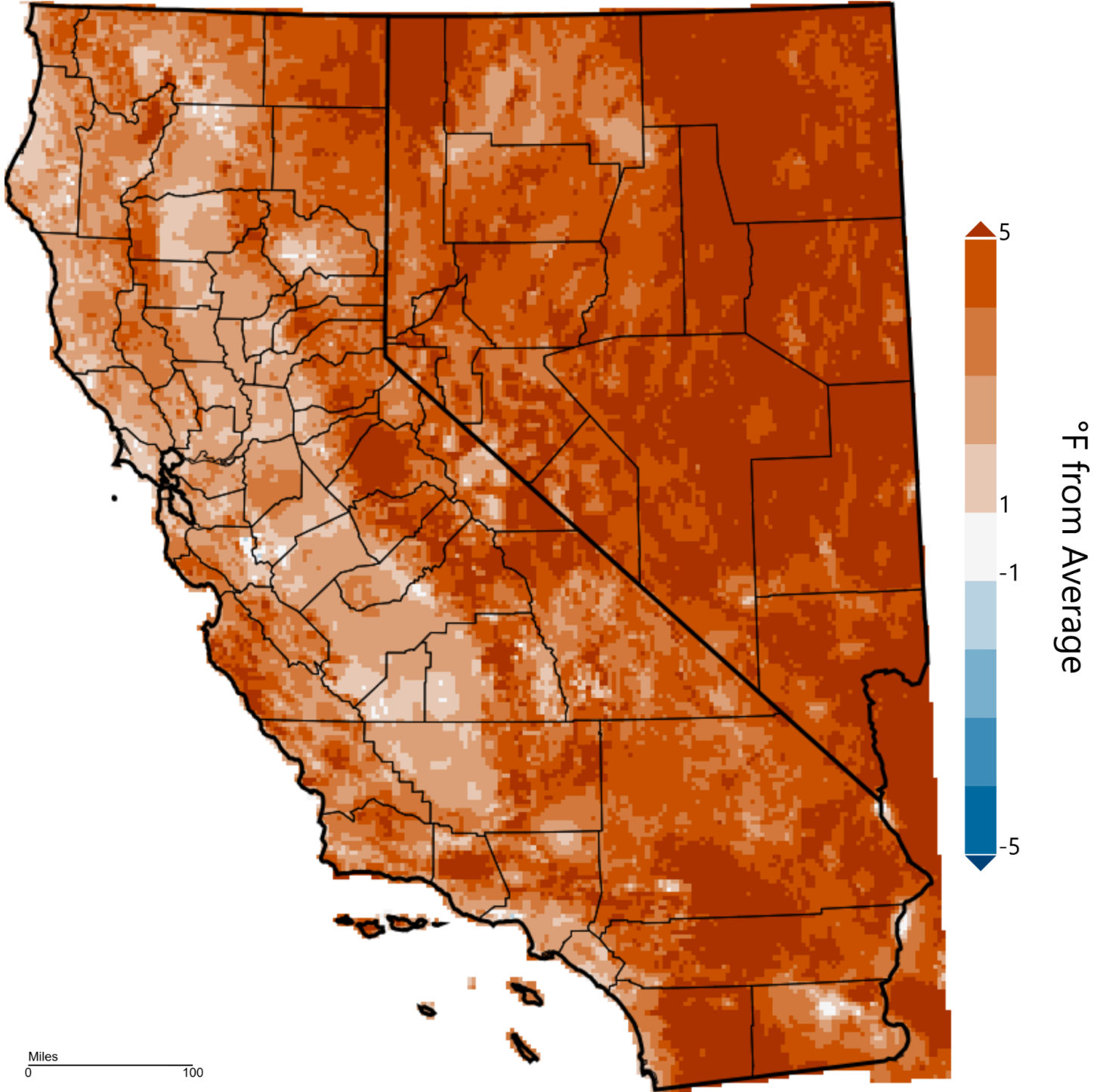


Figure 14. Drought Monitor Status on April 28th (top) and the 4 week change map (bottom). Check for updates at: [Drought Monitor](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu).

California-Nevada - Mean Temperature

October 2025 - April 2026, Departure from 1991-2020 Average

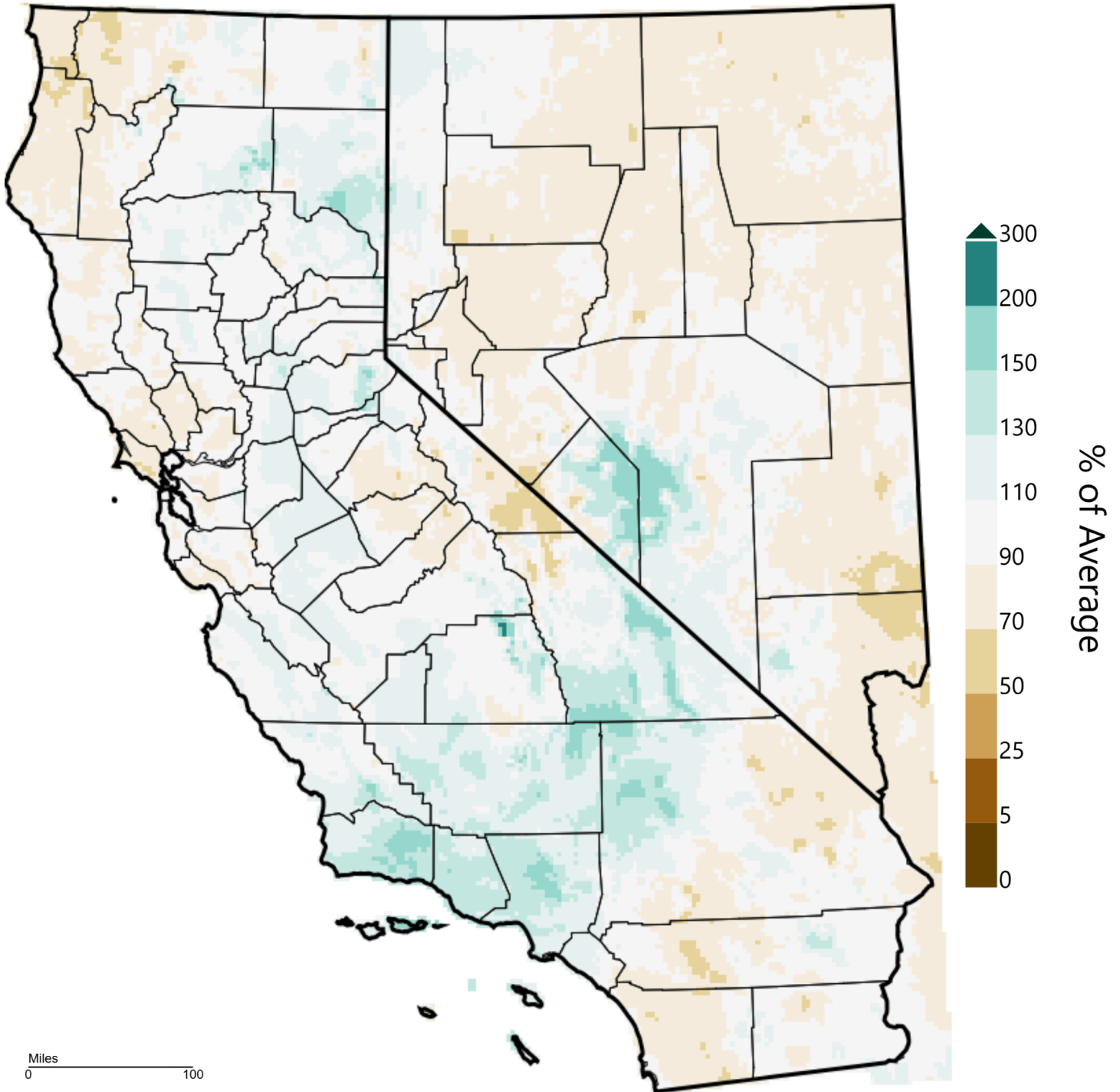


WestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 May 2026

Figure 15. Water year to date mean temperature departure. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. ([WWDT](http://www.wwdt.org))

California-Nevada - Precipitation

October 2025 - April 2026, Percent of 1991-2020 Average



WestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 May 2026

Figure 16. Water year to date precipitation. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. ([WWDT](#))