



Alaska



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Lead Representative

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Monitoring Team

- National Weather Service
Regional Headquarters
(Anchorage)
- NWS Weather Forecasting
Office (Juneau)
- Alaska Center for Climate
Assessment and Policy
- NWS Alaska Pacific River
Forecast Center (as needed)
- University of Alaska Fairbanks

Drought Impacts

- Water supply (potable
water, power generation)
- River transportation
(Interior Alaska)
- Wildfire
- Agriculture
- Forest health
- Fisheries
- Traditional/Indigenous
agriculture and harvest

USDM Recommendation Process

- The Alaska U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) contribution team engages in a weekly discussion via email to:
 1. Form the state drought recommendation.
 2. Assign who will report to the weekly USDM author. This process is usually completed by the end of the business day on Monday.
- Communication occurs with Canada (Yukon and British Columbia) through the Environment and Climate Change Canada and North American Drought Monitor listservs.

Drought Characteristics

- Focus is generally on short-term drought.
- Ground dries rapidly during the warm season, following snowmelt and continuing through July. By early August, north of the Alaska Range, drying slows significantly due to decreasing solar heating. In late August, drying slows south of the Alaska Range. In September, drying slows in the Alaska Panhandle.
- Boreal forest can dry out rapidly, going from snow cover to burnable fuel within a week.

Monitoring Challenges

- Data for monitoring drought is limited in Alaska. The data that is available may not always be reliable due to the distribution of monitoring stations across the state, complex and remote terrain, and challenging weather conditions. Communication and coordination with Canada helps to fill in some of these data gaps, particularly near the Canada-Alaska border.
- Long duration snow cover in the Interior means that the team generally waits until spring to see what the impact of the snow has been.
- Scientists are still trying to understand what drought means in Alaska, particularly in the cold season.