

National Drought Summary for June 6, 2017

Summary

Above-normal rainfall fell across the southern and eastern portions of the country. The rainfall eliminated the lingering abnormally dry areas in the Northeast and helped to alleviate drought conditions across parts of Texas, Georgia, and Florida. Due to variations in totals, pockets of dryness remain in the Texas Panhandle and southeastern Oklahoma; this has led to the expansion of abnormally dry conditions in small areas. Warm, dry weather combined with high winds in the northern Plains continued to dry out vegetation and deteriorate drought conditions while drought persisted across the Southwest. Note that the effects of rainfall falling after 8 AM EDT on Tuesday, June 6, will be reflected on next week's map.

Northeast

Rainfall in the Northeast eliminated the lingering abnormally dry areas in eastern Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Precipitation deficits have improved and the U.S. Department of Agriculture rated soil moisture at adequate or better for crop development.

Southeast

Wet weather prevailed in the Southeast where rainfall amounts of over 4 inches fell in areas of southeastern Alabama and the Florida Panhandle. The excess rainfall helped alleviate abnormally dry and drought conditions in parts of eastern Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. However, drought and dryness still linger at timescales longer than about 3 months. This week's map reflects a one-category improvement in conditions in the drought/abnormally dry areas of South Carolina. Recent rains also resulted in improvements to the drought/abnormally dry areas in northern and central Georgia as streamflow and soil moisture conditions improved. In the southern part of the state, moderate (D1) and severe drought (D2) were reduced to areas that continue to show lingering dryness at 60- to 90-day timescales. Florida saw categorical improvements across many of the drought areas in response to the heavy rainfall. Extreme drought (D3) was removed and some areas near the coasts saw two-category improvements as recent rains totaled up to 7 inches. Minor changes were made to Alabama. The abnormally dry (D0) and moderate drought (D1) areas in the northwest part of the state were expanded slightly in response to continued precipitation departures and satellite-based indicators of vegetation stress. Meanwhile, above-average rainfall in the eastern part of the state resulted in a reduction in the abnormally dry (D0) area. Impact designations across the Southeast were changed to "L" to reflect that the drought's signals are at longer timescales.

South

Much of the South received beneficial rains again this week, with parts of the Central Gulf Coast region receiving upwards of 4 inches of precipitation. Excess rainfall reduced the areas depicted as abnormally dry in Arkansas and Louisiana. Central Oklahoma and the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles missed out on the rain event. Abnormally dry (D0) areas crept northward into parts of southern Oklahoma in response to precipitation deficits and corresponding dry soils and vegetation.

West

Drought conditions persist in the Southwest as the dry season continues. Eastern New Mexico saw rainfall over this past week, resulting in a small reduction in abnormally dry (D0) conditions. Eastern Utah and western Colorado saw a slight expansion in abnormally dry (D0) conditions as above-average temperatures and a lack of rainfall dried out the region. Farther north, warm and dry weather continued in Montana. Pasture and crop conditions further deteriorated, resulting in the westward expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) and the introduction of moderate drought (D1) in the eastern part of the state.

High Plains

The lack of precipitation combined with near record temperatures and high winds has created very dry growing conditions across the Dakotas, with little to no hay production expected. The U.S. Department of Agriculture rates more than half of the top soil in these two states as short to very short. Moderate drought (D1) was expanded so that it now covers the majority of North Dakota as well as northern South Dakota, and severe drought (D2) was introduced.

Midwest

The majority of the Midwest continued to remain drought free with the exception of northern Minnesota, where precipitation departures of 2 to 4 inches over the last 30 days have resulted in dry soils, stressed vegetation, and the introduction of moderate drought (D1).

Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico

Warm temperatures and low winter precipitation resulted in the expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) and the introduction of moderate drought (D1) in Alaska. Dry conditions have resulted in low water levels on the Kuskokwim River, causing impacts to barge traffic.

Hawaii and Puerto Rico remain status quo for the week.

Looking Ahead

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Prediction Center forecast calls for continued rain June 7-14 across the South and eastern portions of the United States. Average predictions range from ¼ of an inch across the Lower Mississippi and Tennessee River valleys to more than 5 inches along the coastal Carolinas and in Florida. Widespread rainfall is also expected across the Rockies and the central United States. Most locations are forecast to receive less than an inch of rain. However, if the forecast holds true, drought-stricken areas of eastern Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota could see over 2 inches of rain. Finally, a frontal system in the Northwest is expected to bring unseasonable rainfall from northern California to western Montana.