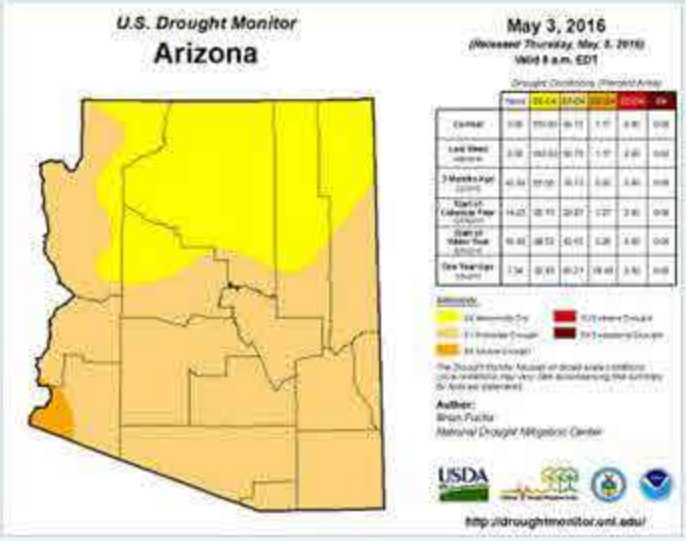
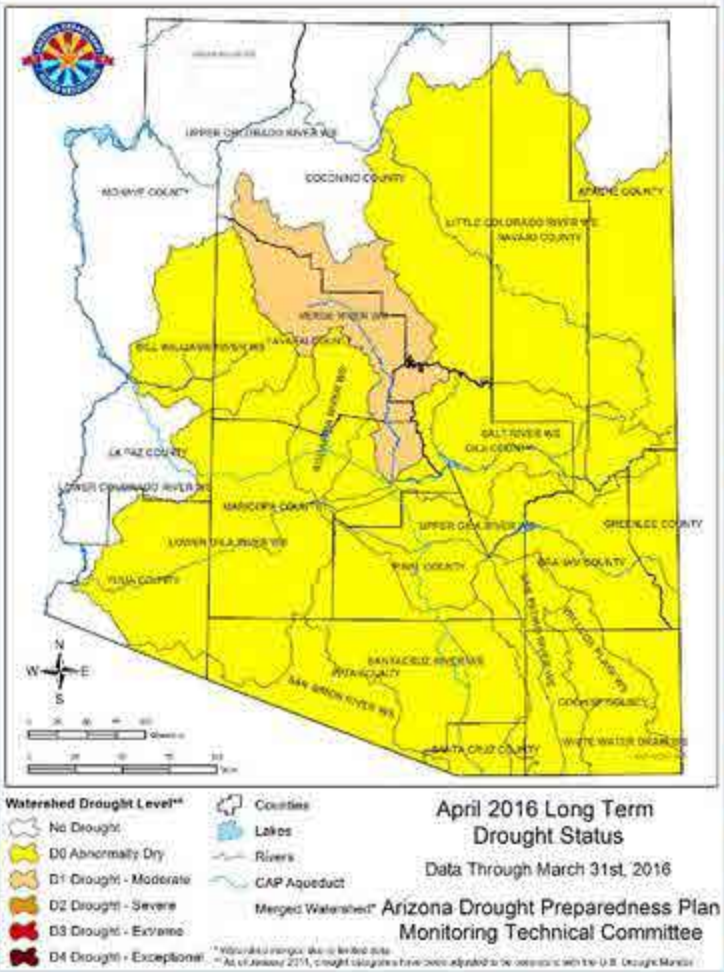
Drought Status Report

April 2016
Short-term Drought Status

April dryness, particularly in southern Arizona, led to the downgrading of southeastern Arizona from abnormally dry (D0) to moderate drought (D1). Northeastern Arizona also dropped from no drought to abnormally dry.

Currently 100% of the state is back in some level of drought, with 2/3 of the state in moderate drought. Fire danger is very high this spring as the dry conditions and high winds have dried out the grasses and shrubs.





January—March 2016
Long-term Drought Status

Winter precipitation this year was well below average for an El Niño winter. The winter season had a strong start in November through January, then the storms stopped coming into Arizona. Most of the storms that crossed Utah brushed by northern Arizona, but left central and southern Arizona quite dry.

The upper and lower Colorado River basins are represented with no drought conditions due to the wet monsoon and the early winter storms, however these areas are starting to dry out.

For a while, streamflow was near normal in some areas, but has later fallen well below average in most parts of the state, and snow pack is long gone. Forest wildfire risk is expected to be above normal across southern Arizona through June due to fine fuels and dry conditions.

Further deterioration will depend on whether the monsoon is wet or not. Since the period from April through June is normally dry statewide, some deterioration is likely before the monsoon kicks in.

Summaries produced by the State Drought Monitoring Technical Committee, May 5, 2016