



Montana



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Lead Representative

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The Montana Climate Office representative is one of five for Montana. The lead representative rotates from week to week.

Monitoring Team

Includes the Montana Climate Office representative and four other formal state drought authors who represent the following entities:

- Montana Climate Office
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- National Weather Service
- Montana State Library

The monitoring team also includes a listserv of over 100 individuals across Montana and neighboring states who can weigh in on each week's state drought depiction.

USDM Recommendation Process

- Early each week, the assigned lead representative completes an initial analysis of drought conditions across the state. The author will send out the initial assessment to the Montana drought listserv with the depictions of changes they are recommending and the data to support their rationale. Of that larger group, there are 20–30 individuals who consistently provide feedback. By the end of the day Monday, they will have received some feedback from the listserv.
- On Tuesday morning, the lead representative sends their initial assessment to the U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) author. The amount of discussion between the state and national author varies from week to week, but the depiction is usually finalized by Wednesday.
- For the most part, drought discussions pertaining to the USDM occur via email. Every few months, the state authors host a public forum where concerned citizens, outfitters, producers, and others can offer their perspectives and opinions on drought.
- Most consistently, the Montana drought monitoring team communicates with Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Canada, given their shared borders. On occasion, there may be some coordination with Oregon and Washington when trying to characterize drought across the larger Northwest region.

Drought Characteristics

Soil moisture, temperature, and snow are key to understanding drought in Montana.

Monitoring Challenges

Traditional drought metrics have limitations, particularly in capturing the nuances of precipitation and drought, especially considering the state's diverse ecosystems and landscapes.

Drought Impacts

- Recreation/tourism
- Hunting/wildlife/outfitting
- Agriculture/rangelands
- Irrigation
- Municipal water supply