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USDA Southwest Climate Hub Bulletin

News, research and events for the Southwest Climate Hub (SWCH) region
March 2018

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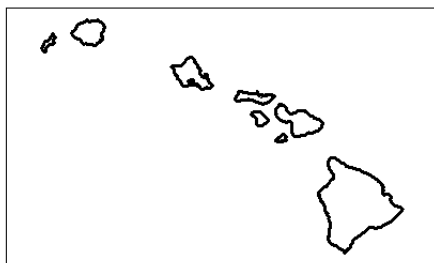
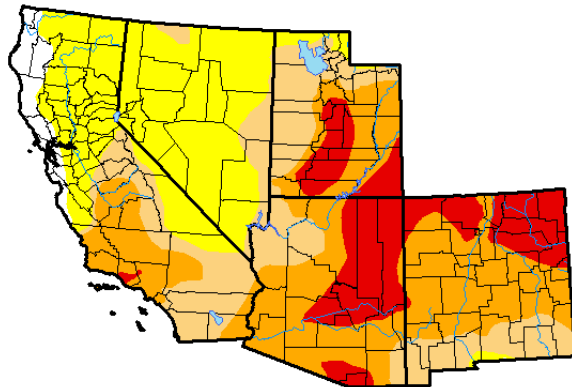
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USDA Southwest Climate Hub

Released Thursday, Mar. 22, 2018
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

| | None | D0-D4 | D1-D4 | D2-D4 | D3-D4 | D4 |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Current | 4.04 | 95.96 | 67.70 | 46.05 | 15.43 | 0.00 |
| Last Week 03-13-2018 | 4.04 | 95.96 | 67.87 | 46.33 | 13.21 | 0.00 |
| 3 Months Ago 12-19-2017 | 31.52 | 68.48 | 35.67 | 3.14 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Start of Calendar Year 01-02-2018 | 30.86 | 69.14 | 41.51 | 9.27 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Start of Water Year 09-26-2017 | 72.24 | 27.76 | 6.04 | 0.16 | 0.03 | 0.00 |
| One Year Ago 03-21-2017 | 75.19 | 24.81 | 6.44 | 0.32 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Intensity:
■ D0 Abnormally Dry ■ D3 Extreme Drought
■ D1 Moderate Drought ■ D4 Exceptional Drought
■ D2 Severe Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:
Chris Fenimore
NCEI/NESDIS/NOAA



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Drought conditions and resources

Drought conditions have been worsening over much of the Southwest, particularly the Four Corners area. The Navajo Nation recently issued an emergency drought declaration. The USDA designated counties in [Arizona](#), [New Mexico](#) and surrounding states as [primary natural disaster areas](#) due to drought related losses and damages. The Southern Plains drought [webinar](#) presents impacts in New Mexico and other Southern Plains states.

Visit the [U.S. Drought Portal](#) to see the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), a weekly map of drought conditions, and the [Drought Early Warning System](#). If you observe drought impacts in your area, please submit your observations at the [Drought Impact Reporter](#).

Dry conditions can be a harbinger of wildfire. Learn more about fire in the Southwest, by attending one of the upcoming [April Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Workshops](#) and the CLIMAS & Southwest Climate Science Center [Colloquium and Panel Discussion](#) (Today!). Fire resources for the Southwest include [After Fire: A toolkit for the Southwest](#) and these [fire resources](#) listed in a previous Southwest Climate Hub Bulletin.

Sagebrush Seed Work Group

The Sagebrush Seed Work Group (SSWG) was formed in 2017 with the following goals: 1) identify best practices and knowledge gaps relevant to the use of sagebrush seed in ecosystem restoration activities, 2) promote research to develop, test and refine those practices and to fill knowledge gaps and 3) engage with existing collaborations to encourage adoption and

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certification agencies. The primary tasks for the group include: exploring methods to differentiate taxa both in the field and in the laboratory, developing seed transfer limits based on adaptive traits and making these limits climate-smart (i.e., capable of projecting these transfer limits using climate change models) and developing seed technology, like seed coatings, to improve germination and establishment success.

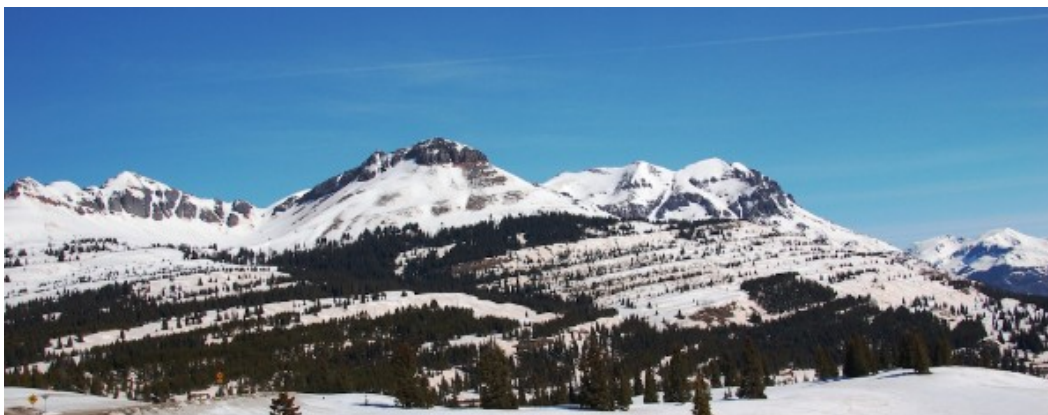
If you are interested in more information, please contact Bryce Richardson, USDA SW Climate Hub Co-Lead, US Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station: brichardson02[at]fs.fed.us



Collectors harvest seeds in the fall from basin big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* subsp. *tridentata*). Seed is then cleaned, certified for purity, subspecies and location, and then stored for restoration projects. (Photo credit: Stan Young)

86th annual Western Snow Conference

Early [registration](#) ends on March 31. This year's [conference](#) will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 16-19, 2018. The conference venue offers the opportunity to interact with other professionals while enjoying the unique ambience of the desert Southwest.



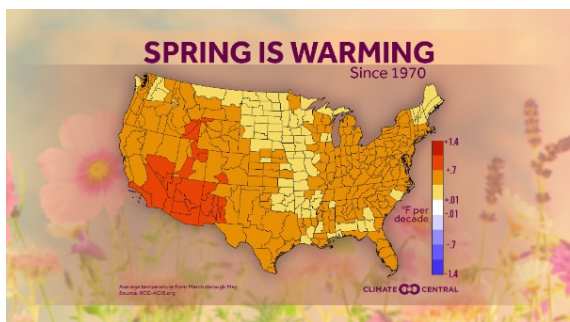
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Tribal Soil Climate Analysis Network (TSCAN)

There will be 30 weather stations available to eligible Tribes to support agricultural operations and Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. The Tribal Soil Climate Analysis Network (TSCAN) consists of a scaled down version of a full size Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) monitoring station. The request for technical approval of a new TSCAN station must be made through the [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\) State Conservationist](#) for the particular state in which the new station will be located.

[News](#)

A [recent report](#) shows how the Livestock Forage Disaster Program has been a tremendous assistance to livestock producers since the 2008 and 2014 farm bills. The program provided eligible livestock producers with payments to partially cover additional monthly feed costs due to natural disasters.



The southwestern U.S. has the strongest spring warming and for the entire U.S., spring has warmed slightly more than 2°F. Check [here](#) to see the warming trend for your city.

[Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) is described as a road map for dealing with impacts of a changing climate.

Explaining "What is climate?" to an eleven-year old, read about the [International Institute for Sustainable Development Experimental Lakes Area's submission](#) to the 2018 [Flame Challenge](#).

[Research](#)

[Dramatic declines in snowpack in the western US](#)

Across snow monitoring sites in the western states significant declines in April 1 snow water equivalent since mid-century show declines equivalent to the volume of water stored in Lake Mead.

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[Observed Changes in Climate and Streamflow in the Upper Rio Grande Basin](#)

Contributions of snowpack to streamflow in the Upper Rio Grande have been declining since mid-century showing the impacts of climate change on the basin due to warming winters and springs.

(Journal of the American Water Resources Association)

[Climate Change Trends and Impacts on California Agriculture: A Detailed Review](#)

Future climate changes pose risks to California which produces more than two-thirds of the Nation's fruits and nuts. This synthesis describes the current state of knowledge, and asserts the importance of local adaptation efforts with effective stakeholder engagement.

(Agronomy)

[Future southcentral US wildfire probability due to climate change](#)

Simulation models show that fire is likely to become more frequent in New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma through the end-of-the-century.

(Climatic Change)

[Announcements](#)

The 5th annual Native Youth in Food and Agriculture Leadership Summit

Deadline: March 31, 2018

The [Summit](#) is open to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian youth, ages 15-18 (including recently graduated high school seniors). The Summit will be held June 7-14 in Fayetteville, Arkansas, at the University of Arkansas School of Law, home of the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI). The 2018 Summit will be a skills-development focused event that will give attendees an opportunity to do a deep dive in a particular area of food and agricultural production or policy. These four subject matter areas are:

- 1) Agricultural Business and Finance;**
- 2) Conservation Practices and Planning for Agricultural Production;**
- 3) Agricultural & Food Law and Policy; and**
- 4) Nutrition and Health.**

[Applications are online now!](#)

2018 Early Career Researcher Professional Development Training

Deadline: April 2, 2018

The [Early Career Researcher Professional Development Training](#) designed for **graduate**

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New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, or Texas/Louisiana coast).

New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute 2018-2019 Student Water Research Grant Program

Deadline: April 20, 2018

The [Student Water Research Grants](#) are intended to help students initiate research projects or to supplement existing student research projects in water resources research. Students must be enrolled in a degree program at one of the eight New Mexico Public Education Institutions (New Mexico State University, University of New Mexico, New Mexico Tech, Eastern New Mexico University, Western New Mexico University, New Mexico Highlands University, Northern New Mexico College, and Diné College). The proposal submission must have a faculty sponsor from the applicant's institution.

Events

Meetings

[California Tribal Water Summit](#), April 4-5

[Great Plains Grassland Summit](#), April 10-11

[Western Snow Conference](#), April 16-19

[National Tribal Forum on Air Quality](#), May 14-17

[NOAA's 16th Annual Climate Prediction Applications Science Workshop](#), May 22-24

[Climate Resilience - A course for Farmers](#), May 30- July 30

[Universities Council on Water Resources & National Institutes of Water Resources Conference](#), June 26-28

[2018 Sustainable Agriculture Education Association \(SAEA\) Conference](#), July 27-29

Webinars

[Fire in the Southwest Today](#), March 23

[California-Nevada Drought & Climate Outlook](#), March 26

[Drought & Climate Galleries](#), March 29

[Promoting Beneficial Insects in Vineyards for Conservation Biological Control](#), April 3

[Discussing Climate Change with Agriculture and Natural Resources Audiences: Professional Perspectives](#), April 12

[Balancing objectives and outcomes for wildlife habitat and forest management](#), April 25

[Irrigation Scheduling Tools for Improved Water Management & Water Use Efficiency](#), May 10

[California-Nevada Drought & Climate Outlook](#), May 29

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If so, please send it to [helena.deswood\[at\]ars.usda.gov](mailto:helena.deswood@ars.usda.gov) with "SWCH News" in the subject line!

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