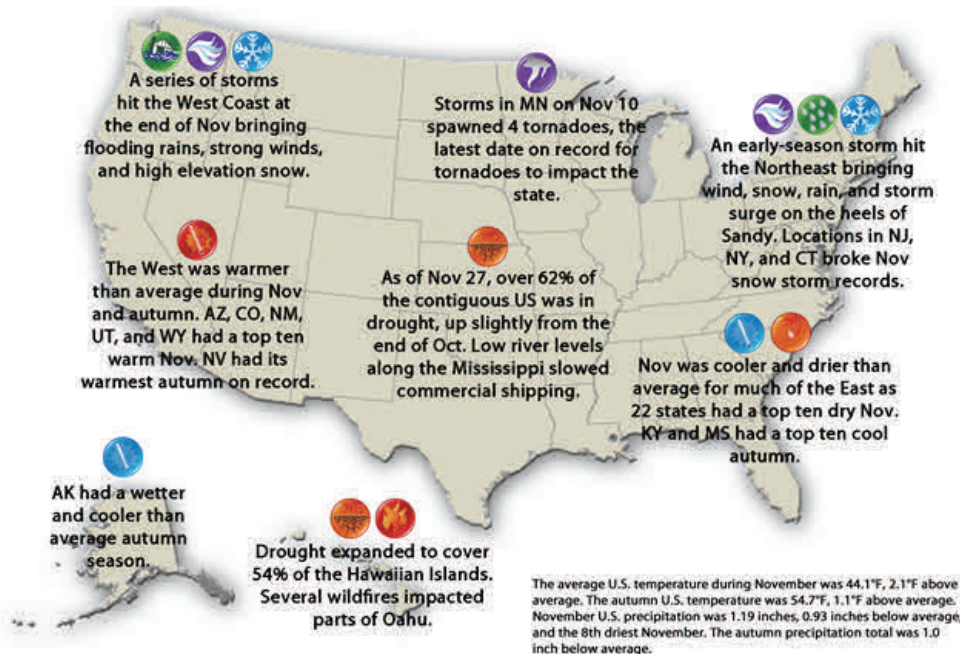


National Outlook — Significant Events for Fall 2012

## Drought persists, powerful storm provides some relief



**Central US:**

- The ongoing drought contributed to a large dust storm on October 17-18 in portions of Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Winds were sustained at 35-45 mph with gusts as high as 70 mph.

**Southern Great Plains:**

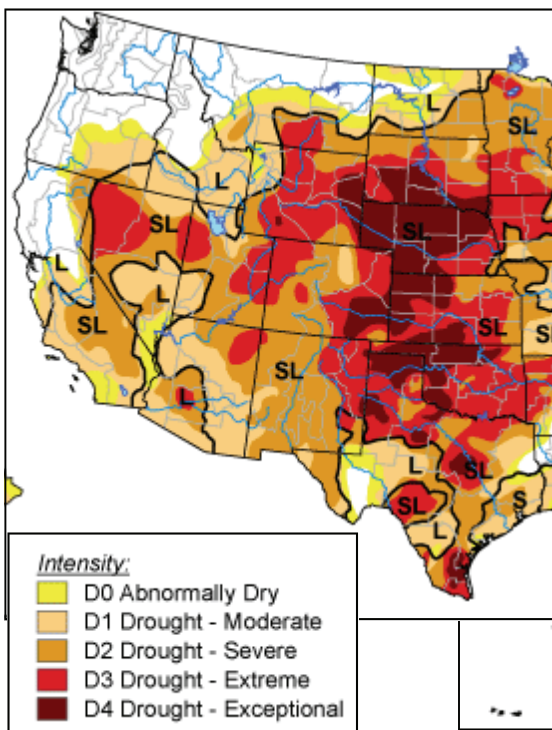
- In Texas, a much-needed September rainstorm added over a year of supply to the O.H. Ivie Reservoir.
- New Mexico, however, has not experienced this relief: the state's primary reservoir, Elephant Butte, was at 6% of capacity as of Nov 30th. Water releases and deliveries may be in jeopardy.

**Western US**

- A powerful, slow-moving storm system brought widespread heavy precipitation to the West, dropping as much as 1 to 2 feet of precipitation in the northern half of the Sierra Nevada and ranges along the Pacific Northwest.

Regional Outlook — Climate Overview for Fall 2012

### Drought in the West



**Left—US Drought Monitor:** Though early signs indicated a **weak El Niño** for the winter, neutral conditions have emerged instead. An El Niño would have been favorable for reducing drought, since El Niño typically brings above-average precipitation to the southwestern US. Without the extra moisture from El Niño, drought continues to linger across much of the West.

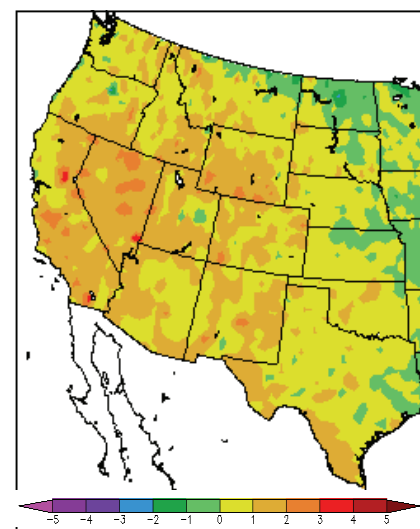
December 18, 2012.  
(droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

**Right — Departure**

**from Normal Temperature:** Most of the West experienced a warmer than average fall, with temperatures particularly higher than average in November. (hprcc.unl.edu)

### Departure from Normal Temp. (F)

Sept. 1 — Nov. 30, 2012



## Governor Leadership on Drought: WGA Co-Sponsors National Drought Forum

Given the extent and severity of the current drought, WGA co-sponsored the *National Drought Forum* on December 12-13, 2012 in Washington, DC. The forum focused on enhancing long-term drought preparedness and resilience, especially in advance of what could be another drought year in 2013.

“Drought impacts next year could be far more severe, especially given that the reservoir storage in many basins has been depleted,” said Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, guest speaker at the event.

Governor Brownback has employed a suite of policy reforms, state initiatives, and federal programs to address drought and water stress in the Ogallala aquifer. Reservoir management and dredging to re-establish reservoir capacity are of particular interest to the Governor.

Immediate follow-up activities include:

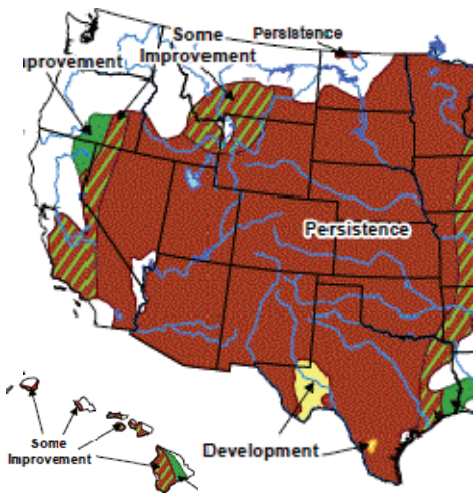
- 1) Regular, real-time coordination and information sharing on the status, impacts, and prospects for drought throughout 2013
- 2) Identification of priority basins or projects that are severely affected by drought, in order to focus mitigation strategies for 2013
- 3) Coordination with USDA on federal disaster declarations and drought relief programs
- 4) Working with the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge critical reservoirs and enhance storage capacity in the West.



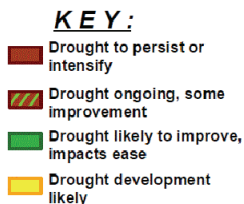
*Governor Sam Brownback spoke about Kansas' response to the 2012 Drought — as well as its preparation for future drought years — at the National Drought Forum in Washington, DC on December 13, 2012.*

## Regional Outlook and Impacts

### Persistent drought likely through March

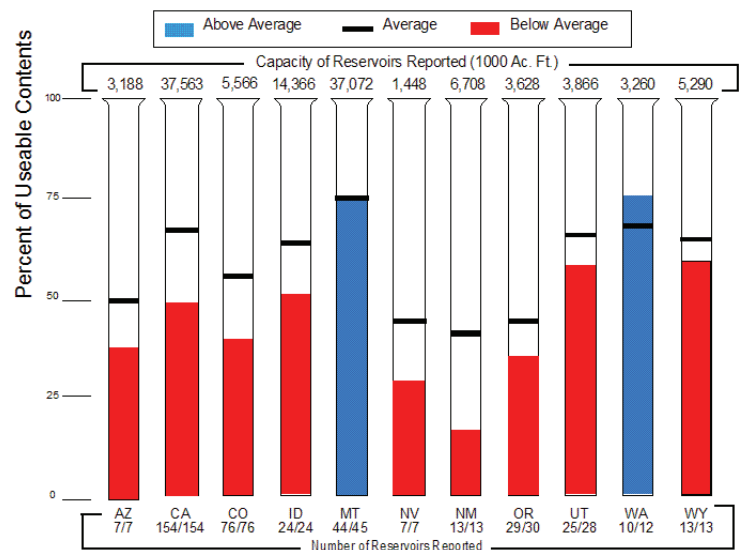


Above: US Seasonal Drought Outlook; valid Dec. 2012 — Mar. 2013.  
(cpc.ncep.noaa.gov)



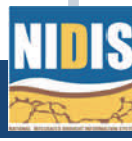
Little change is expected for drought in the interior Western states between now and March 2013. The cold season is typically the driest portion of the year in most mid-continent locations, so even with average seasonal precipitation there will likely be much little relief from the drought. California and Montana are the exceptions, slated to see some improvement.

### Reservoir storage below average in much of West



Above: Reservoir storage as of Dec. 1, 2012. Reservoirs are lowest in New Mexico at 18% of capacity; average storage for the state is 42% of capacity. Prepared by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Water and Climate Center, Portland, OR.

(wcc.nrcs.usda.gov)



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