

Nevada Drought Update - May 2025

6 May 2025

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Drought persists in southern Nevada. Some drought improvement possible over the next month.

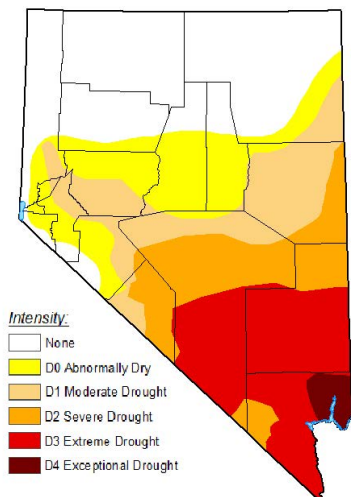


Figure 1. U.S. Drought Monitor for Nevada on 29 April 2025.

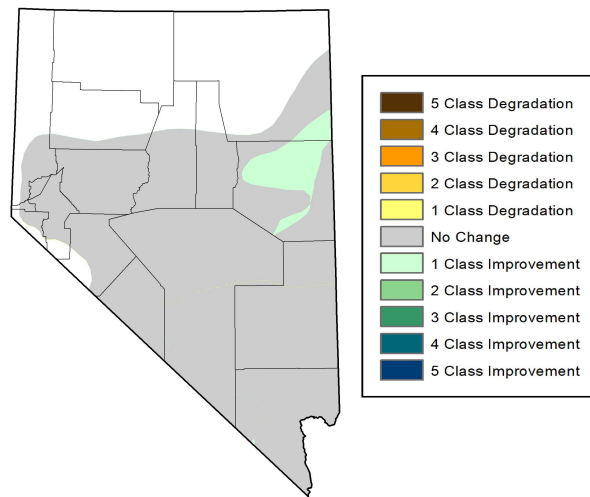


Figure 2. U.S. Drought Monitor Class Change for Nevada between 1 April and 29 April 2025.

Abnormally dry (D0) and drought (D1 to D4) conditions persisted across central and southern Nevada as of 29 April 2025 (Fig. 1). Exceptional Drought (D4) was limited to eastern Clark County, with Extreme Drought (D3) encompassing most of the rest of Clark, Lincoln, and southern Nye counties. Severe Drought (D2) was found just to the north and west, including the remainder of Clark County, northern Nye and Lincoln counties, and eastern Esmeralda and White Pine counties. Moderate Drought (D1) continued to persist across extreme southeast Elko County, most of White Pine County, extreme northern Nye County, and into southern Churchill, eastern Mineral, and a portion of southeastern Washoe County. There was little change in drought conditions across the state in April except for portions of White Pine and Elko counties seeing some improvement (Fig. 2). Half of the state (50%) was classified in drought as of 29 April 2025, a substantial increase since 30 July 2024 when only 1% was in drought (Table 1).

April 2025 began cold and stormy, but Nevada average temperatures quickly went from 10°F below normal on the 2nd to 13°F above normal on the 11th (Fig. 3). The roller coaster continued the rest of month as statewide average temperatures fell to 8°F below normal on the 18th, rose to 5°F above normal on the 23rd, and then dropped to 8°F below normal on the 27th. The month ended up 1.7°F above normal. Except for storms at the beginning and end of the month – and mainly in western Nevada, little precipitation fell in April 2025 (Fig. 4), resulting in well below normal precipitation totals across the eastern two-thirds of the state (Fig. 5). Las Vegas only reported a trace of precipitation, which was 0.20" below normal.

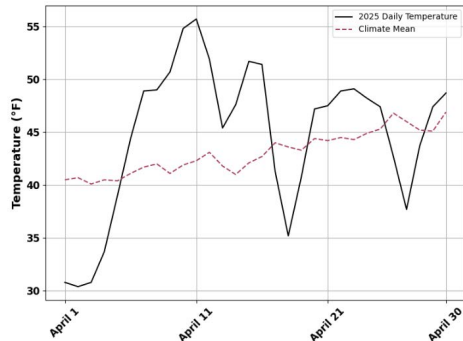


Figure 3. Time series plot depicting the average temperature (in degrees Fahrenheit) from Automated Surface Observing Stations (ASOS) and the Nevada Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) network from 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025 (in black) plotted against the long-term daily mean values.

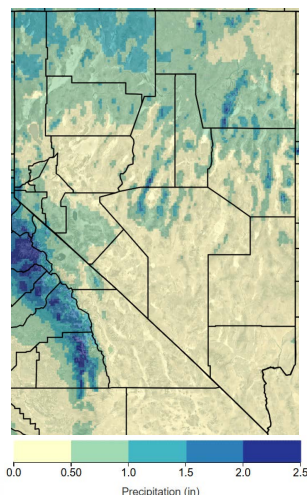


Figure 4. Total precipitation (inches) for Nevada between 1 April 2025 and 30 April 2025. Source: PRISM 4km Daily.

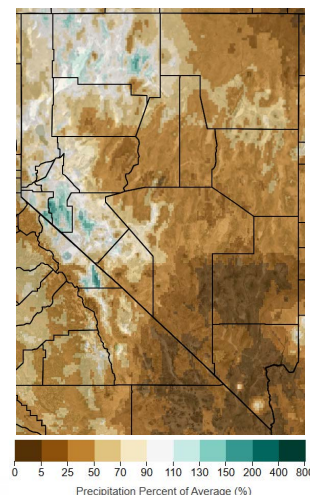


Figure 5. Precipitation percent difference from average between 1 April 2025 and 30 April 2025, compared to 1991-2020 climatology. Source: PRISM 4km Daily.

Table 1. Percent of Nevada in each drought class from the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Date	30 July 2024	29 October 2024	28 January 2025	29 April 2025
None	35	0	12	34
Abnormally Dry- D0	64	74	34	16
Moderate Drought- D1	1	13	22	16
Severe Drought- D2	0	13	21	14
Extreme Drought- D3	0	0	11	18
Exceptional Drought- D4	0	0	0	2

Snow water equivalent (SWE) values reached their annual peak in Nevada and the Eastern Sierra in early April and were above climatological median values (Fig. 6). Rapid snow ablation began by 10 April and continued until the late month cold surge slowed loss and additional snowfall resulted in increases in SWE. Values for basin-average percent of median SWE from 1 May 2025 ranged from 0% in the Spring Mountains to 127% in the northern Great Basin (Fig. 7). Eastern Nevada, Upper Humboldt, and the Clover Valley and Franklin basins were well below median values, ranging from 57 to 82%. The Truckee, Carson, and Walker basins were closer to median values for the date, between 85 and 96%. Lower elevation SNOTEL stations lost snow cover several weeks earlier than normal due to limited winter accumulation.

Reservoir storage levels have risen or held steady over the month of April (Fig. 8). Boca and Prosser Reservoirs, along with Donner Lake join most of Nevada’s other water reserves with current capacity amounts above their median values for the date. An exception among northern reservoirs, Marlette Lake is below half its median storage capacity, but this is due to dam renovations currently underway. The reservoirs to the south had mixed trends, with Lake Mohave rising slightly and Lake Mead falling by almost 2%.

The latest U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook for May 2025 projects drought to persist across most of southern Nevada (Fig. 9). Some improvement and removal of drought conditions is forecast over central Nevada. No additional drought development is expected across the state during the next month. The latest U.S. Monthly Outlook for May 2024 indicates equal chances for near normal temperatures, except in the extreme northeast where above normal temperatures are favored (33-50%) (Fig. 10). Above normal probability (>40%) of precipitation is projected across nearly the entire state (Fig. 11).

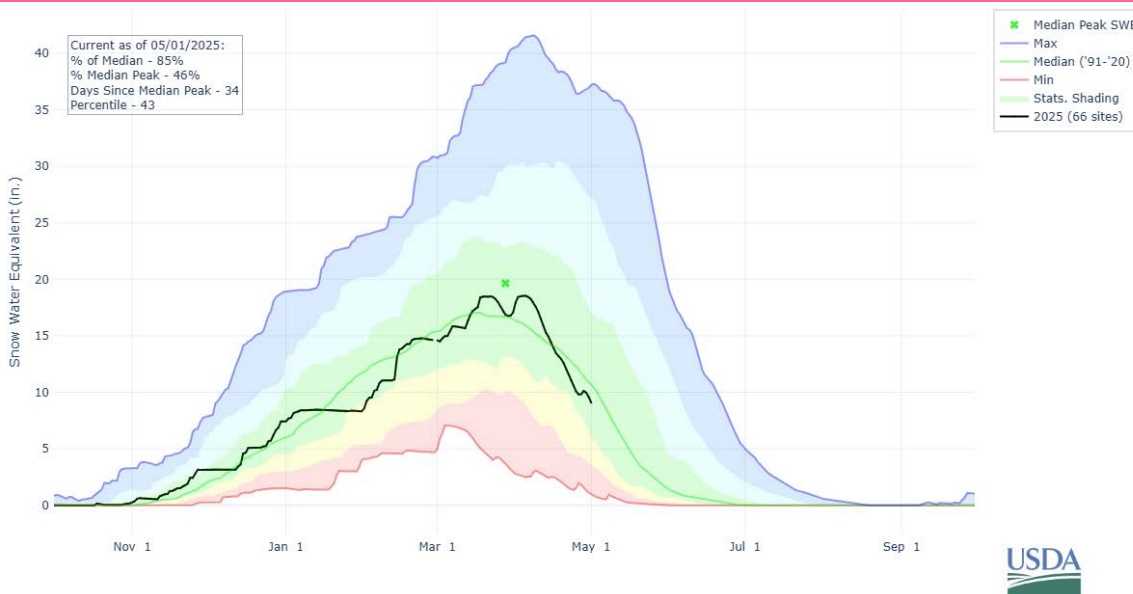


Figure 6. Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) percent of 1991-2020 median values for Nevada and the Eastern Sierra on 1 May 2025 based on measurements from the Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) network of stations. Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

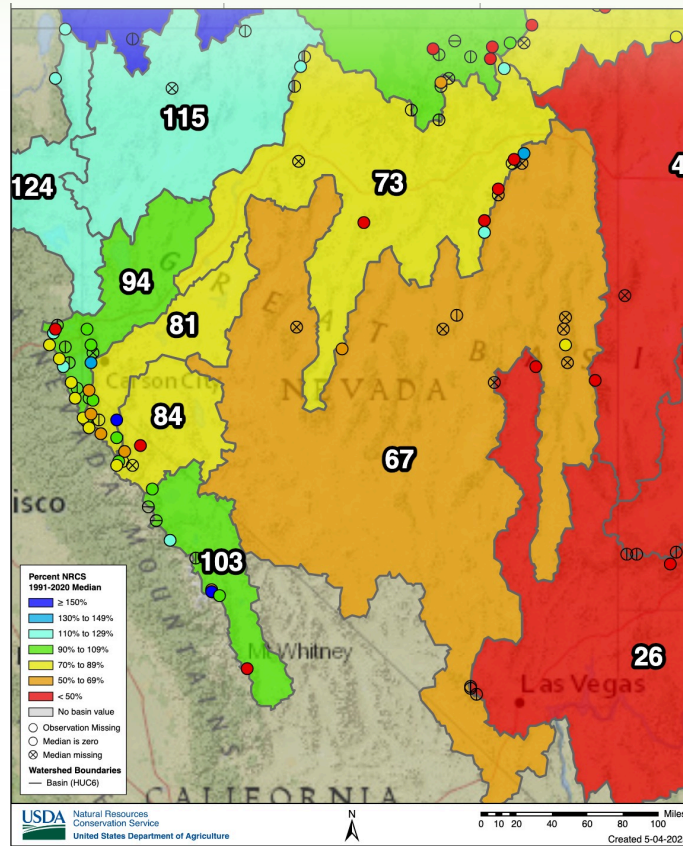


Figure 7. Basin-averaged and station Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) percent of 1991-2020 median values for Nevada and the Eastern Sierra on 1 May 2025 based on measurements from the Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) network of stations. Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

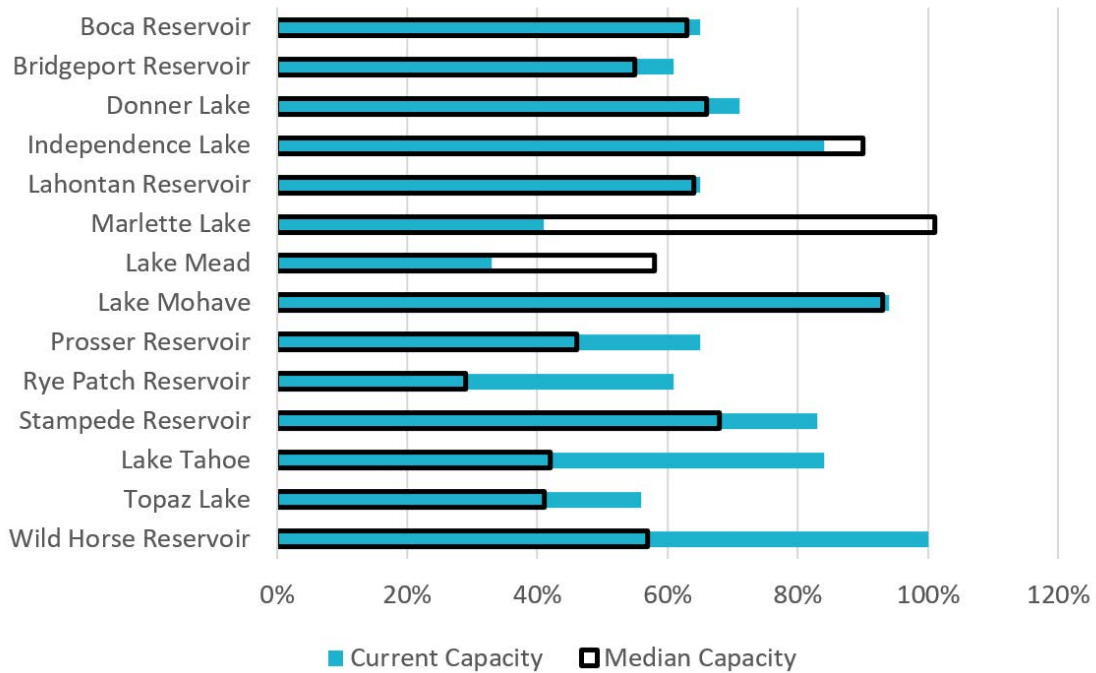


Figure 8. Reservoir storage capacity on 1 May 2025. Source: NRCS National Water and Climate Center; Bureau of Reclamation; Truckee River Operating Agreement.

U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for May 2025
Released April 30, 2025

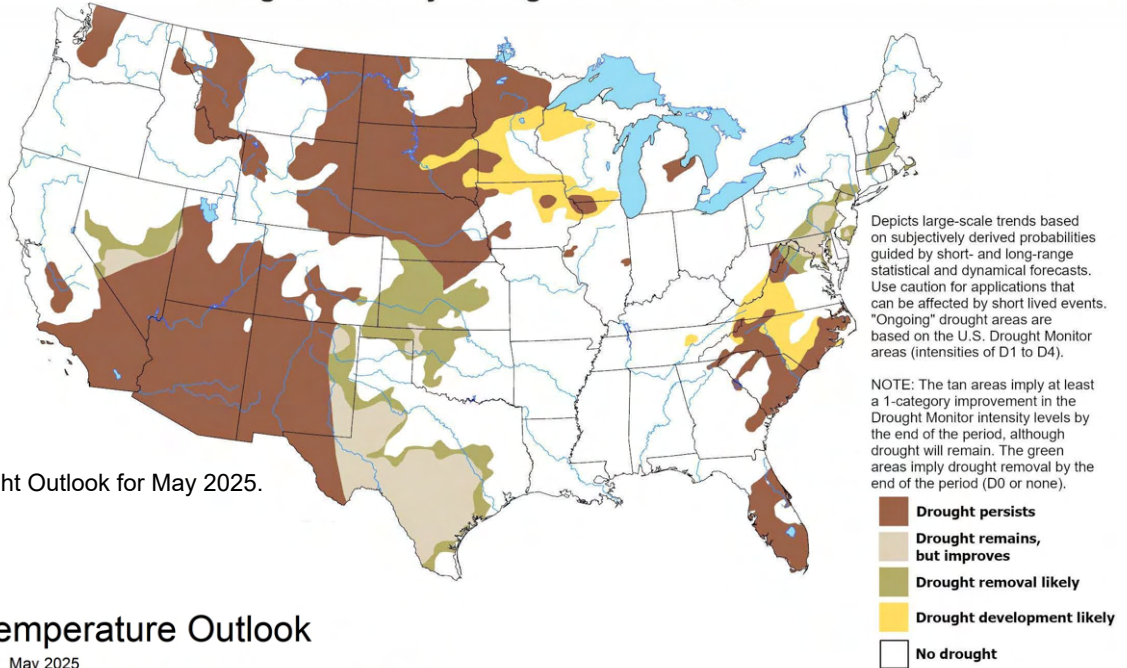


Figure 9. U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook for May 2025.

Monthly Temperature Outlook

Valid: May 2025
Issued: April 30, 2025

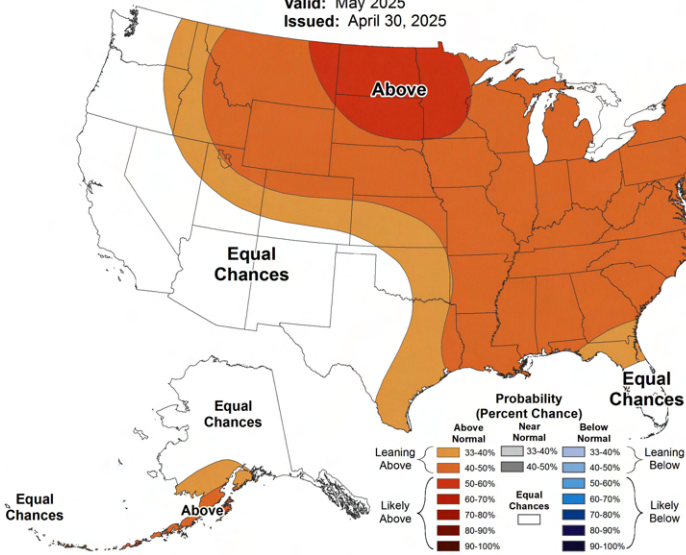


Figure 10. U.S. Monthly Temperature Outlook for May 2025.

Monthly Precipitation Outlook

Valid: May 2025
Issued: April 30, 2025

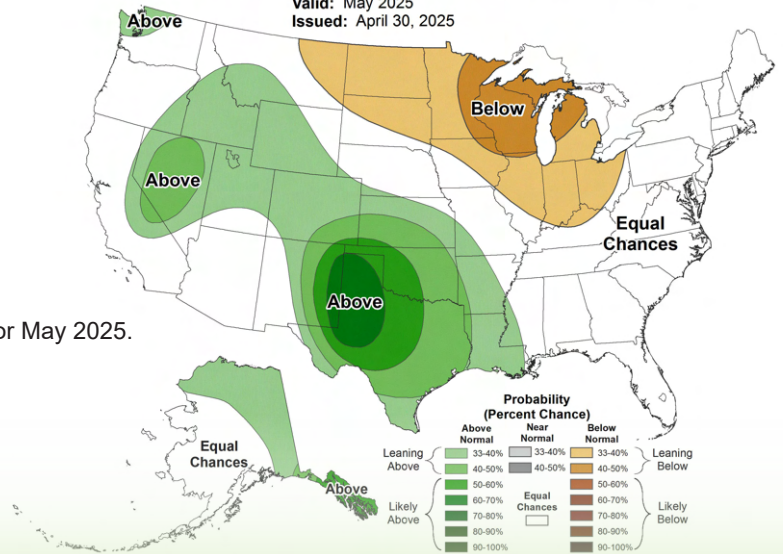


Figure 11. U.S. Monthly Precipitation Outlook for May 2025.