Monthly Climate Report

NWS Reno NV

Issued: 6/5/2026

Weather Synopsis & Highlights:

May 2026 temperatures were generally warmer than average by 1-3 degrees across the region, with a few parts of northern Washoe and southern Churchill counties nearly 4 degrees warmer than average. Parts of Mineral, Mono and southern Lyon counties reported temperatures near average for May (Figure 1). Precipitation was generally near average with no extreme wet or dry areas. Parts of west central NV including Lyon and western Churchill-Mineral counties southward to northern Mono County were a bit wetter with 110-150% of May average precipitation, while parts of northeast CA and northwest NV were on the drier side with about 50-90% of May average precipitation (Figure 2).

A slow moving storm system brought several days of showers and thunderstorms between the 2nd and 5th (Photos 1). Coverage was relatively sparse on the 2nd, then increased on the 3rd and 4th, with more isolated showers lingering through the 5th. The strongest storms formed on the afternoon of the 3rd, producing outflow gusts of 50-60 mph across the Reno-Carson City vicinity and eastward to parts of west central NV. The most widespread rain occurred on the 4th, with overall storm totals ranging from 0.25-0.75” across much of the eastern Sierra and western NV near and south of I-80. Several locations near the Sierra crest received heavier liquid totals of 1.0-1.5”. Snowfall was sparse, with up to 1” reported along the crest near and above 7000 feet and up to 3” on higher peaks.

After this storm departed, drier weather returned from the 6th through 12th with a notable warming trend. Temperatures peaked from the 10th through 12th with highs surpassing 90 degrees for the first time this year for several western NV valleys, and highs near 80 degrees for the Tahoe basin. Record highs were set or tied in Reno and South Lake Tahoe on all three of these days.

During the afternoon of the 12th, isolated showers with high cloud bases produced little or no rainfall, but strong wind gusts of 40-60 mph in parts of west central NV, due to a deep warm and dry layer below the cloud bases.

This round of early summer-like heat ended on the 13th as a weak low pressure moved across northeast CA and northwest NV, bringing increased wind gusts across western NV. After this low departed on the 14th, a period of dry conditions with temperatures slightly above average prevailed through the 15th.

A colder storm system quickly followed on the 16th and 17th. Winds increased on the 16th with stronger gusts (mainly 45-55 mph) on the 17th. Light rain and snow showers and much colder conditions with highs only in the 50s accompanied the winds on the 17th, including a trace of snow around Reno including the airport.

A warming trend then followed with highs climbing to the upper 70s and lower 80s in lower elevations by the 20th and 21st. Dry conditions prevailed from the 18th through 20th, then isolated showers and thunderstorms

returned from the 21st through 24th (Photo 2), although for most areas the Memorial Day holiday weekend was dry and warm with highs in the lower-mid 80s in lower elevations and lower 70s near the Sierra.

Winds increased on Memorial Day (25th) with peak gusts 45-55 mph in many areas (up to 70 mph for wind prone areas and peak ridge top gusts 90+ mph), leading to the first Red Flag Warning of the season for parts of northeast CA and northwest NV. The first large fire of the 2026 season, the “Quartz” fire in northern Pershing County began on the 23rd and burned just under 2500 acres (Photo 3).

A colder low pressure then brought widespread areas of rain with embedded thunderstorms, high elevation snow and a sharp drop in temperatures from the 26th through the 28th. Windy conditions with similar peak gusts to the 25th continued on the 26th, mainly for areas south of US-50. Rainfall totals from this 3-day storm event generally ranged from 0.50-1” near the Sierra, northeast CA, northwest and west central NV, with some locations north of Susanville and Gerlach receiving up to 1.5”. The remainder of western NV from Reno-Carson southward received rainfall totals mainly between 0.10”-0.40”, with locally higher amounts along with isolated small hail. The driest areas were southern Mineral and southeast Mono County valleys with 0.10” or less. Mountain snowfall totals were generally between 1-5” above 8000 feet, with highest peaks in southern Mono County receiving 8” or more (Photos 4 through 6). The coldest day overall was the 27th, with highs mainly in the 40s and 50s.

The final three days of May brought mainly dry conditions and a steady warming trend, with highs rebounding to the upper 70s for lower elevations and upper 60s near the Sierra by month’s end.

Hydrology:

No flooding occurred in May. A few high elevation watersheds like the West Walker River observed their peak snowmelt flows with the warm sunny days just before mid-month. Most other watersheds did not have enough snow remaining to generate significant rises. May mountain precipitation as measured by SNOTEL was near normal for the east side of the Sierra, but well below normal in NE and NW Nevada (Figure 3). By mid-month, only 4 SNOTEL sites retained any snow and by the end of the month it was down to just 3 keeping the Eastern Sierra SNOTEL group near the 10th percentile (Figure 4). The Levitt Lake SNOTEL in the Walker Basin tends to be one of the deepest snow accumulation sites and last to melt out. That location shows that some of the highest and deepest snow areas still retain significant snow, and actually had some modest gains in early May (Figure 5). Figure 6 shows the snow covered area at the end of April vs. the first day of June. Snow in the Humboldt basin has been long gone.

Mountain water year precipitation as measured by SNOTEL as of the end of May is still slightly above normal for the east side of the Sierra, and somewhat below normal in NE California and NW Nevada (Figure 7). Mountain soil moisture has dried considerably with nearly all SNOTEL sites snowfree, and is now below normal and the lowest for this date since 2021 for the E. Sierra, and has dropped well below the previous record low in the Humboldt (Figure 8). Satellite derived soil moisture briefly showed a wetting response to late May rains, but quickly dried out to below normal for most of the area (Figure 9). Water year to date flows are mostly well above normal for streams draining the Sierra (Figure 10 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 the vast majority of that flow has already occurred leaving little residual flows expected in June and July (Figure 10 right side). End of May reservoir conditions remain well above normal of Lake Tahoe and the Walker, near normal on the Truckee and Carson, and well below normal in Rye Patch on the lower Humboldt (Figure 11).

Drought Update:

The U.S. Drought Monitor depicts most of the northern portion of the NWS Reno service area in D1 (moderate drought) with the exception of the NE corner of Pershing County where continued drying conditions along the lower Humboldt lead to the expansion of D2 (severe drought). The southern portion of the NWS service area is depicted as D0 (abnormally dry) (Figure 12 top image). The U.S. Drought Monitor changes since last month had slight improvement from Tahoe north into Sierra County as a delayed response to April rain and snow, and a further degradation along the lower Humboldt in NE Pershing county (Figure 12 bottom image). The very warm water year temperatures (Figure 13) are in a large part to blame for the limited snowpack and early snowmelt. Area wide water year precipitation is displayed in Figure 14.

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:

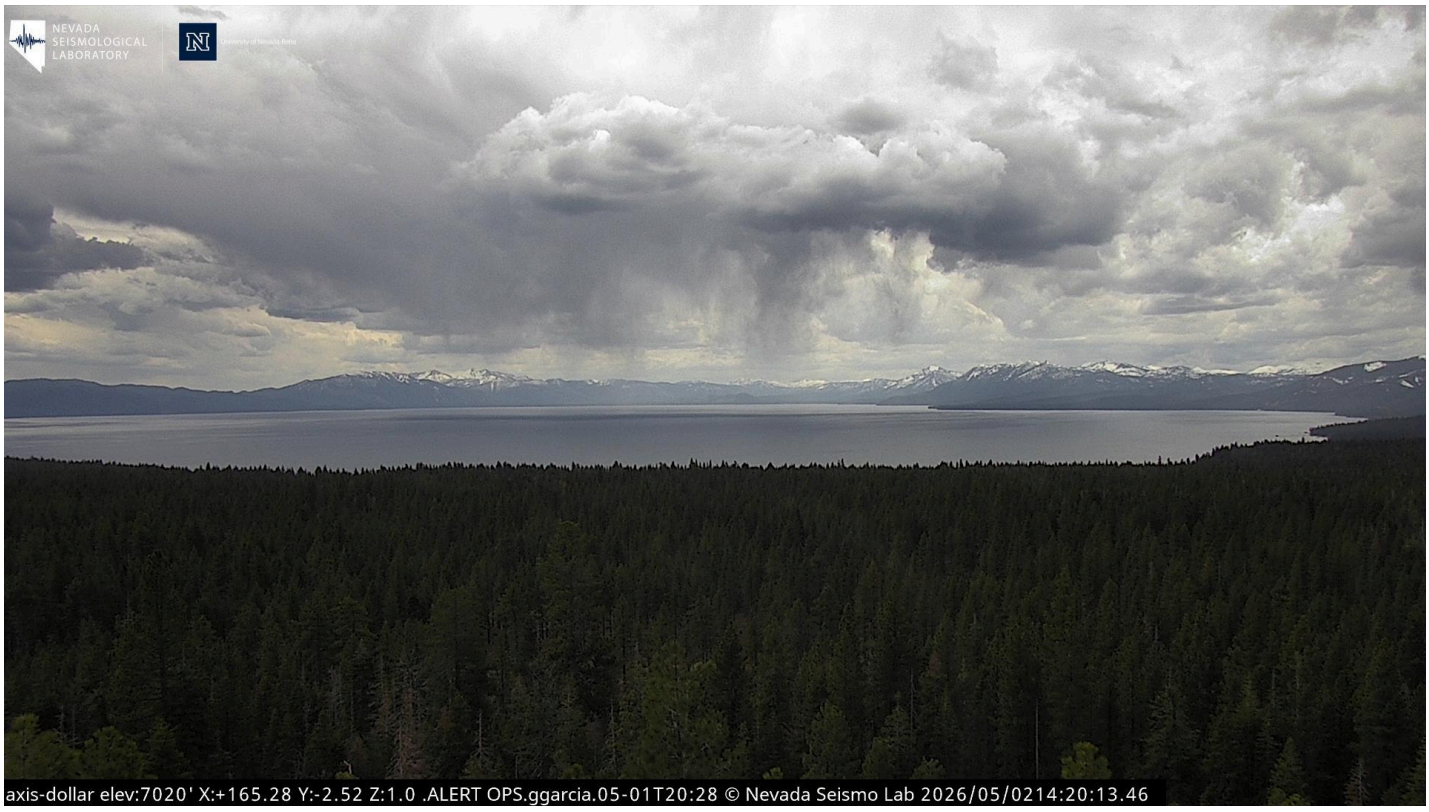


Photo 1: Showers over Lake Tahoe, view from Dollar Point CA web camera, 5/2 (University of Nevada, Reno and Nevada Seismological Laboratory)

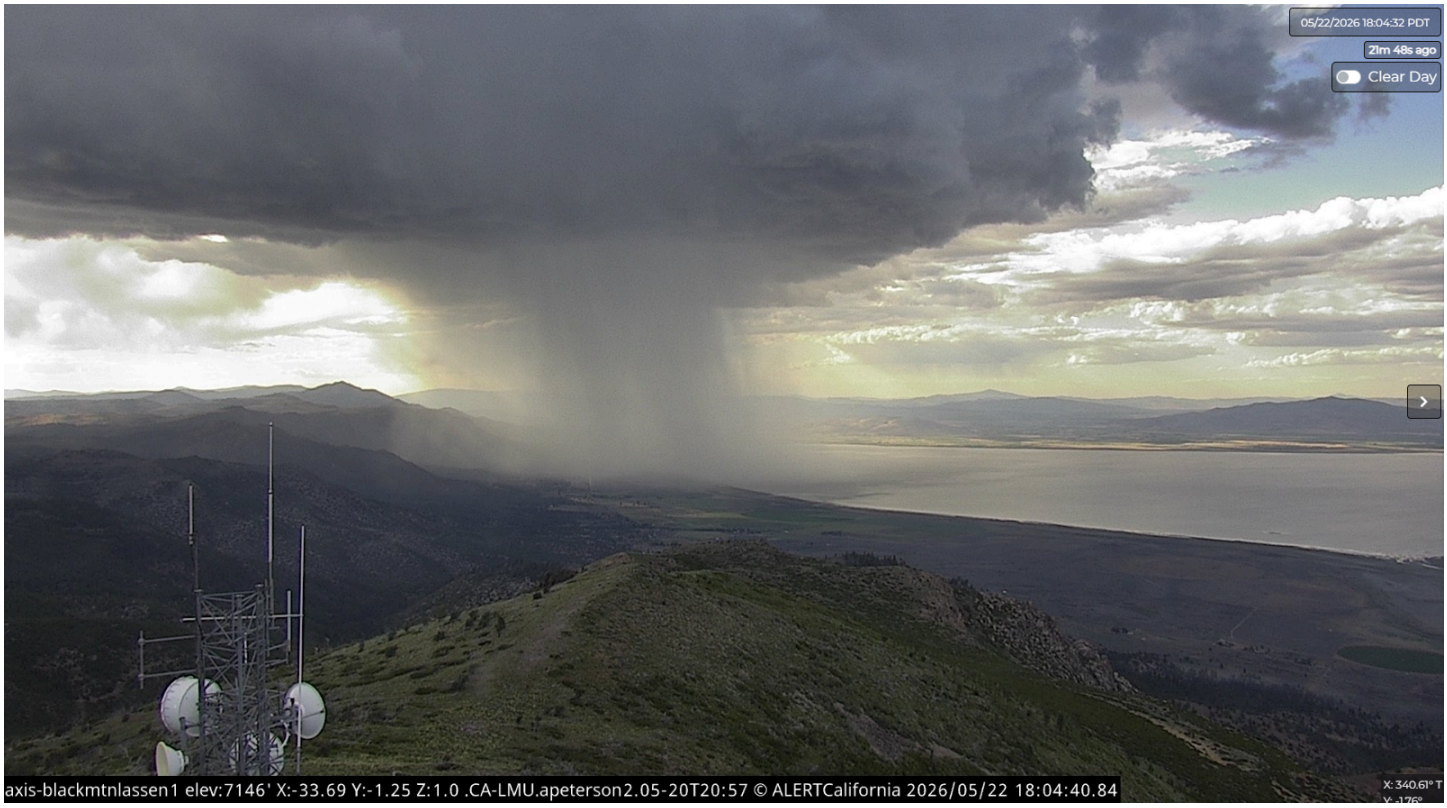


Photo 2: Thunderstorm w/heavy rain & small hail near Honey Lake CA, view from Black Mtn web camera, 5/22 (UC San Diego/PG&E utilities)

Photo 3: Smoke plume from Quartz Fire in northeast Pershing Co. NV, view from Winnemucca Mtn web camera, 5/23 (University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada Seismological Laboratory, and NV Energy)

Photo 4: Fresh spring snowfall along US-50 in Glenbrook NV, 5/27 (NV DOT).

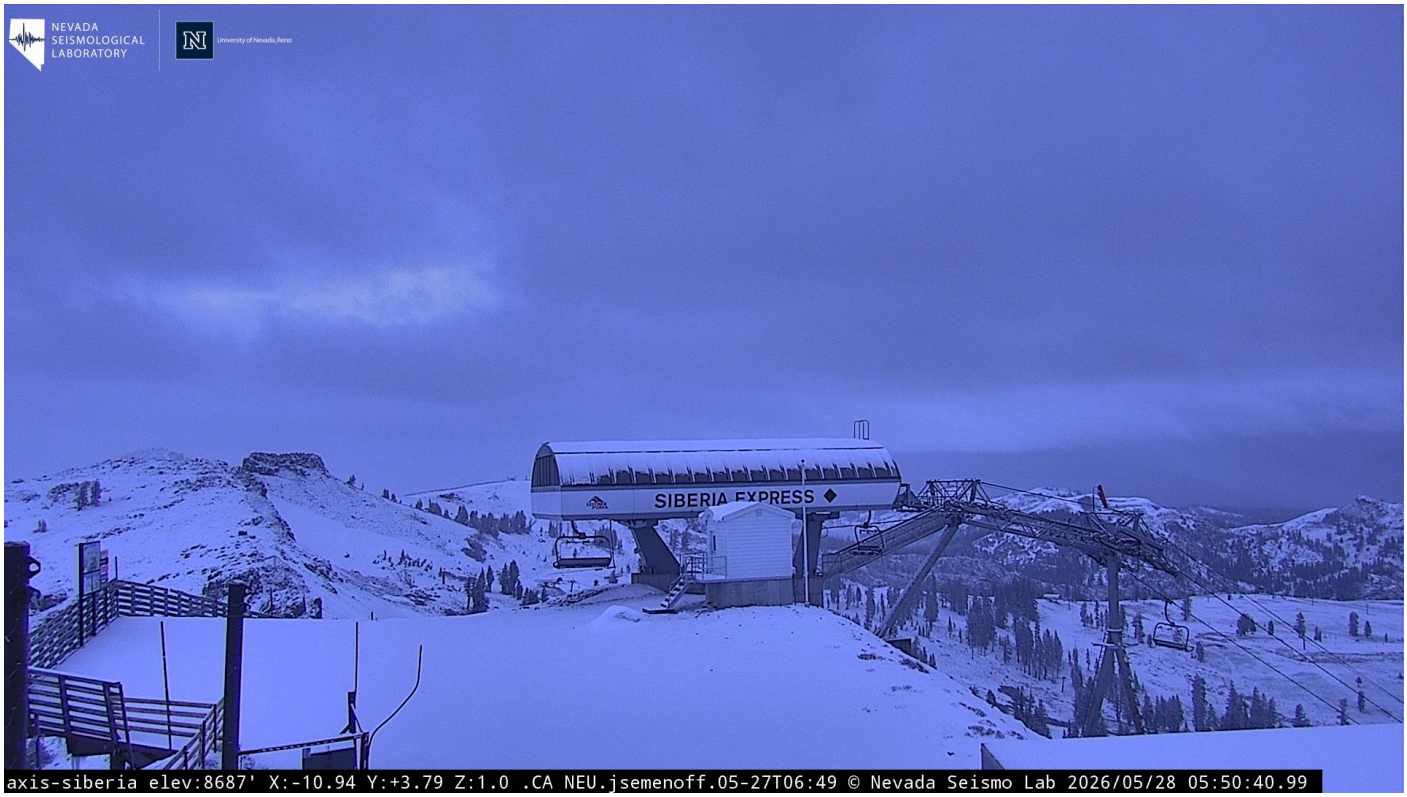


Photo 5: Fresh spring snowfall at the top of Palisades Tahoe CA ski resort, 5/28 (University of Nevada, Reno and Nevada Seismological Laboratory).

Photo 6: Fresh Snow in the White Mountains CA, 5/31. (Photo credit Sue Burak)

Figures:

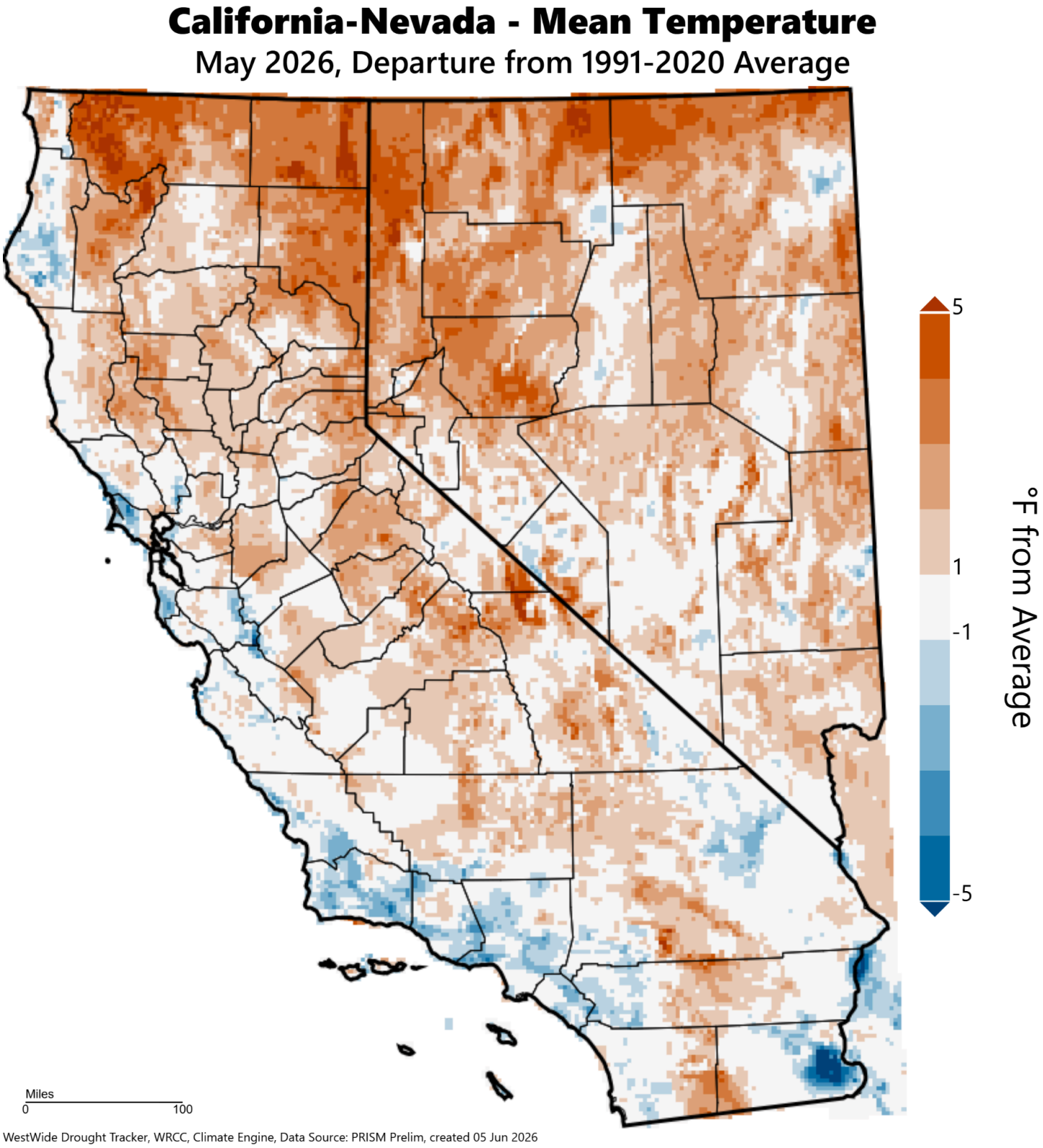


Figure 1: Departure from normal temperatures for May 2026.(WWDT)

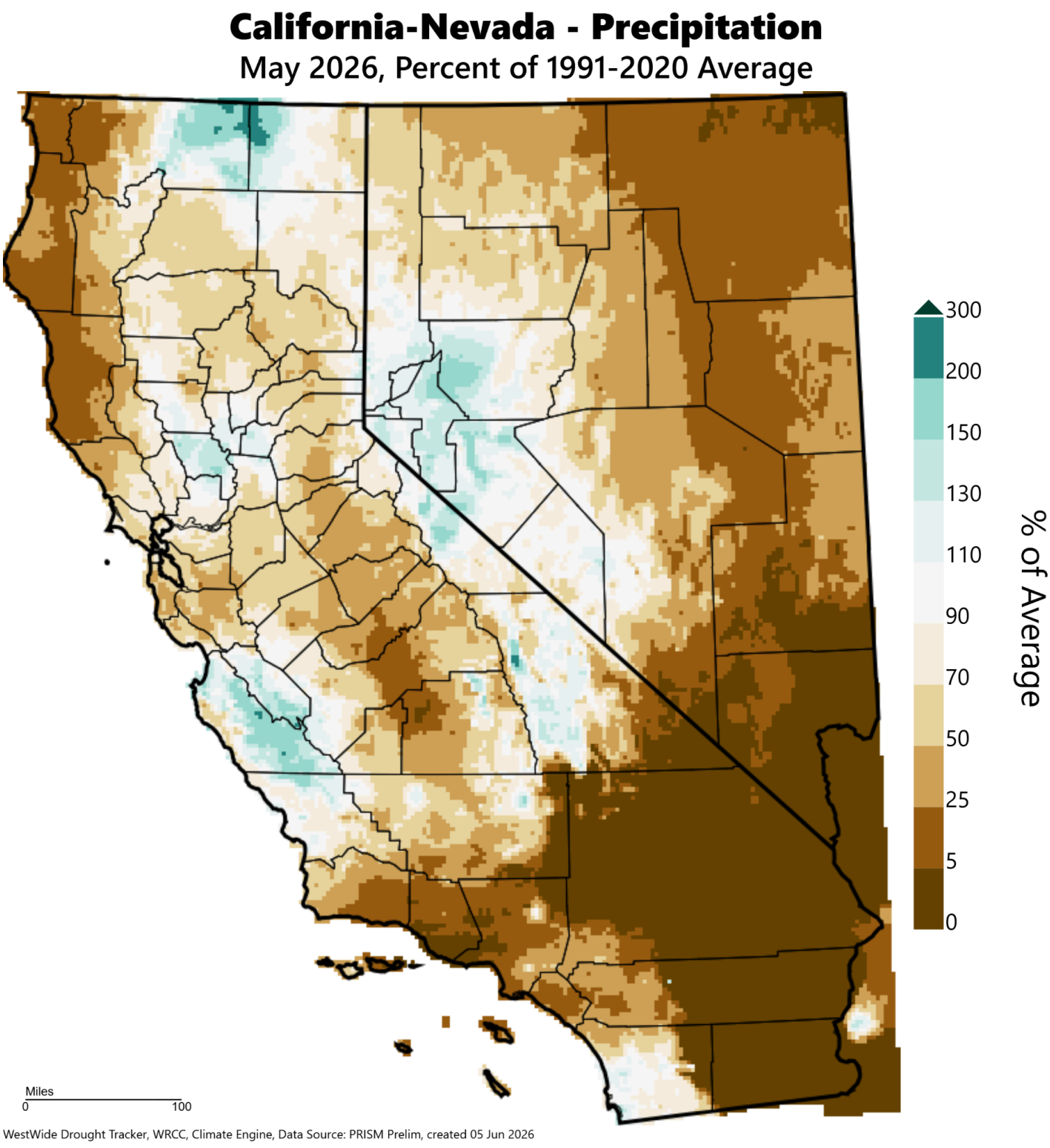


Figure 2: Percent of normal precipitation for May 2026. (WWDT)

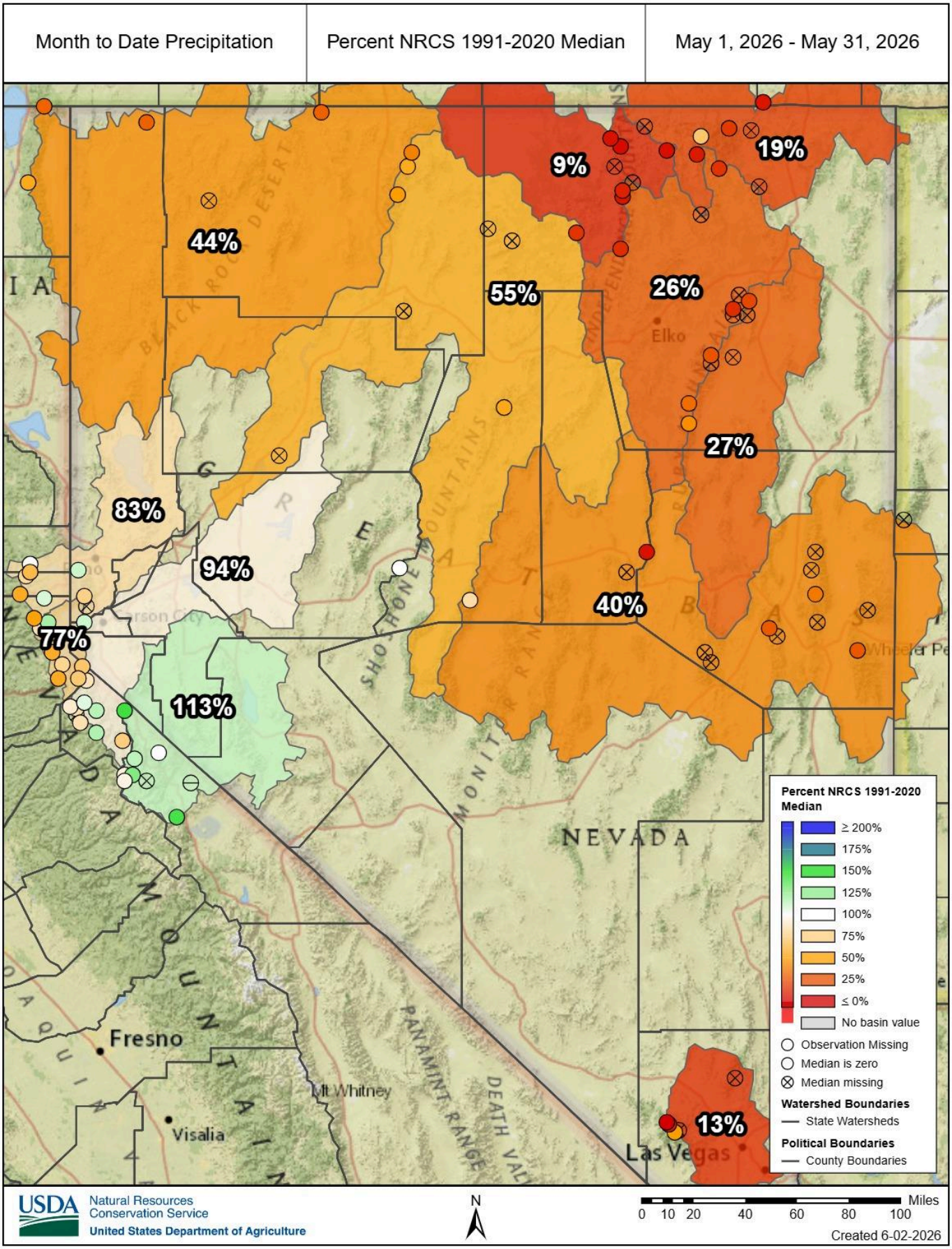


Figure 3. SNOTEL mountain precipitation for May 2026.

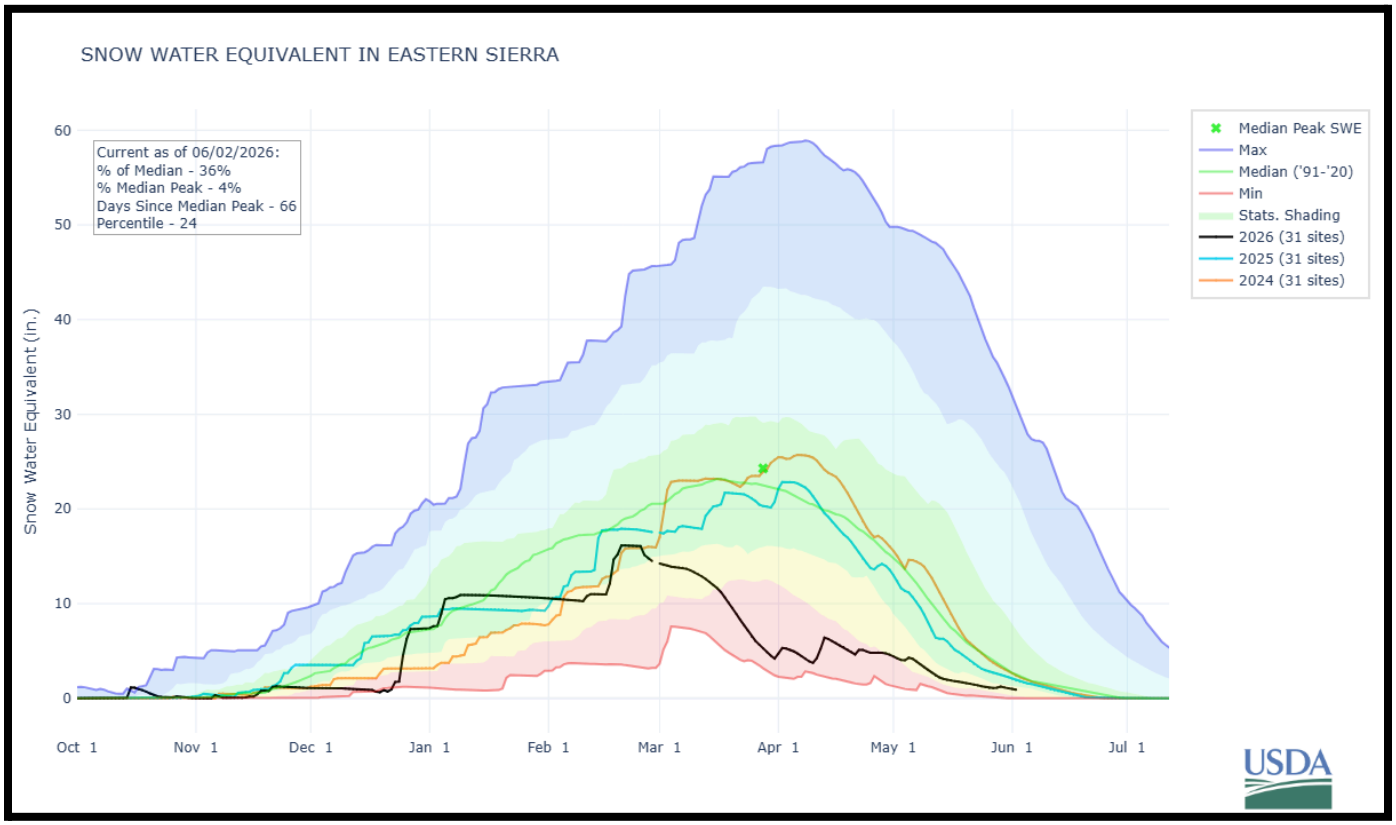


Figure 4. NRCS SNOTEL snow water equivalent (SWE) for the combined Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins. This year in black with 2025 and 2024 plotted for reference. All sites in the Humboldt basin have been bare for a prolonged period of time and therefore not plotted.

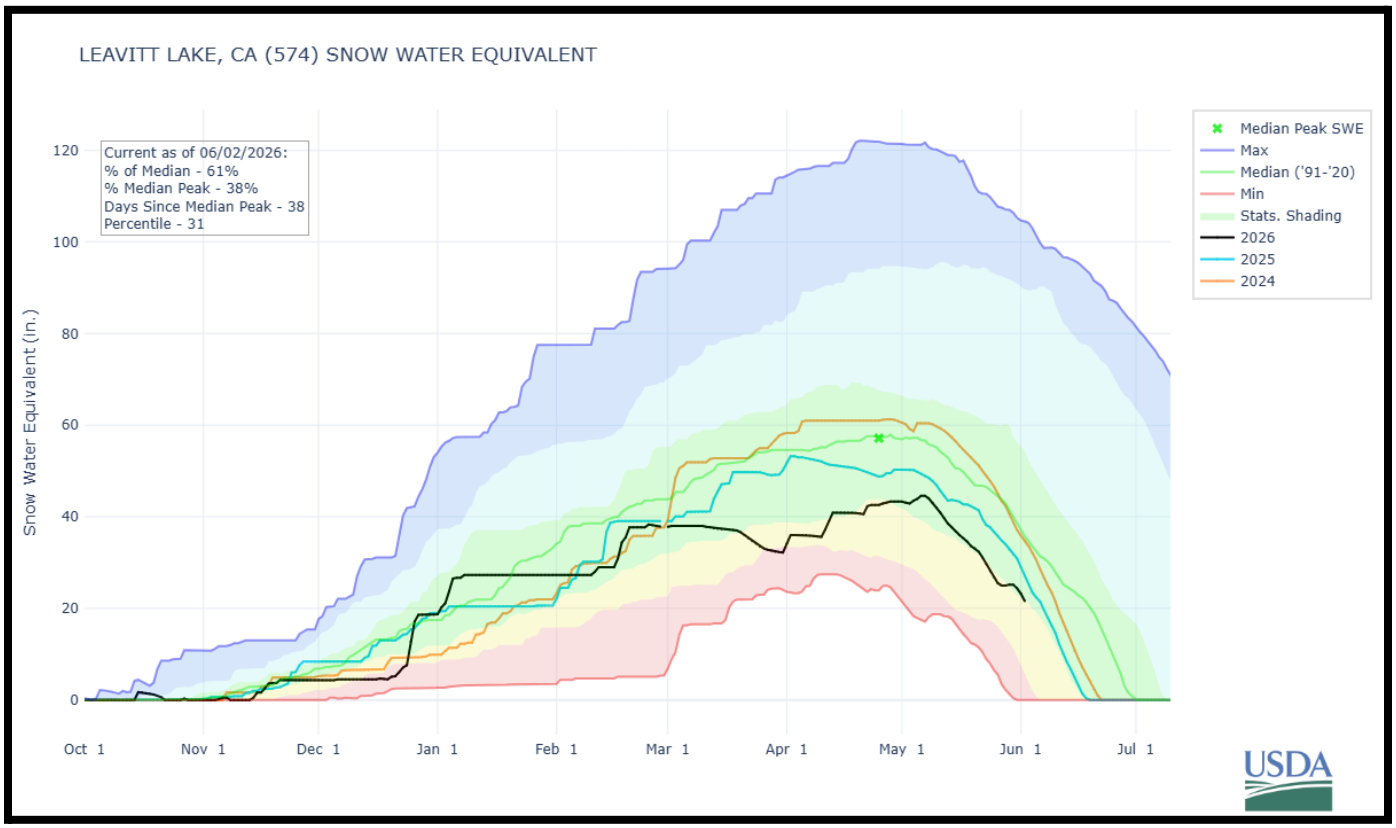


Figure 5. NRCS SNOTEL snow water equivalent (SWE) for the Leavitt Lake in the Walker Basin with this year in black, and the last two years for comparison. Leavitt Lake is in the Walker basin and typically the deepest SNOTEL site in the area and often the last to melt out.

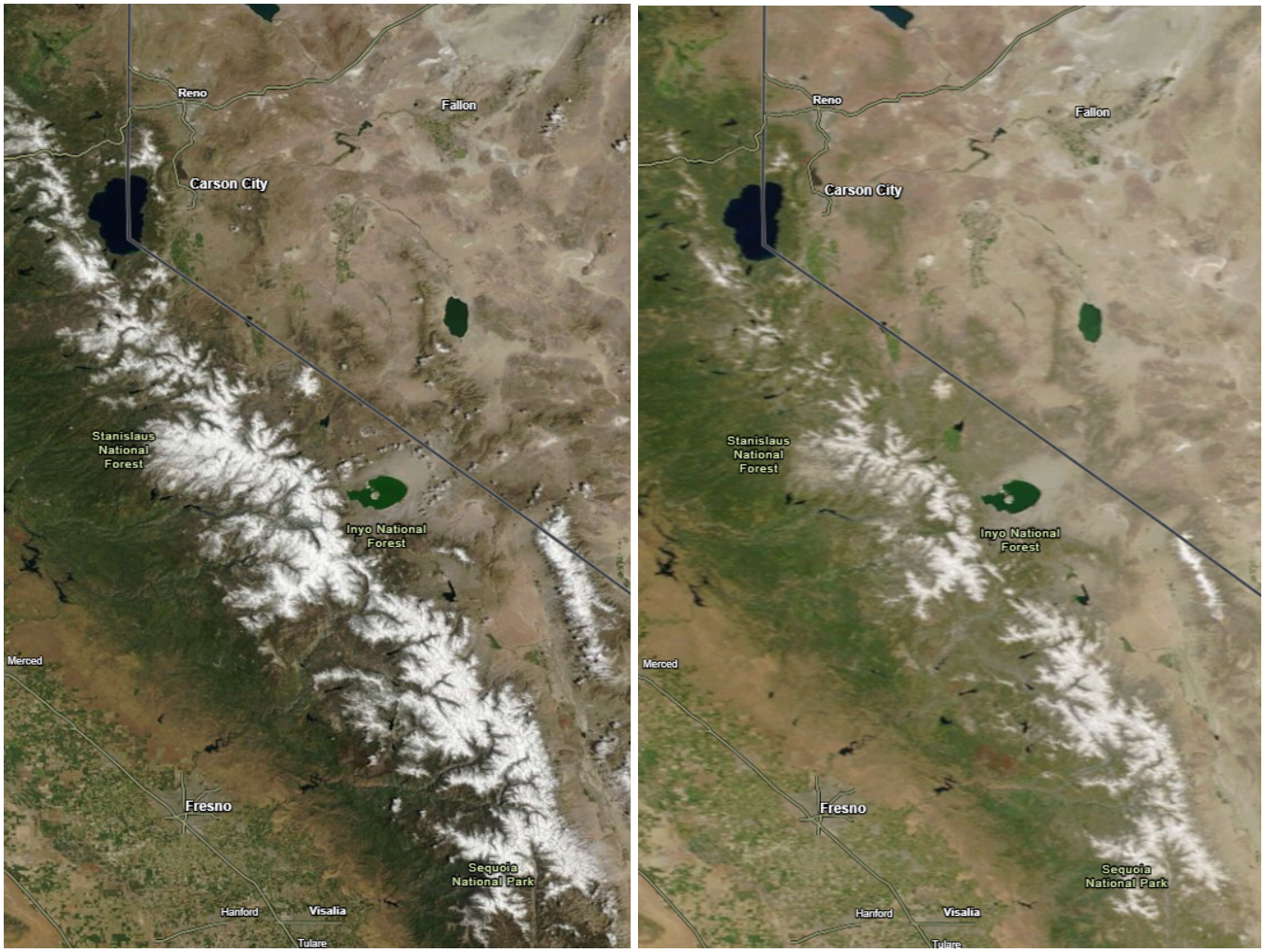


Figure 6. True color near cloud free MODIS imagery for 4/30/26 and 6/1/2026/26 from [NASA Worldview]

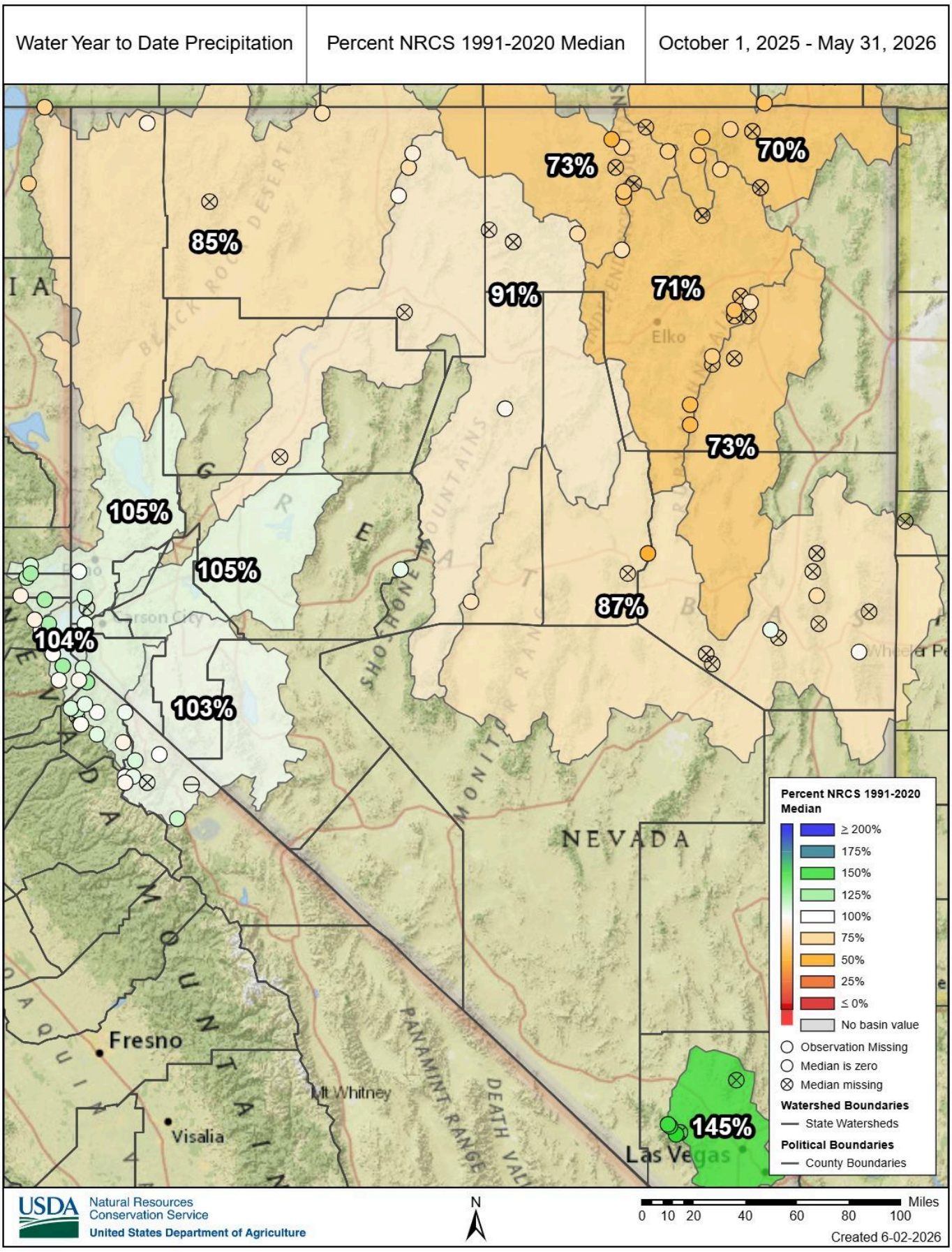
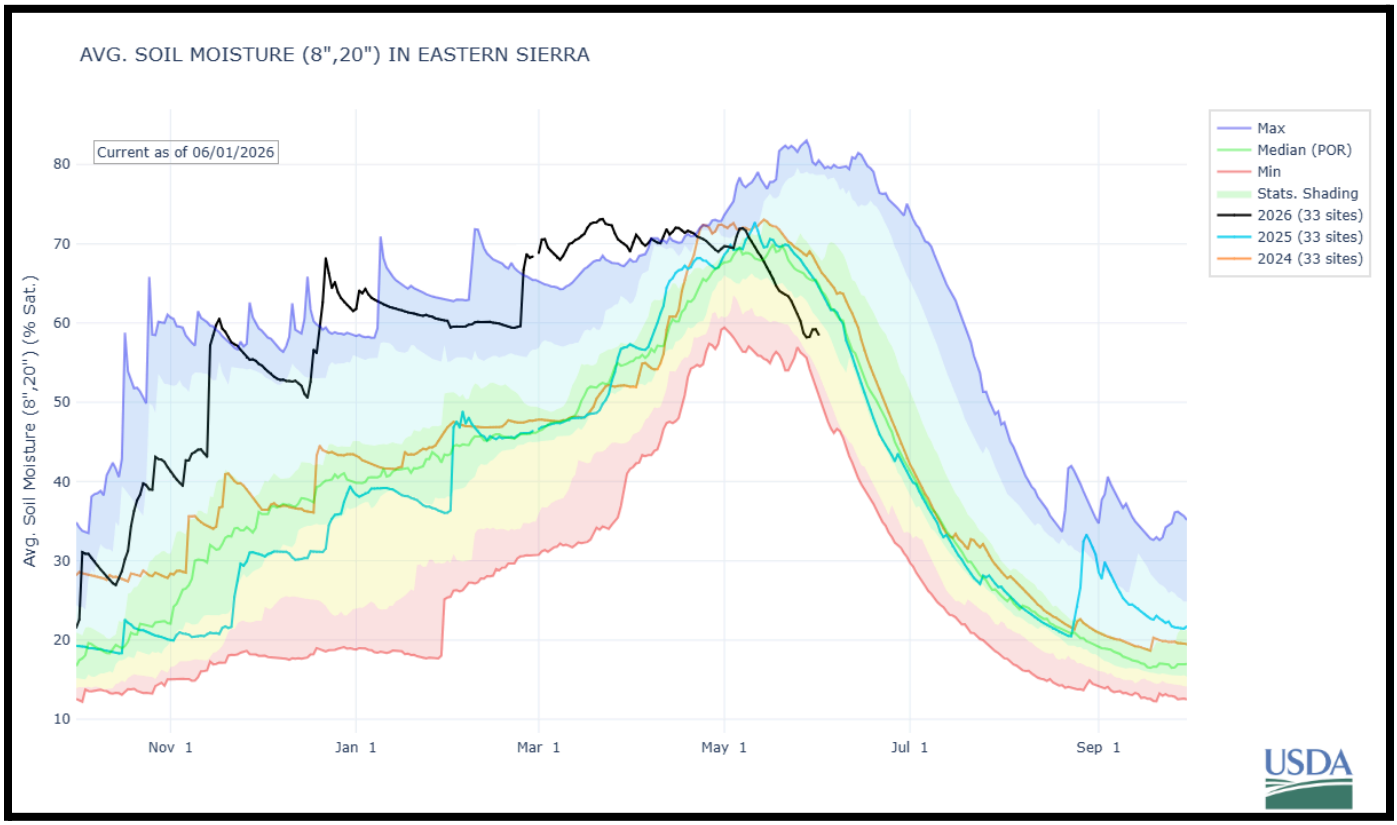


Figure 7. NRCS SNOTEL basin Water year precipitation as % of Median through May 31st, 2026



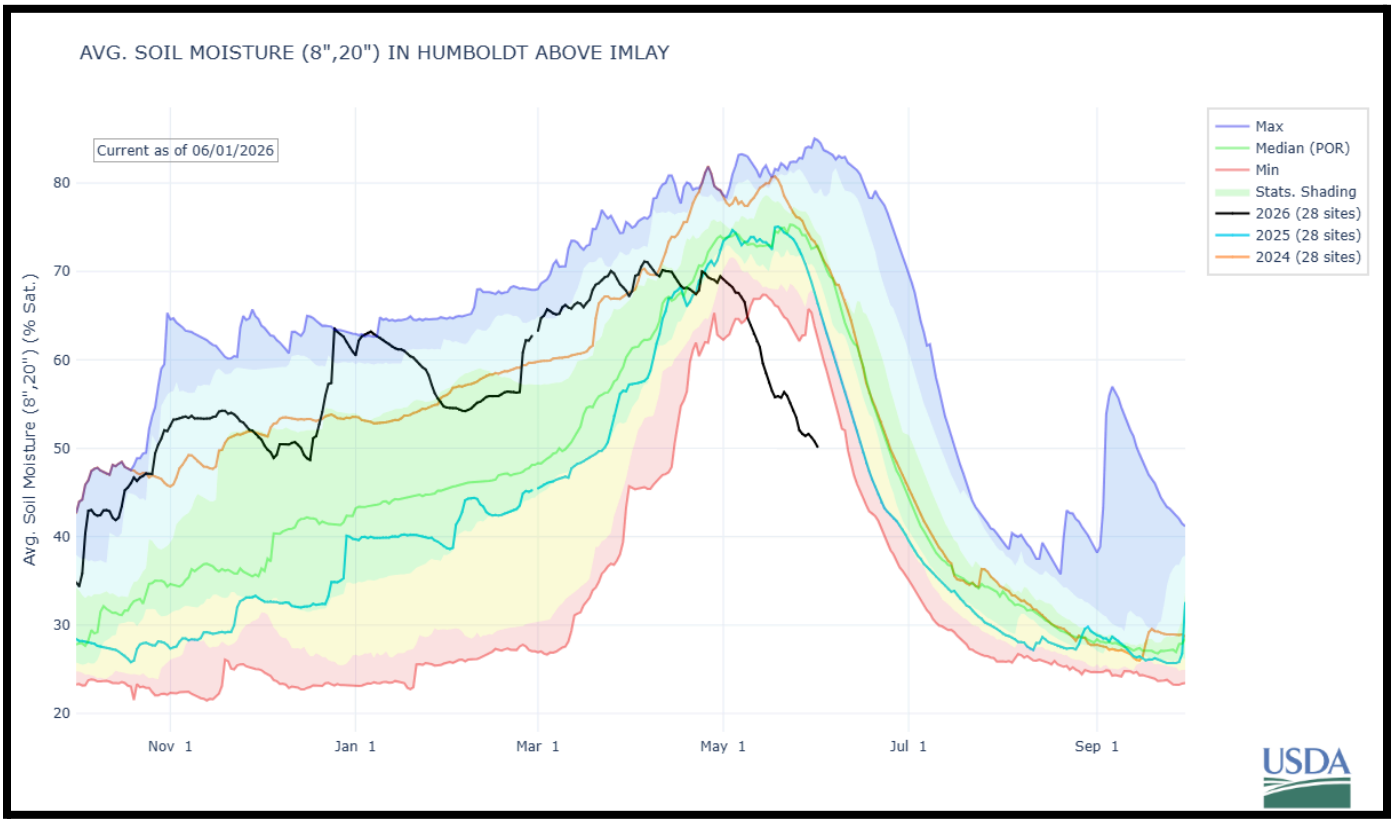


Figure 8. NRCS SNOTEL soil moisture for the combined Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins (top), and Humboldt basin (bottom) indicated in black for the water year 2026. Water years 2025 and 2024 are plotted in blue and orange respectively for additional perspective.

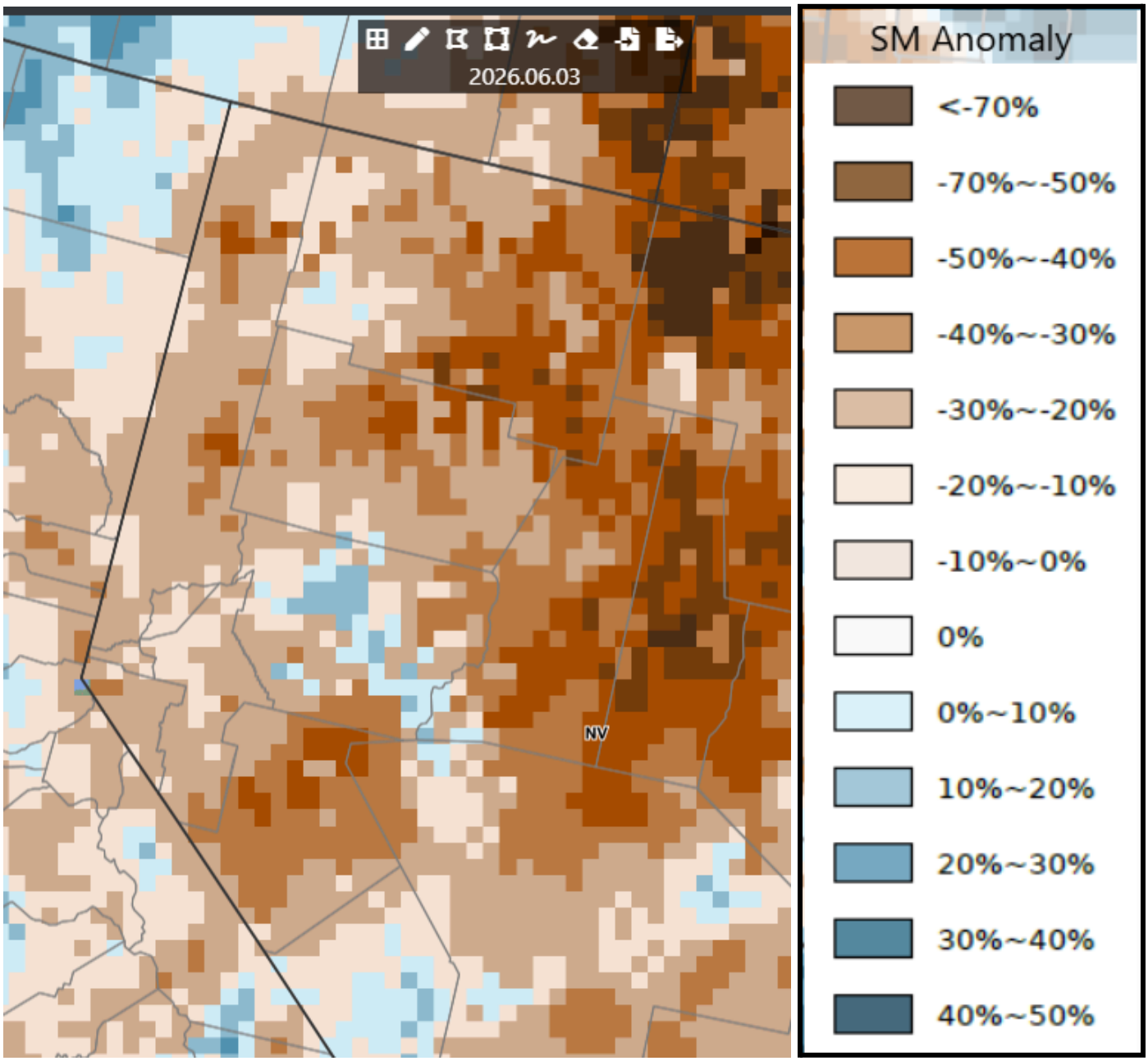
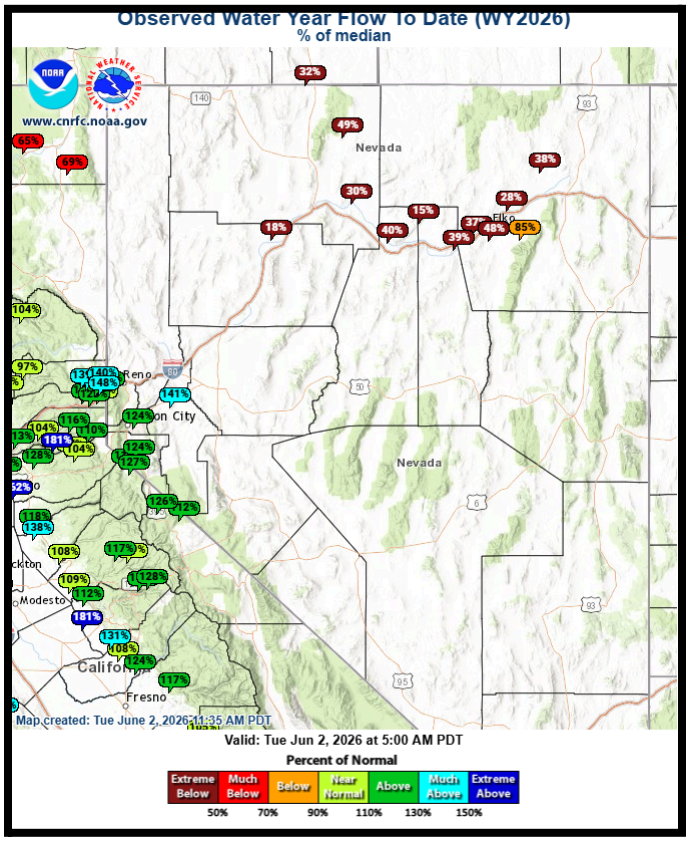


Figure 9. Crop-CASMA Soil Moisture Anomaly 06/03/2026



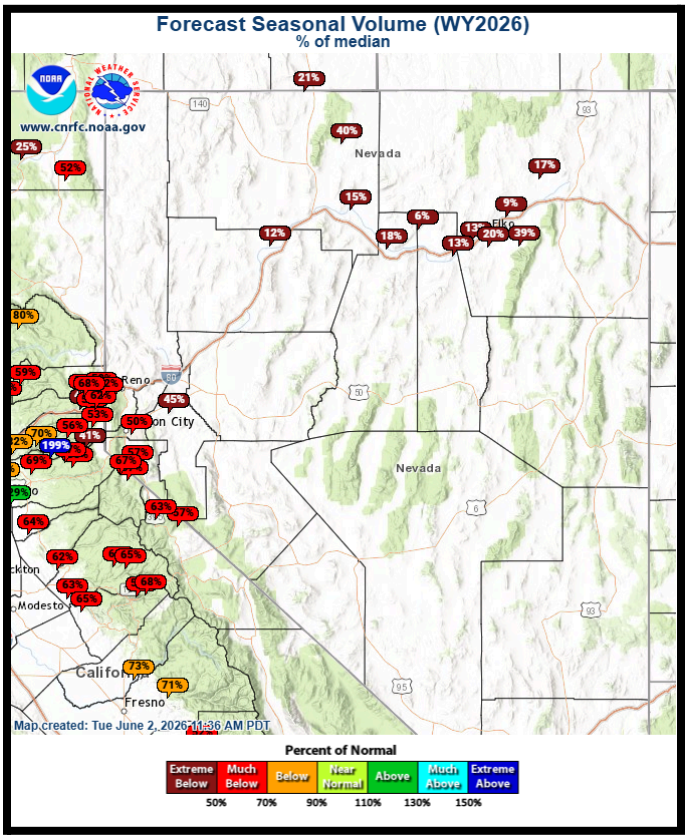


Figure 10. CNRFC Water year 2026 observed flow to date and right figure CNRFC April-July forecast volume both as % of median and as of April 30th.

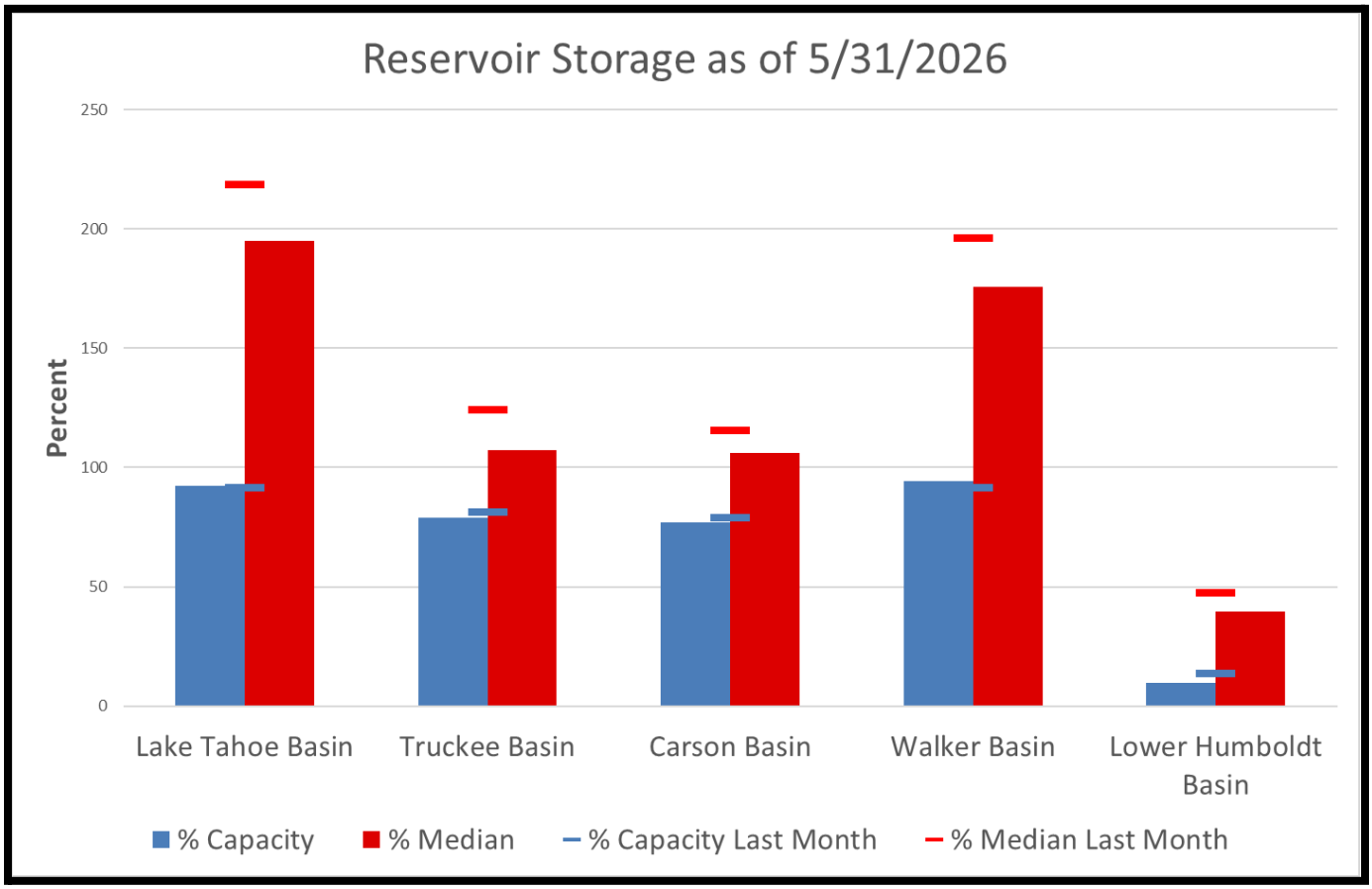
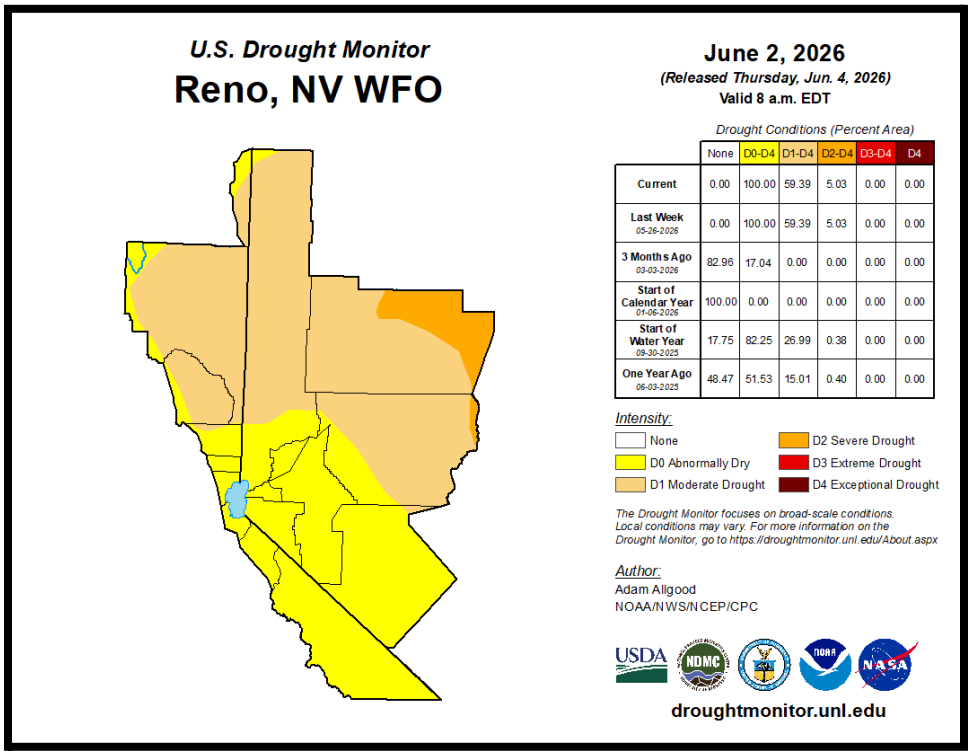


Figure 11. End of March reservoir storage relative to capacity and **median*** for this month and last month.



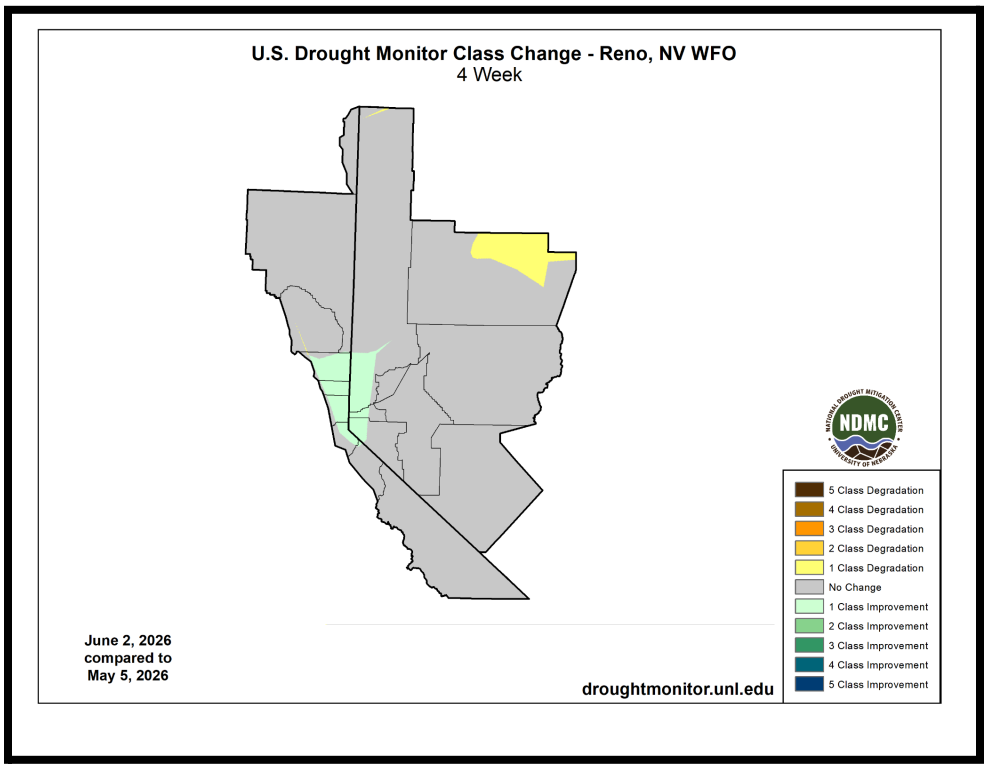


Figure 12. Drought Monitor Status on June 2nd (top) and the 4 week change map (bottom). Check for updates at: [Drought Monitor]().

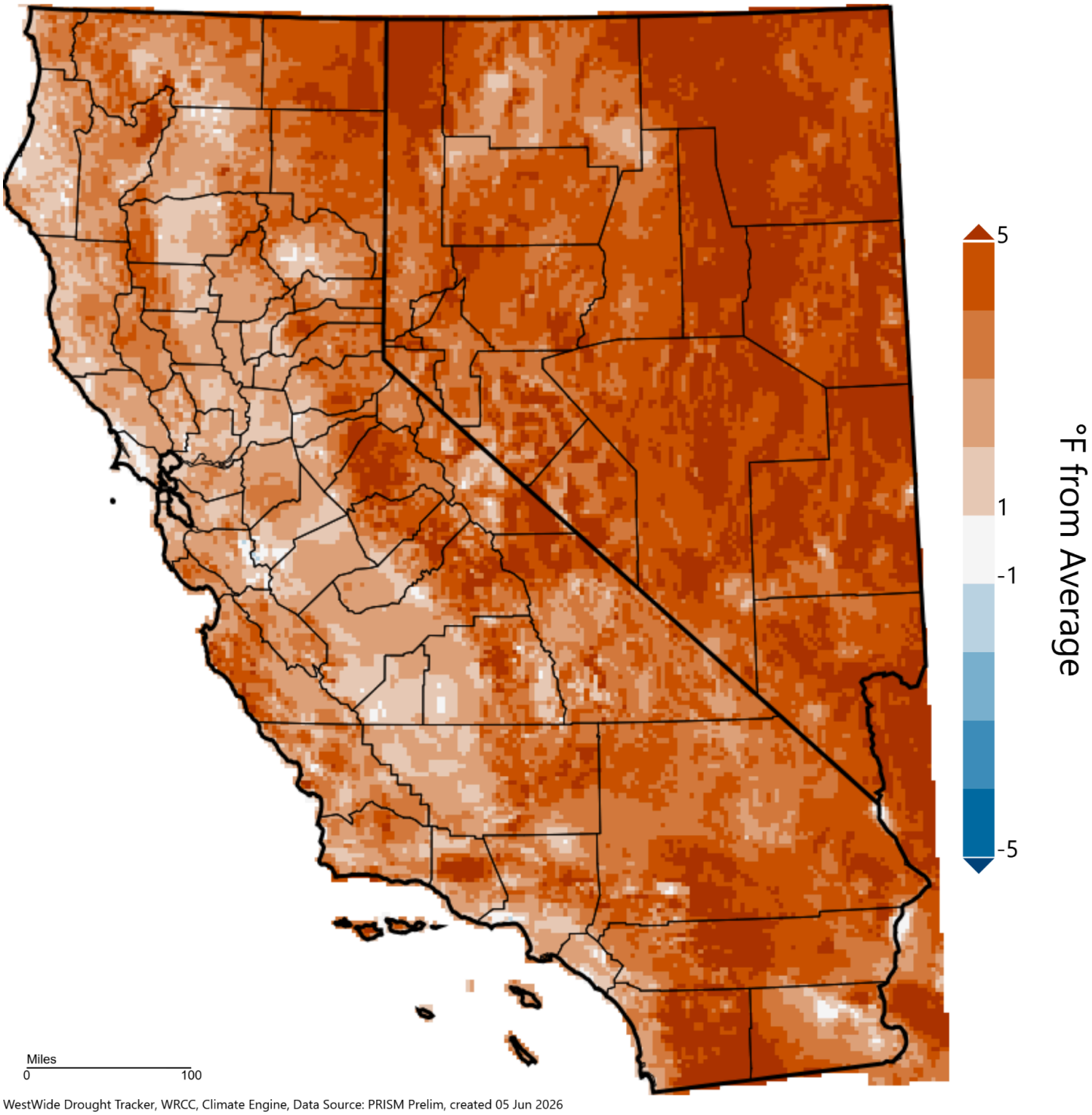


Figure 13. Water year to date mean temperature departure. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. (WWDT)

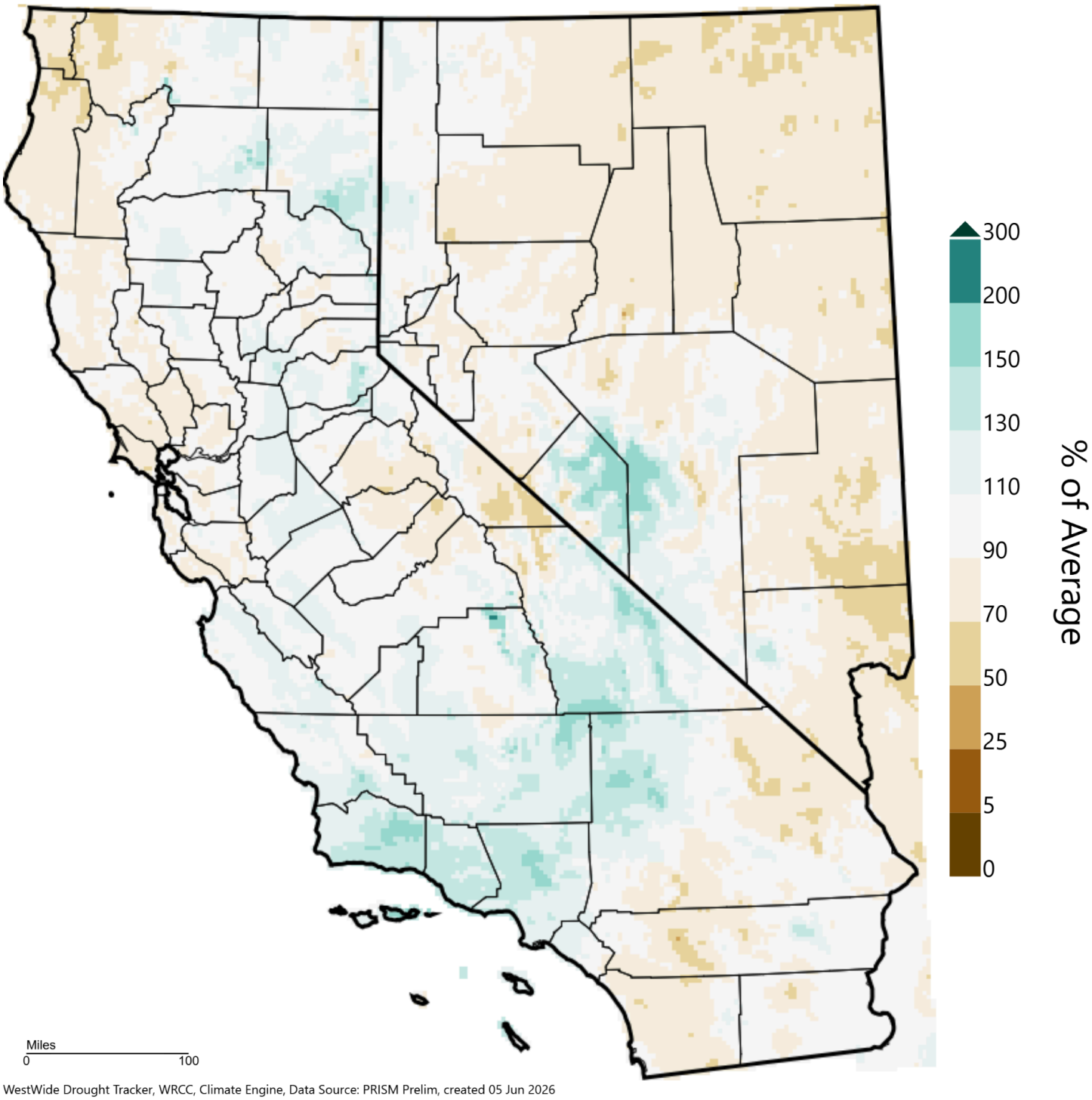


Figure 14. Water year to date precipitation. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. (WWDT)