



Monthly Climate Report

NWS Reno NV

Issued: 9/11/2026



Weather Synopsis & Highlights:

August 2026 temperatures were between 1 to 5 degrees above normal across the area (Figure 1). Precipitation was between 70 to 150% of normal in Mono and Alpine counties in the eastern Sierra and between 90 to 250% of normal in the Reno metro area, as well as Mineral, Lyon, Douglas, Churchill, and Pershing counties. But, precipitation was a meager 0 to 50% of normal for central and northern Washoe County, as well as the eastern Sierra north of the Tahoe basin into northeast California (Figure 2).

August began with widespread triple-digit heat in lower elevations, with Heat Advisories in effect for west central NV on the first 2 days of the month. After a brief cooling into the 90s on the 3rd, temperatures warmed up again with a prolonged heat event from the 5th through 9th, followed by only a slight dip in temperatures on the 10th. Heat Advisories were in place for all lower elevations of western NV/northeast CA, with Extreme Heat Warnings from the 7th-9th for Pershing/Churchill/northern Lyon counties. During the peak heat, highs were between 100-104 degrees in most valley locations, with 105+ degree highs in the warning areas, while Sierra communities pushed above 90 degrees. A few warm nights also contributed to the heat impacts, especially on the 8th when a thick blanket of cloud cover kept lows in the mid 70s-near 80 for most lower elevations. Several daily record highs were tied or set during this event, with Reno Airport setting a new record on the 8th for warmest minimum temperature (77 degrees) for any day in August. This also tied the record warmest minimum for any month at Reno.

While most areas remained dry through the first 10 days of August, isolated showers and thunderstorms formed mainly near the eastern Sierra and parts of western NV from the 6th through 10th, producing limited rainfall, gusty outflow winds and a few new lightning fire starts. Also during the first week of the month, various fires produced areas of smoke and haze with reduced air quality (Photo 1). From the 8th through 10th, large fires began and spread rapidly in far southeast Lassen County and far western NV north of Reno-Sparks, and near the southwest shore of Pyramid Lake. These fires led to multiple evacuations, periodic road closures, and commercial power interruptions. The largest fires were the Bug Fire (Photo 2) which grew to over 93,000 acres, and the Stallion Fire which surpassed 40,000 acres by mid-August. While 9 structures were lost, thousands were saved with aggressive fire suppression and structure protection measures. Unfortunately, this fire led to 1 fatality and 1 injury.

From the 11th through 13th, moisture increased over the eastern Sierra and western NV, leading to an expansion of shower and thunderstorm coverage. On the 11th, the strongest storm produced up to 1" of rainfall and minor lowland flooding around Hawthorne. The most widespread storms occurred on the 12th and 13th, with a new precipitation record for the 12th set at Reno Airport (0.60"). A total of 8 Severe Thunderstorm Warnings were issued, plus a Tornado Warning (first issued by NWS Reno in nearly 6 years) which covered Storey County and adjacent parts of SE Washoe and N Lyon counties, although no tornado was reported.

Areas impacted include southeast Reno/Sparks, Gardnerville, and highways near Nixon and Luning (rainfall up to 1.5" and flooding --see hydro section for more details), Lee Vining, southeast Reno/Sparks and Gardnerville (hail), and Lovelock, Fallon, and Schurz (50+ mph wind gusts or wind damage). Even some snow fell in the higher peaks of the White Mountains of SE Mono County (Photo 6).

By the 14th, thunderstorm coverage became more isolated over western NV, although a storm near Virginia Peak produced 1.21" of measured rainfall, with similar rainfall estimates in a remote portion of northern Mineral County. For the Bug and Stallion fires, erratic outflow gusts produced short periods of increased fire spread, but overall the significant increase in humidity, periods of rain, and cooler temperatures greatly reduced the activity of these fires into mid-August.

Dry conditions then prevailed from the 15th through 20th, allowing a lightning fire ignition in northeast Churchill County (Shoshone Fire) to grow to nearly 25,000 acres during this time frame. Temperatures were near or just below mid-August averages through the 17th. A brief warmup then followed, with highs of upper 90s-near 100 for lower elevations and mid 80s near the Sierra on the 19th and 20th.

A few thunderstorms returned to far eastern Churchill County on the 21st, then on the 22nd scattered thunderstorms moved quickly across west central NV. Meanwhile, a Red Flag Warning was in effect on the 22nd for parts of northeast CA and western NV due to increased winds and dry vegetation. The Hawk Fire which began southwest of Peavine Mountain spread rapidly with gusty winds of 40-50 mph on that day, with as many as 90,000 residents of northwest Reno and North Valleys under voluntary or mandatory evacuations.

Winds decreased to more typical levels on the 23rd and 24th, with isolated showers and thunderstorms for west central NV both days, and in far northwest NV on the 24th. Two notable fire starts resulted from this lightning, the S-1 Vya fire in far northern Washoe County, and the Blue Eagle fire in northeast Churchill County. After an overall dry day on the 25th, isolated showers and storms returned mainly for Lyon and Churchill counties on the 26th. Winds edged upward across northeast CA and far northwest NV on the 26th and 27th, leading to continued growth of the S-1 Vya fire in far northern Washoe County. Closer to Reno, the Hawk Fire (Photo 7) was much less active after the 22nd, but over 50 homes were lost or damaged, with one fatality and six injuries reported.

A push of increased moisture on the 27th brought isolated showers and thunderstorms with 0.20" or less of rainfall for parts of the eastern Sierra and west central NV, along with an area of blowing dust which pushed across Pershing County with wind gusts up to 45 mph and visibility as low as ½ mile. A more widespread area of rain with embedded storms developed across much of the region on the 28th. Rainfall amounts were generally between 0.10" and 0.25" across western NV south of Gerlach, while Sierra locations generally received 0.25-0.50", with locally up to 0.75" near the crest in Mono and Alpine counties. Little to no rain fell across northeast CA, northwest NV and southeast Mono-Mineral counties. Temperatures on the 28th were sharply cooler, with highs only in the 60s to lower 70s where rain fell, and lower to mid 80s where it was dry.

Dry weather then prevailed for the final three days of August, with highs near or slightly slightly below average--mainly in the 80s for lower elevations and 70s near the Sierra.

Hydrology:

Besides heavy rain from thunderstorms mostly concentrated on August 12th and 13th, There was little excitement hydrologically in August. That said, having numerous new and ongoing burn areas in the region with the potential for heavy rain on fresh and active burns had this hydrologist's attention. Fortunately the heaviest rains missed the fresh burn areas, but moderate rains did fall on the Bug and Stallion fires on August 12 and 13th. Reports from field observations reported no significant impacts from the rainfall on these burns, and it is likely that radar over estimated the rainfall rates onto the burn. The radar sits within the burn area of the Stallion fire, creating a challenge of being too close to the radar to sample the entire storm.

Other areas did receive intense rainfall leading to flash flooding impacts. On August 11th, minor flood impacts were reported near Hawthorne. On August 12, mud and debris temporarily closed Fish Springs Road near Jo Lane (photo 3) and Eastbound Glendale Ave in Sparks was closed near Bergin Way. August 13th was the most impactful day of the month for flash flooding. Flooding impacts on the 13th included mud and debris closing Hwy 95 near Lunning (Photo 4), Hwy 447 near Nixon (Photo 5), Hwy 338 near Sweetwater Summit. On the same day mud and debris impacted TMWRF and two homeowners in Hidden Valley had water into their garages.

August mountain precipitation as measured by SNOTEL was well above normal for the Tahoe, Carson, and Walker Basins, but somewhat below normal for the Truckee and NW Nevada (Figure 3). While some of these percentages look very impressive, the August median precipitation for the Sierra basins is about 0.25", so it does not take a lot to have high percentages. Water year to date mountain precipitation remains near normal for the watersheds draining the east side of the Sierra, and moderately below normal for NE California and NW Nevada (Figure 4). Late June, July and mid-August storms helped maintain mountain soil moisture near the long-term median (Figure 5). Satellite-derived soil moisture shows generally below normal conditions throughout most of the region, with modest wet anomaly in western Lassen, Modoc, and Northern Washoe counties (Figure 6). Water year observed flow to date remains near to above normal for rivers and streams draining the east side of the Sierra, and well below normal for rivers and streams in northeastern CA and far northern Nevada (Figure 7 left side). USGS low flow locations are plotted in Figure 7 right side. End of July reservoir storage shows Tahoe still well above normal and the Walker slightly above normal for this time of year, while the Truckee and Carson have fallen slightly below normal. Rye Patch on the lower Humboldt is about 15% of normal (Figure 8).

Drought Update:

The U.S. Drought Monitor depicts all of the NWS Reno service area in D0 (abnormally dry) , and about 65% of the area in D1 (moderate drought). Also, D2 (Severe drought) covers about 11% of the area, and mostly confined to eastern Pershing County (Figure 9 top). Areas of Churchill, northern Lyon, Storey, Carson City, southern Washoe, along with portions of the eastern Sierra in the Tahoe area changed last month from D0 to D1 (Figure 9 bottom). The very warm water year temperatures (Figure 10) contributed to early snowmelt, drying soils and low summer streamflows. Areawide water year precipitation has been generally near to slightly below average (Figure 11).

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

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

Photos:



Photo 1: Smoke from fire across the west produced reduced visibility and poor air quality the fire week of August. Photo courtesy of NWS Reno.



Photo 2: Pyrocumulus with a pileus cloud from the Bug Fire on 8/9/2026. Photo taken by off duty NWS employee.



Photo 3. Flash flooding in Fish Springs Douglas County 8/12, Image courtesy of Douglas County Stormwater.



Photo 4. NV Hwy 95 near Luning closed due to flash flooding 8/13/26, image courtesy of NDOT



Photo 5. Flash flooding forcing closure of NV SR 447 on 8/13, Image courtesy of NDOT.



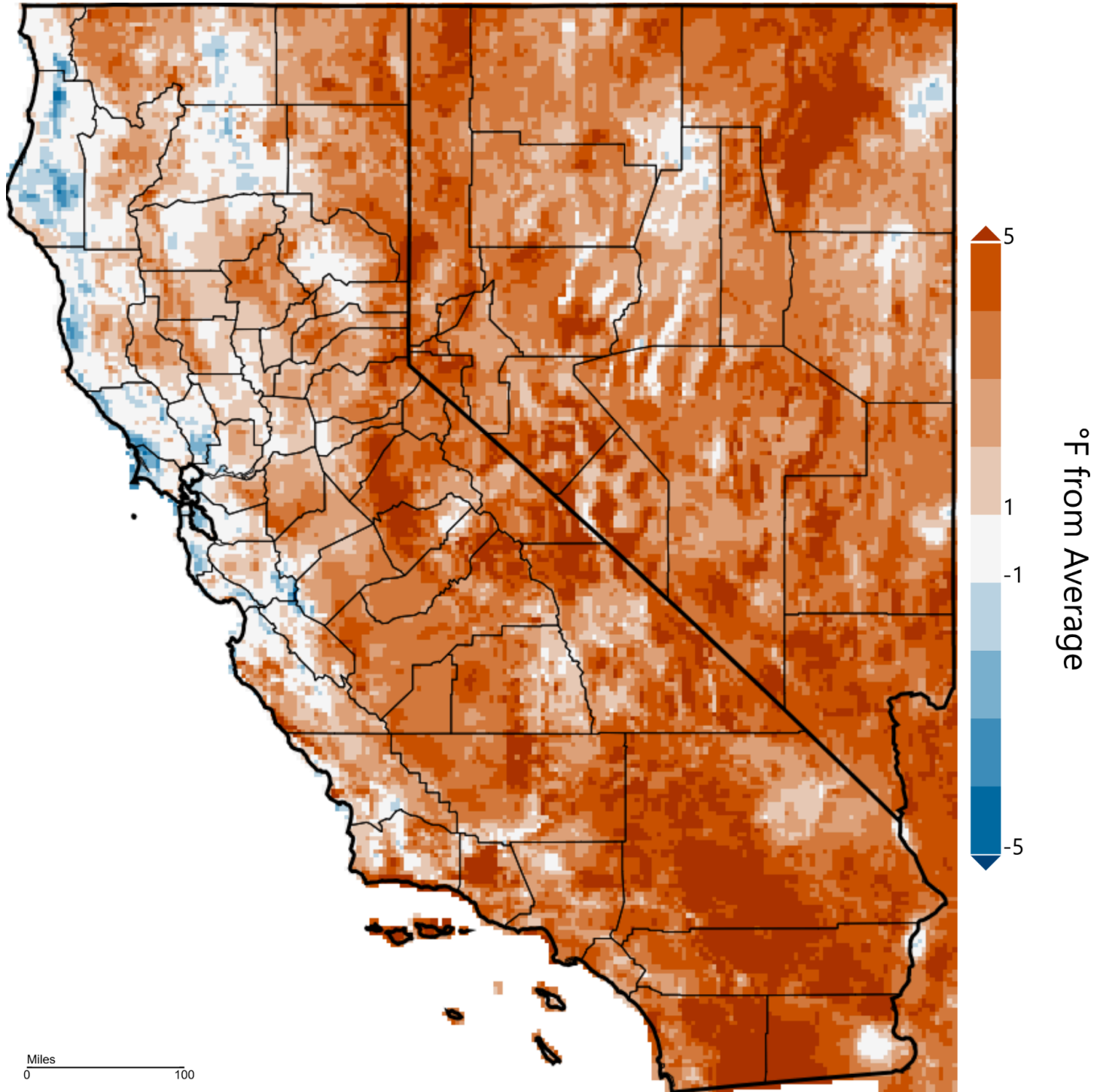
Photo 6. New snow cover on White Mountains the afternoon of 8/13, image courtesy of Sue Burak



Photo 7. Hawk fire plume from NWS Reno 8/22.

Figures:

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

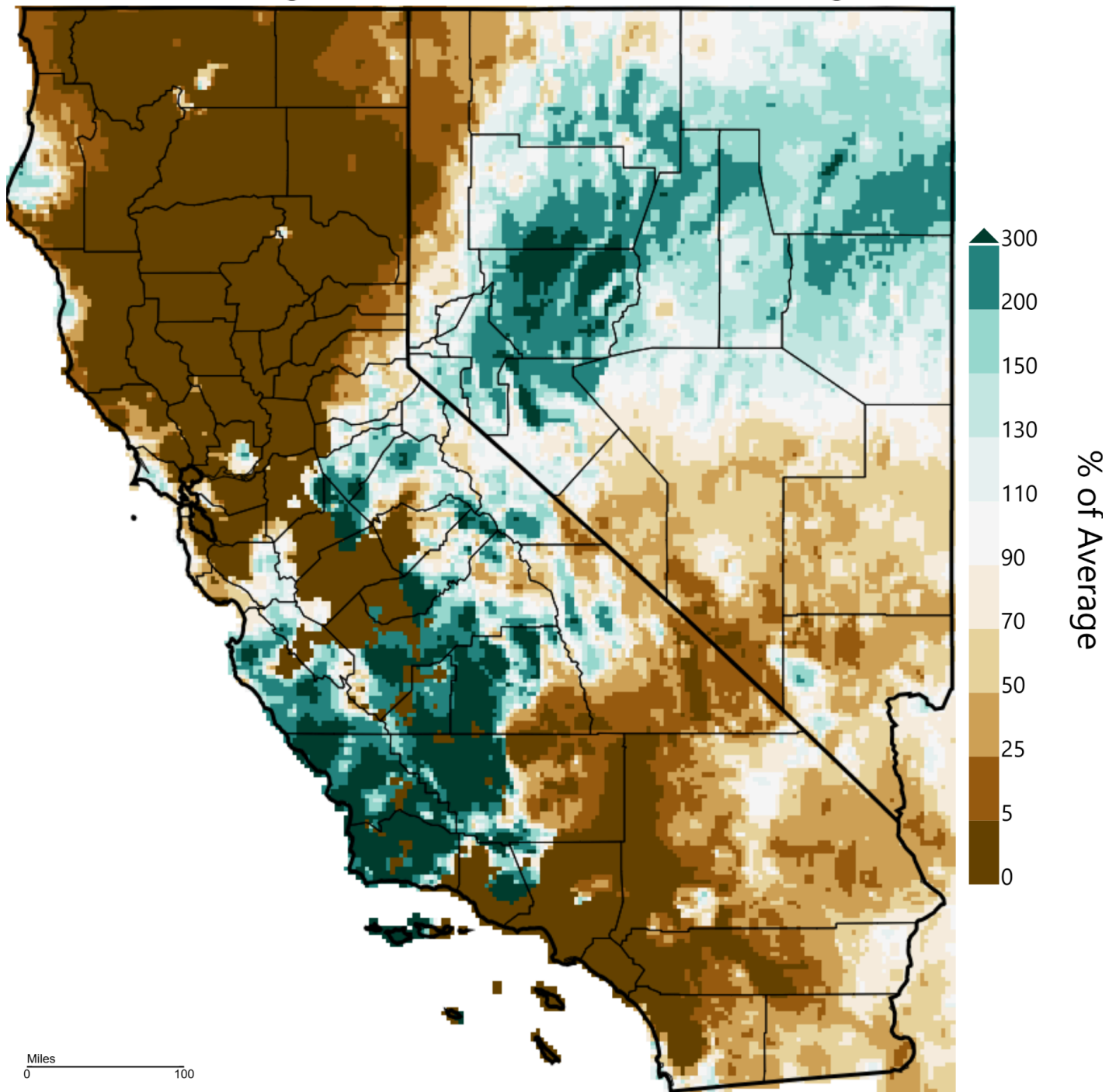


NestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 Sep 2026

Figure 1: Departure from normal temperatures for August 2026. ([WWDT](#))

California-Nevada - Precipitation

August 2026, Percent of 1991-2020 Average



NestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 Sep 2026

Figure 2: Percent of normal precipitation for August 2026. ([WWDT](#))

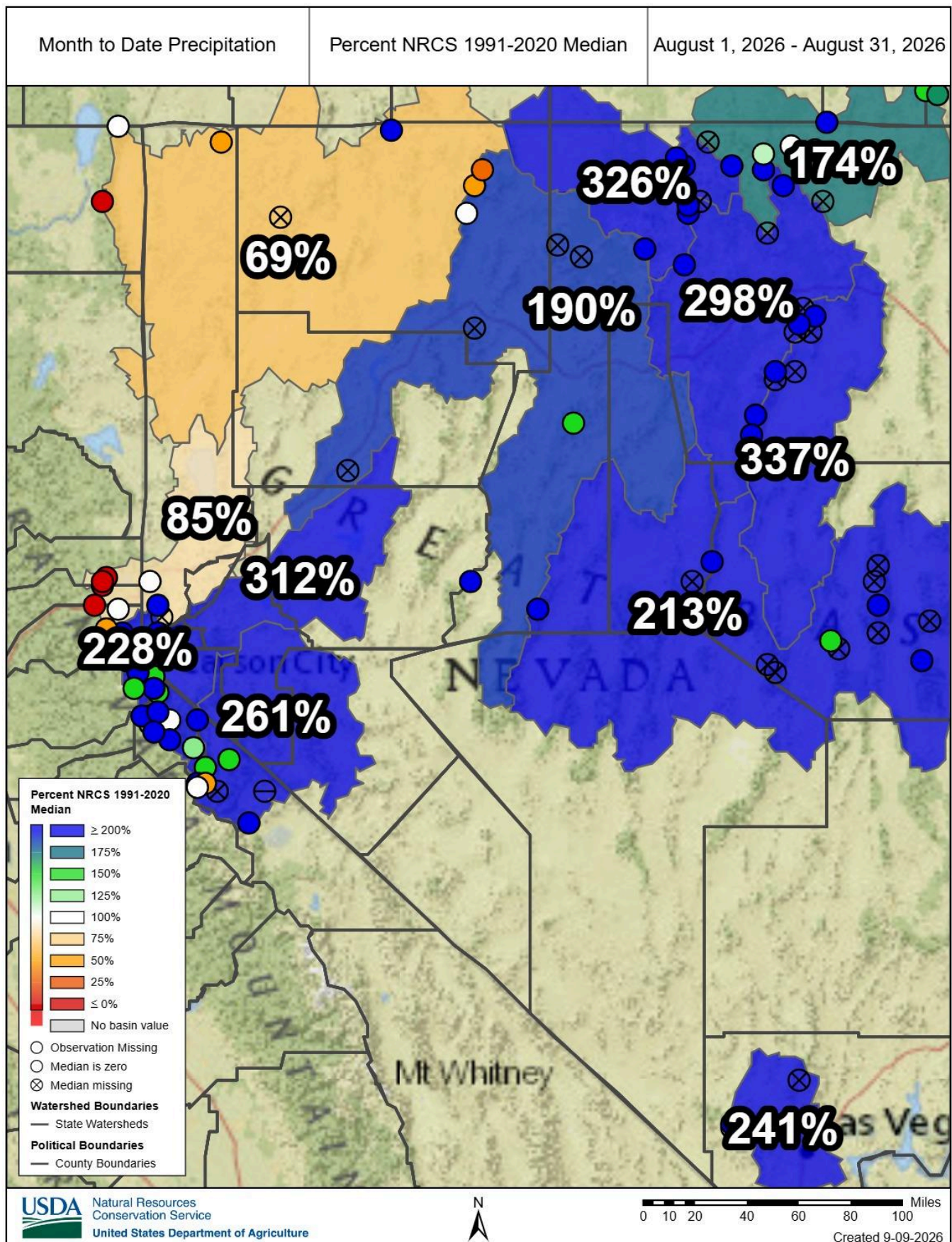


Figure 3.. SNOTEL mountain precipitation for August 2026.

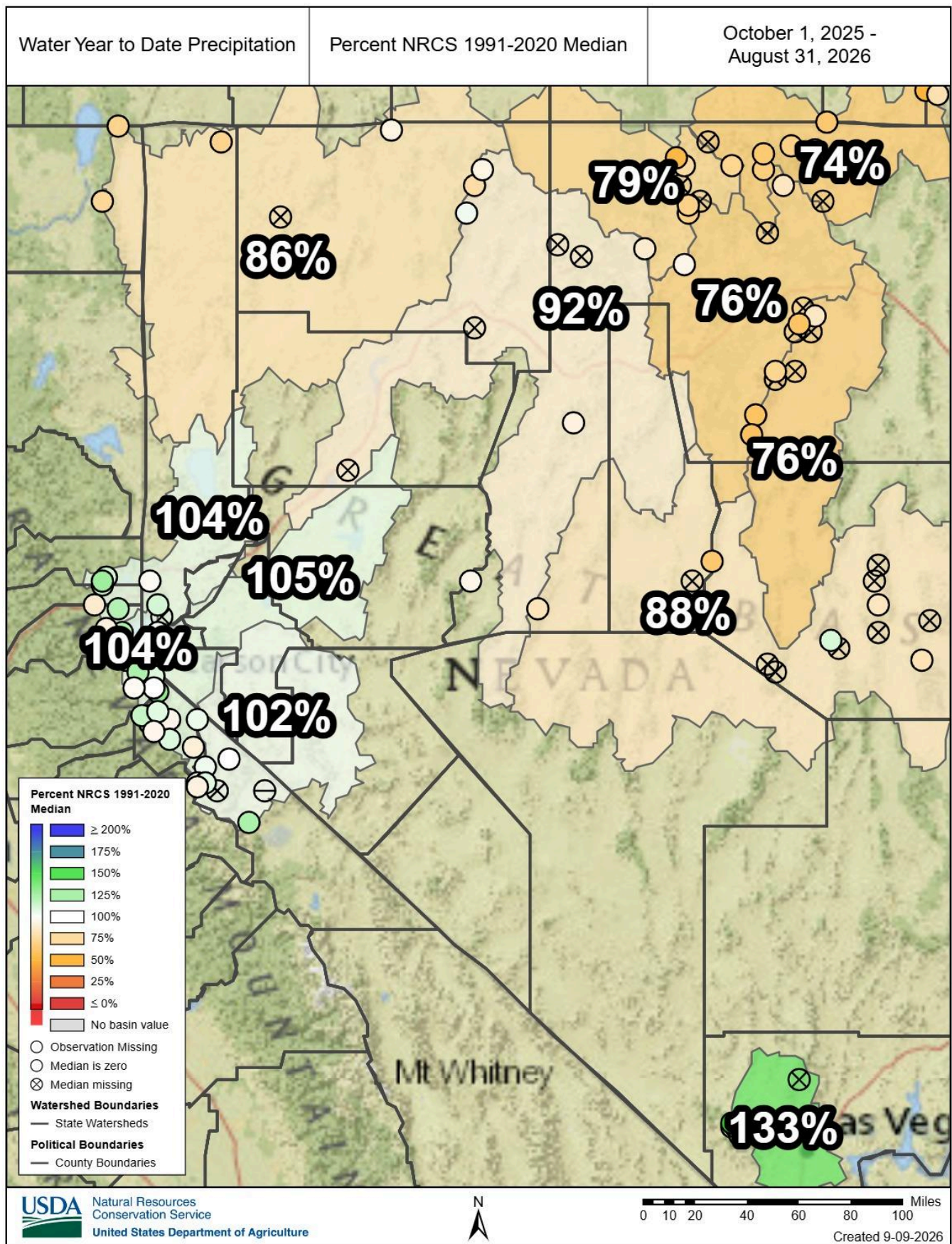


Figure 4. [NRCS SNOTEL basin Water year precipitation as % of Median](#) through August 31st, 2026.

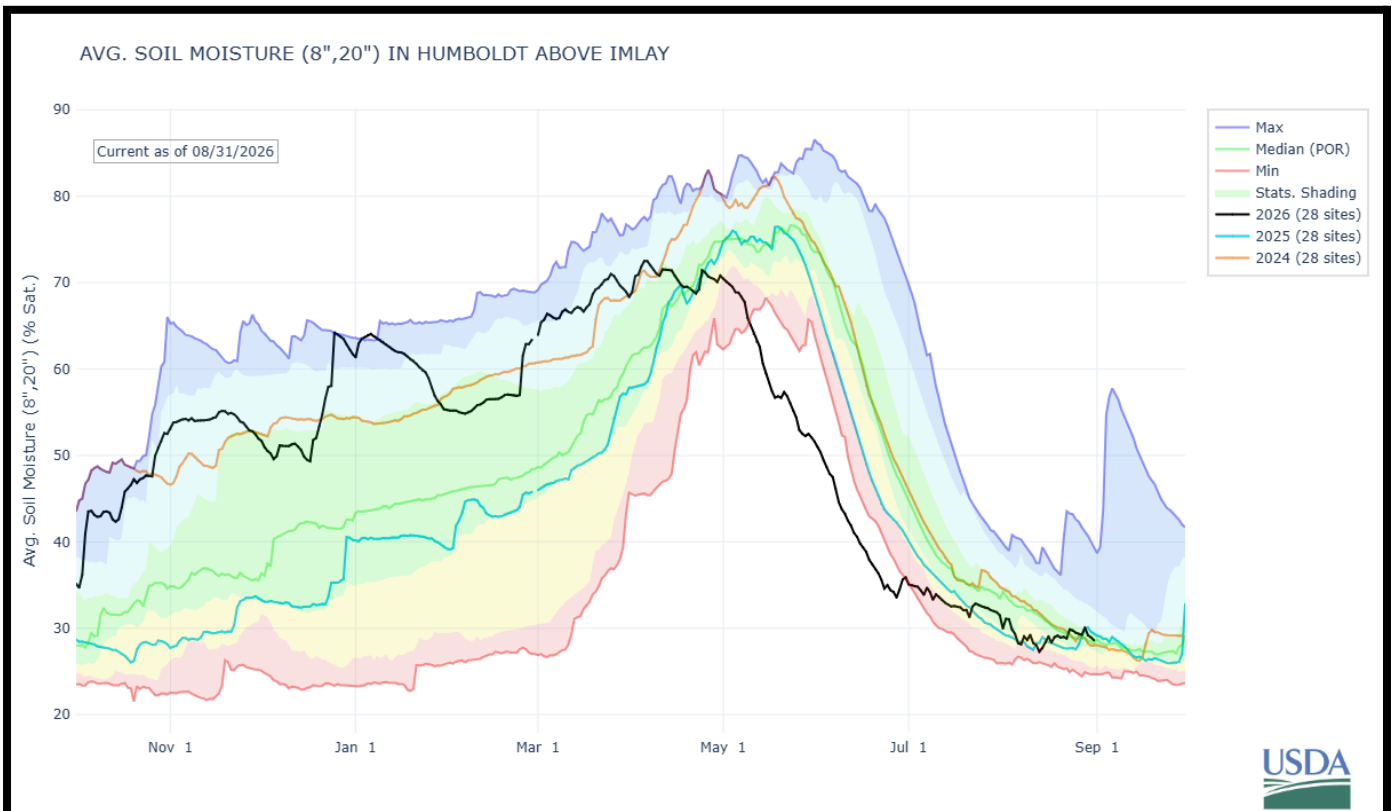
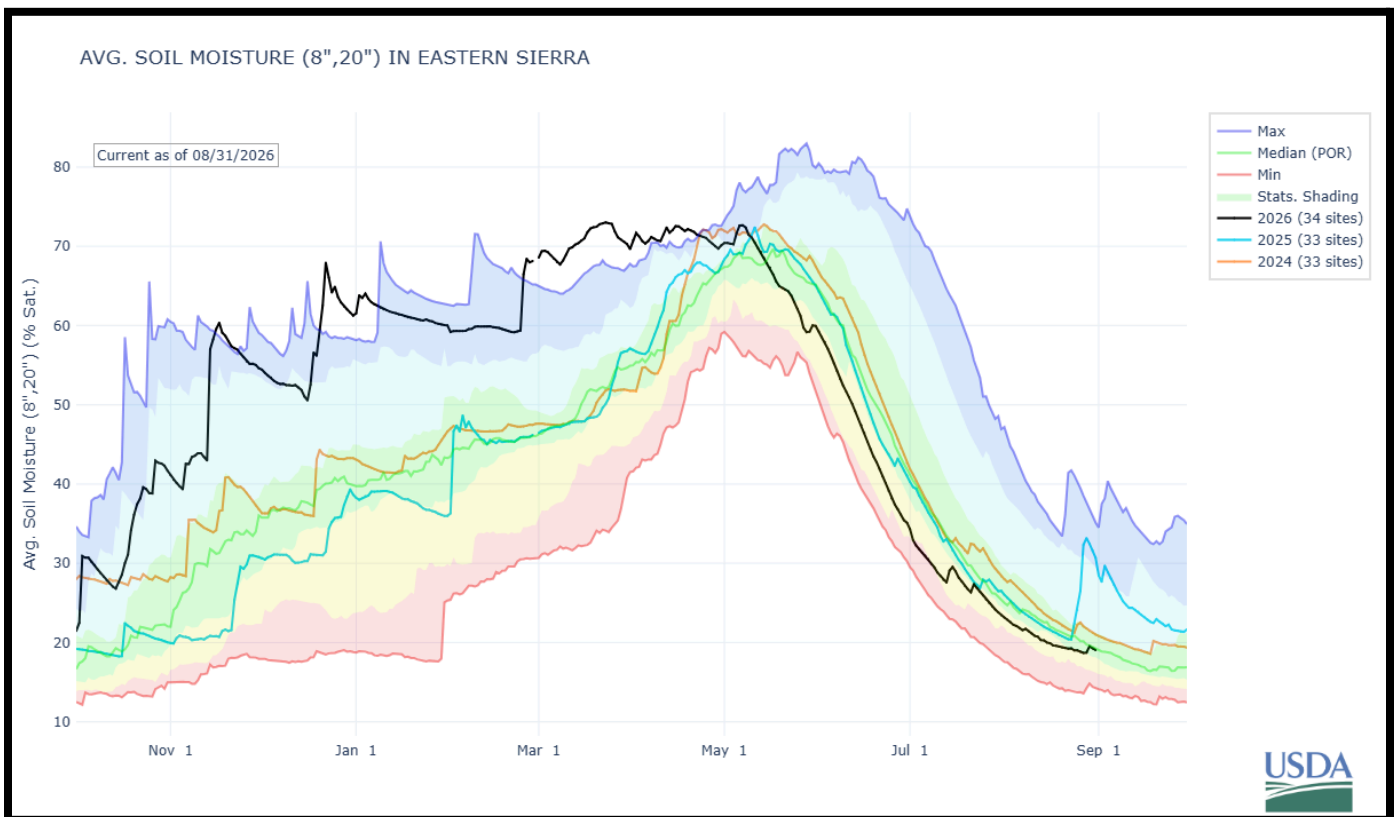


Figure 5. [NRCS SNOTEL soil moisture](#) for the combined Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins (top), and Humboldt basin (bottom) indicated in black for the water year 2026. Water years 2025 and 2024 are plotted in blue and orange respectively for additional perspective.

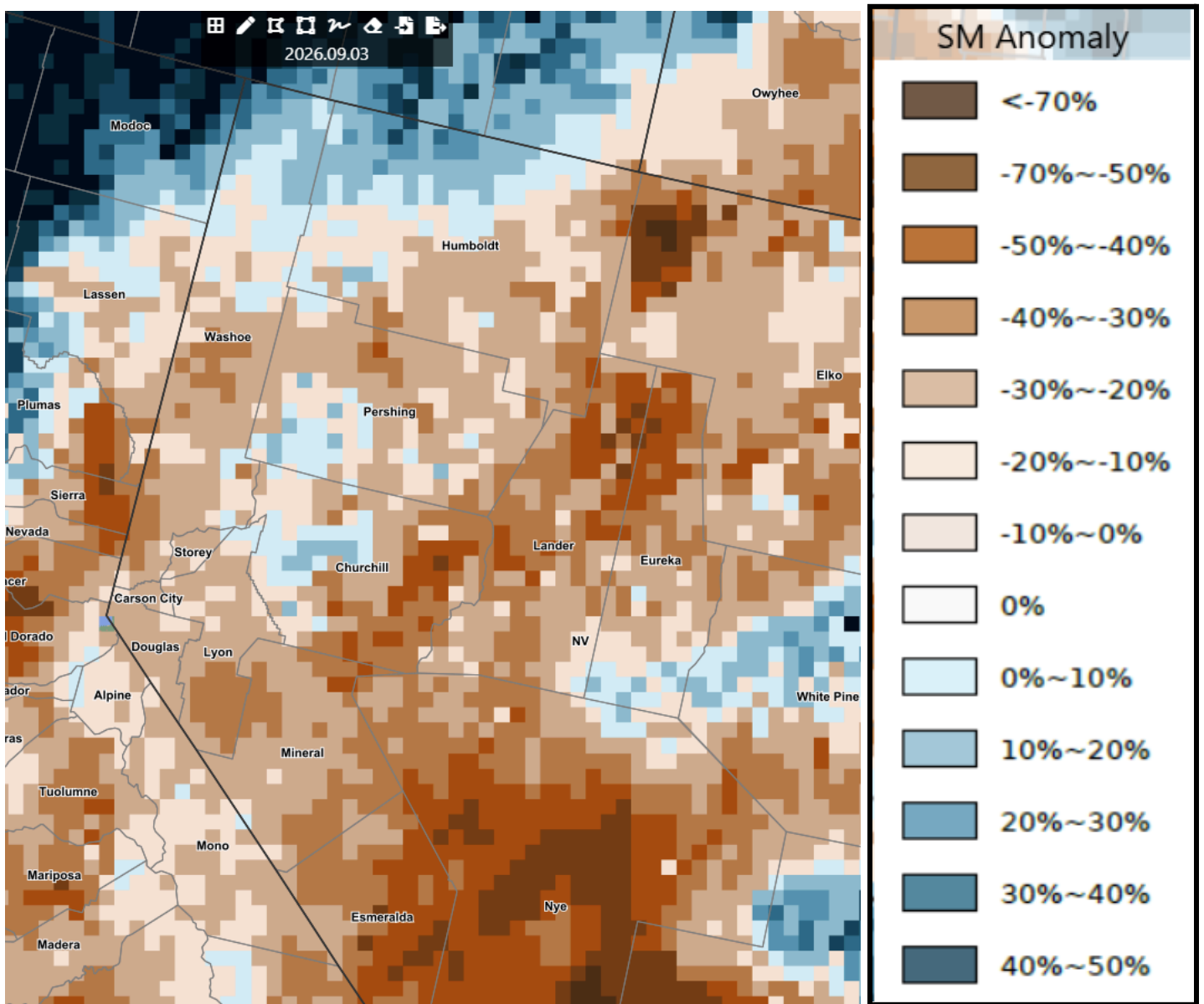


Figure 6. [Crop-CASMA](#) Soil Moisture Anomaly 09/03/2026.

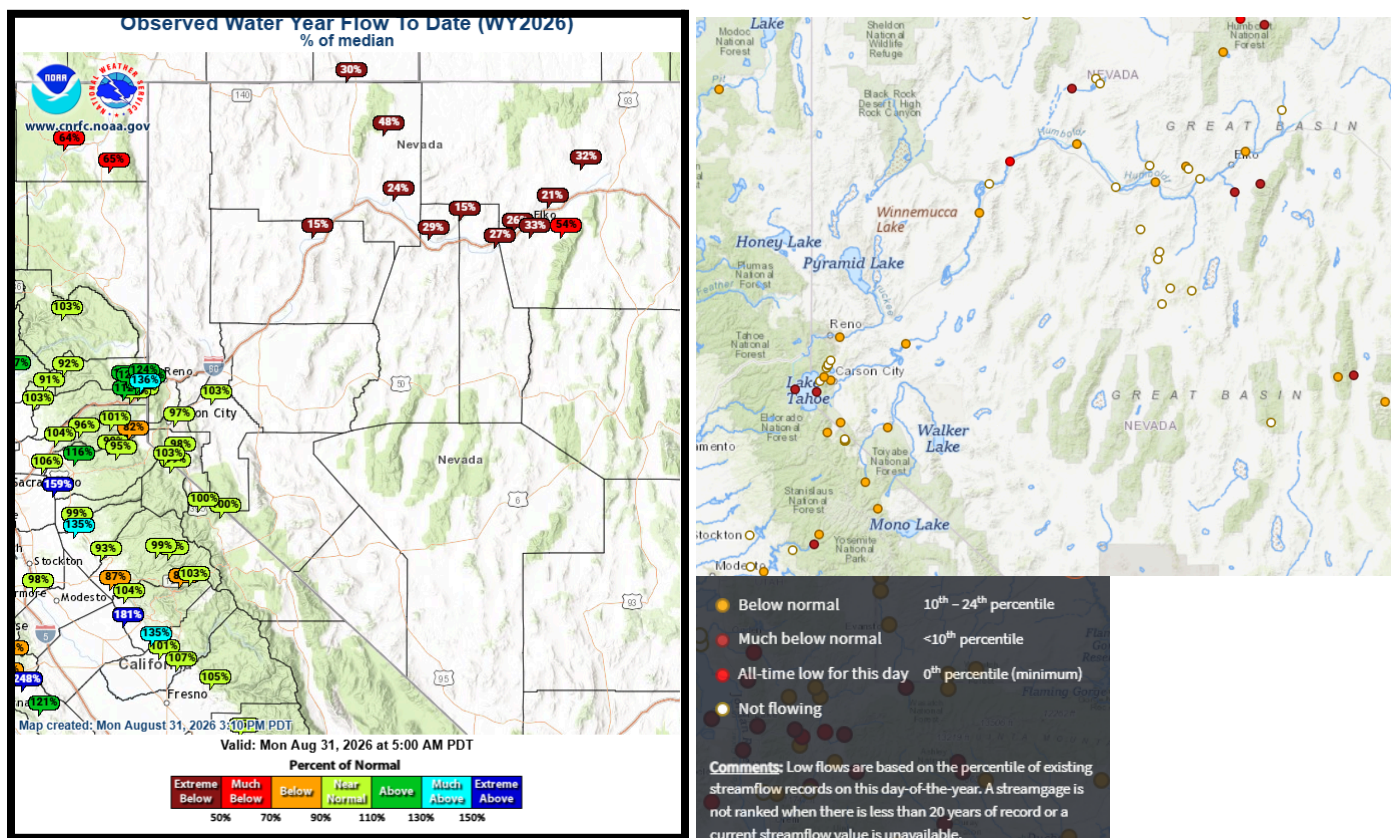


Figure 7. [CNRFC](#) Water year 2026 observed flow to date as % of median and USGS streamflow low flow anomalies as of August 31st.

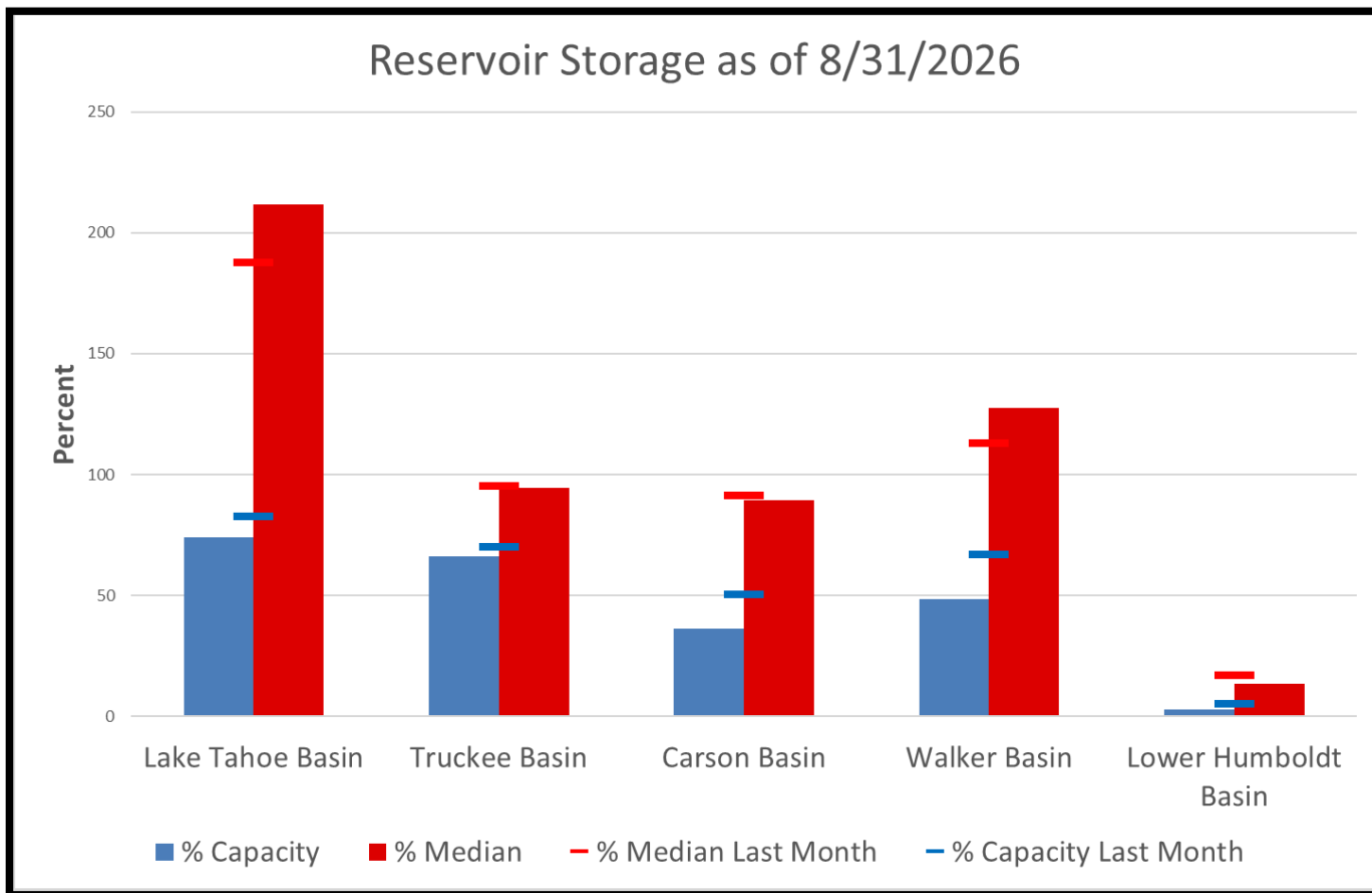
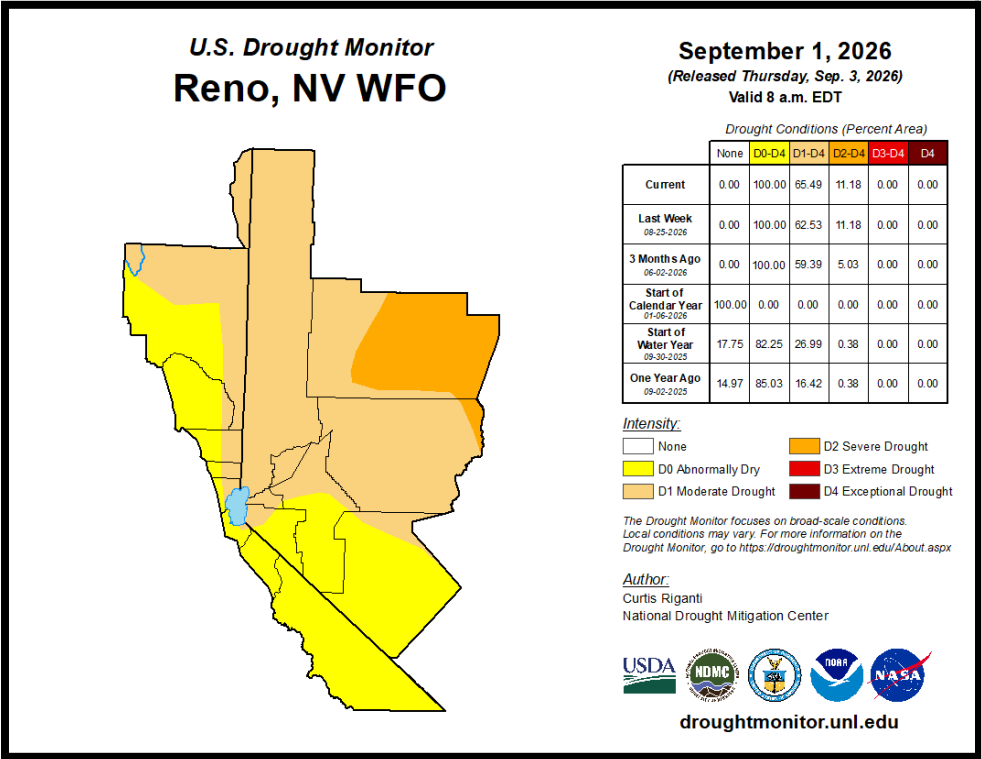
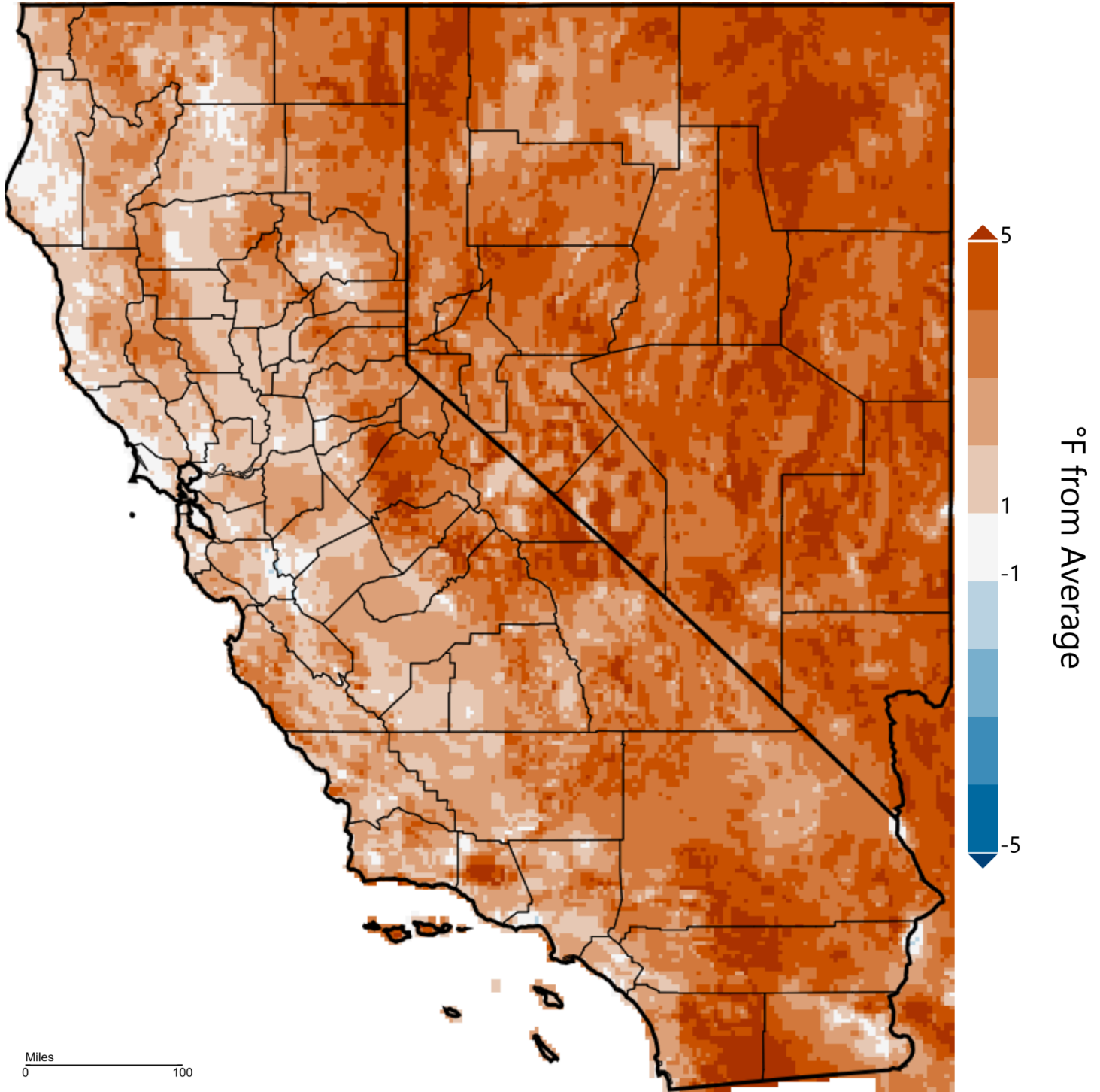


Figure 8. End of August reservoir storage relative to capacity and **median*** for this month and last month.



California-Nevada - Mean Temperature

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

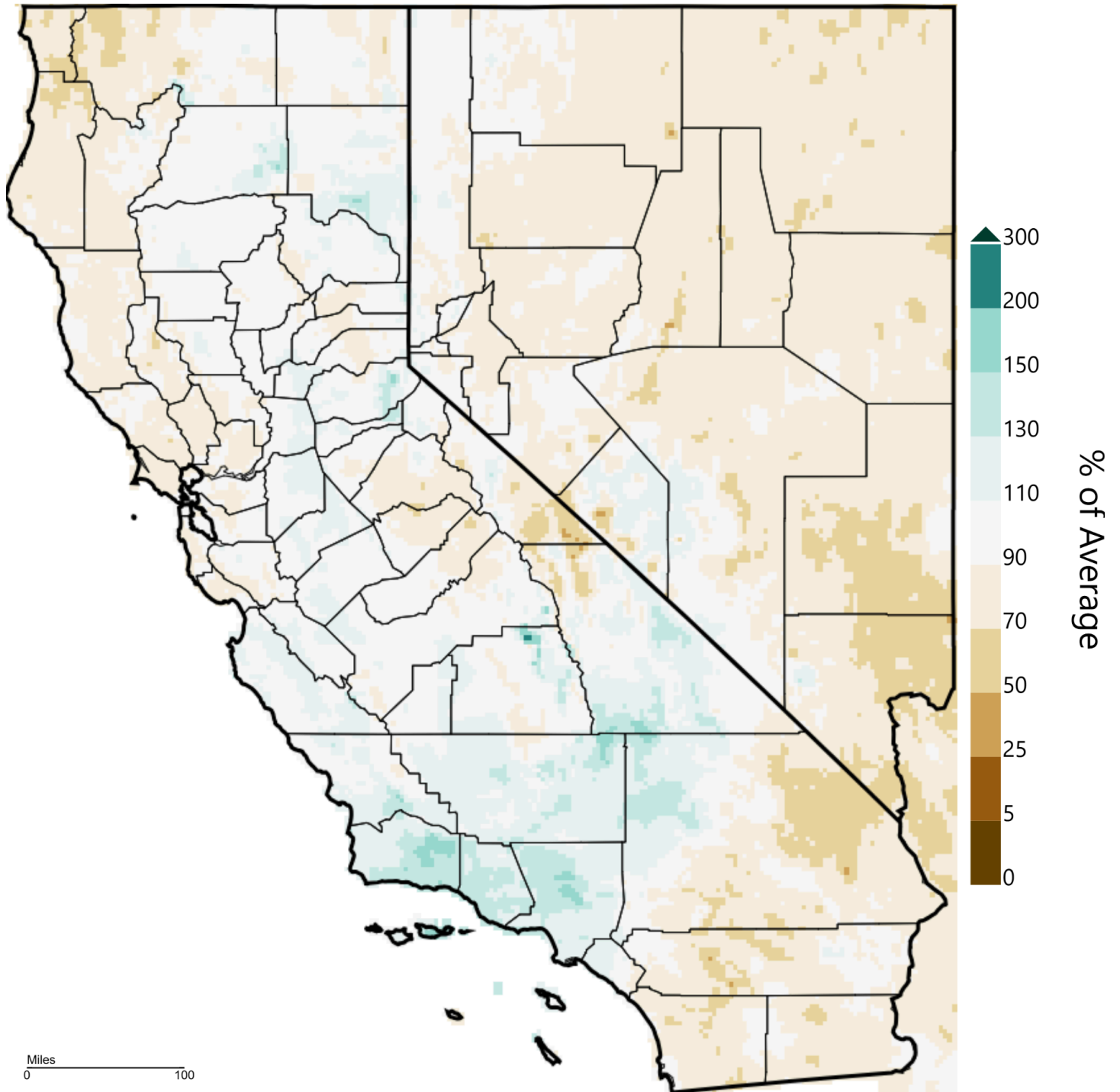


NestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 Sep 2026

Figure 10. Water year to date mean temperature departure. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. ([WWDT](#))

California-Nevada - Precipitation

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



NestWide Drought Tracker, WRCC, Climate Engine, Data Source: PRISM Prelim, created 05 Sep 2026

Figure 11. Water year to date precipitation. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. ([WWDI](#))