National Drought Summary for November 17, 2026

Summary

This past week's drought summary featured generally worsening drought conditions from the Mississippi River Valley to the Southeast and Middle Atlantic states. Meanwhile, more drought improvements were found from Southern California through the Four Corners region and into large portions of Texas and parts of Oklahoma. Additional targeted improvements occurred in the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State and parts of South Florida and the interior Northeast. Drought expansion also occurred in parts of the northern Rockies. Temperatures this past week were generally above average across the Northern Plains and Northern Rockies, with below average temperatures and dry conditions across the Southeastern U.S.

Northeast

A significant coastal storm system impacted the Northeast with substantial rainfall and high elevation snow across the interior region, especially northeastern Pennsylvania into Central and Eastern New York. This led to targeted improvements across parts of Northwest New Jersey and Northeastern Pennsylvania. Some additional small improvements occurred over Eastern Maine, while Northwestern Maine and Northern New Hampshire had worsening drought conditions due to continued below normal precipitation. Moderate drought also spread into northwestern New York where below normal precipitation continued in recent weeks. Below normal rainfall also contributed to an expansion of moderate drought in much of Eastern Maryland.

Southeast

With a week of virtually no precipitation, the Southeast saw almost exclusively worsening drought conditions or intensifying dryness from Alabama through Virginia. The Piedmont and eastern parts of South Carolina and North Carolina into Southern Virginia in particular saw intensifying extreme drought conditions due to persistently low precipitation totals. The only slight improvements were found around Lake Okeechobee in Southern Florida where abnormal dryness was completely removed around the lake.

South

Texas saw another round of very heavy rainfall that impacted central to southeastern parts of the state. Rainfall amounts up to three to four inches or more fell along the Gulf Coast between Corpus Christi and Houston Metro. As a result, more categorical improvements to drought occurred, helping to alleviate the severe to extreme drought conditions over Southeastern Texas. One to two inches of rain also fell over Central Oklahoma helping to relieve drought conditions there as well.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, where exceptional drought conditions continue to spread. Mississippi saw a large expansion of

exceptional drought across the central part of the state as the lack of rainfall continued to mount large precipitation deficits going back well over a year. Many parts of these three states require at least 20 to 30 inches of rain in a 3-month span in order to overcome the current drought conditions.

Midwest

Abnormal dryness and drought continued their expansion across Southern and Central Missouri into Illinois this past week due to very little rainfall. Abnormal dryness was introduced into southeastern Wisconsin due to unusually dry conditions over the past month. The northern part of the Midwest region experienced status quo drought conditions given the seasonably cooler temperatures combined with the lack of precipitation.

High Plains

Only targeted changes in drought classification were made over the High Plains states this past week. A small degradation occurred in the Northern Colorado Rockies with a couple small degradations in Eastern Kansas. The most noteworthy degradations were made in Northern and Northeastern Wyoming where well above average temperatures combined with a lack of precipitation led to an expansion of extreme drought as well as an introduction of exceptional drought in northeastern Wyoming. Very poor long-term drought indicators along with ground validation reports suggested the need to introduce this exceptional drought area.

West

A series of storm systems affected coastal Washington, Oregon, and Northwestern California with heavy precipitation. The Olympic Peninsula in Northwestern Washington experienced over 15 inches of rain in a typically wet location, which was sufficient to reduce drought categories. With many streams running at near all-time flows for this time of year, more widespread drought improvements were made across Southeastern California, Southeastern Nevada, Northern Arizona, Southern and Eastern Utah, and New Mexico. The Southwestern reservoirs continued to experience more recharge this week, but at a slower rate than in previous weeks. The news was not all good in the West, however, as portions of Northwestern Montana and Northern Idaho saw the introduction of moderate drought due to the combination of temperatures 10 degrees or more above average with well below normal precipitation.

Caribbean

Drought classifications were status quo this past week in Puerto Rico. However, unusually hot, dry, and windy conditions were cause for some concern, if it continues.

Portions of the Virgin Islands received several tenths of an inch of rain early last week, but ensuing conditions were drier, warmer, and less humid, making the introduction of any improvements out of the question. Thus, the most intense classification, exceptional drought (D4) is maintained on St. John and St. Thomas while extreme drought (D3) was kept in place

on St. Croix. The last six days of the period dropped about 0.2 inch around Frederiksted on St. Croix, with 0.1 inch or less observed elsewhere. Since September 1, generally 5.5 to 7.0 inches of rain fell on Charlotte Amalie in St. Thomas, compared to a normal of just over one foot. Similar conditions have been noted around Cruz Bay on St. John, with about 6 inches of rain well short of the 14 or so inches that typically falls September 1-November 17. Rainfall deficits were not quite as acute on much of St. Croix, but are well below normal nonetheless. Most locations across St. Croix recorded 6.1 to 9.3 inches of rain during this period, compared to normals of 14 to 14.5 inches.

Pacific

In Alaska, the upper Tanana Valley continued with below normal snowfall, therefore the abnormally dry classification continues in East-Central Alaska.

Hawaii saw status quo conditions with abnormal dryness on the west coast of the Big Island.

Koror in Palau reported increased rainfall this past week (3.84 inches). So far in November, Koror reported 6.87 inches, which is about one-half inch above normal and sufficient to at least keep pace with water demand. As a result, conditions were improved to abnormally dry (D0).

The Marianas reported generally surplus rainfall this year through early autumn, with periods of excessive rainfall and impacts from a few tropical cyclones. Over the past few weeks, however, conditions have dried out. The past week was marginally wetter than the prior week, but amounts remained below normal and slightly less than what is necessary to keep up with human and environmental demand. Guam reported 0.37 inch, pushing November 1-17 totals to 0.81 inch, which is more than 4 inches below normal. Since October 20, just 1.86 inches fell there, which is less than 25 percent of normal. The Keetch-Byram Drought Index on Guam reached 541, which is 2.6 standard deviations above normal, indicating significant surface moisture loss. Rota recorded 1.38 inches this past week, which was only somewhat below normal and boosted by rainfall at the end of the period. Still, November 1-17 rainfall was only about half of normal, which followed a drier-than-normal end to October. Conditions are marginal, but the continuation of subnormal rainfall supports the introduction of D0 at Rota. Rainfall has also been somewhat below normal recently at Tinian and Saipan, but not as much as farther south. No drought designation is supported at these locations currently.

Across western Micronesia, abnormal dryness (D0) was maintained across Yap, Ulithi, and Woleai. Only 0.3 to 0.7 inch of rainfall was recorded across the islands last week, compared to typical amounts of 2 inches or a little more. Subnormal rainfall dates back through at least October, when Ulithi and Woleai recorded less than half of normal amounts.

Subnormal precipitation continued affecting the central tier of Micronesia, keeping Kapingamaringi in moderate drought (D1) and Chuuk, Lukunor, and Nukuoro in abnormal dryness (D0). Kapingamaringi reported 3.91 inches of rain for the first 17 days of November, including 1.75 inches this past week. Since the start of September, only 11.35 inches of rain accumulated at Kapingamaringi, slightly under half of normal. Chuuk and Nukuoro measured 2.44 and 1.18 inches of rain, respectively, last week. This was an improvement on the prior few weeks, but was still near or below normal. Rainfall was less robust at Lukunor, only about 0.3

inch although one day was missing. September 1-November 17 brought 12.70 inches of rain to Lukunor, which is less than half of (13.3 inches below) normal. Lukunor is probably closest to reaching moderate drought (D1) among locations in north-central Micronesia, since subnormal rainfall dates back longer. Conditions will continue to be closely monitored.

In eastern Micronesia, abnormal dryness (D0) continued affecting Kosrae, while Pohnpei remained free of any dryness or drought designation. Kosrae reported 1.70 inches of rain last week while 3.44 inches were recorded in Pohnpei, boosted by increased precipitation late in the period. Kosrae reported 11.43 inches of rain since October 1, which is about 9 inches below normal but only somewhat less than what is needed to keep pace with demand. On Pohnpei, November 1-17 brought 4.07 inches of rain, following over 14 inches in October, which is about sufficient to keep pace with demand.

Abnormal dryness (D0) remained in place along the western tier of the Marshall Islands (Kwajalein, Ailinglapalap, and Jaluit). Heavy rainfall late last week boosted November 1-17 totals to 4.71, which is below normal but sufficient to prevent deterioration and slightly improve surface moisture conditions, but didn't markedly improve overall conditions, nor reduce precipitation shortfalls. Farther south, only 0.81 inch of rain fell on Ailinglapalap last week while just 0.14 inch barely dampened Jaluit. Since October, 8.39 inches of rain fell on Ailinglapalap, almost 9 inches below normal. Deficits are a bit larger on Jaluit, with only 4.84 inches observed since October, which is slightly more than a foot less (one-third to one-half of) normal. The larger deficits on Jaluit have conditions on the cusp of moderate drought (D1), but no increase in designation was introduced this week. Conditions will continue to be closely monitored.

Wojte and Utirik in the northeastern Marshall Islands remained free of any dryness or drought designation. Last week, rainfall totaled 3.52 inches and 1.63 inches, respectively, boosted by increased precipitation late in the period. So far this month, totals have been somewhat below normal on Utirik and slightly wetter than normal on Wotje, which was sufficient to keep deterioration at bay.

In the southeastern Marshall Islands, Majuro reported just 0.09 inch of rain last week, bringing November 1-17 amounts to about 3 inches (4.5 inches less than normal). More than 14 inches of rain fell during October, however, which has held notable dryness and surface moisture shortages at bay so far. Mili received barely any rain last week, and only 1.39 inches have fallen November 1-17 (normal is 5.45 inches). As a result, D0 was maintained there

Moderate drought remained in place across American Samoa following another week of deficient rainfall. Pago Pago recorded 0.8 inch of rain, bringing November 1-17 amounts to just 3.42 inches (compared to a normal of over 16 inches). Despite being sharply drier than normal, these amounts are not too far removed from what is necessary to keep pace with demand, so deterioration has been slower than might be expected given the size of the short-term deficits.

Looking Ahead

A powerful storm system will impact much of the West later this week, especially California. Several inches of precipitation, along with very heavy mountain snows of 50-100 inches in the California Sierras are likely over the next several days. Lesser but still substantial mountain

could also fall in Western Colorado, Northeastern Utah, and Western portions of Montana and Wyoming. Another intense storm system is expected to take shape along the east coast of Florida, producing several inches of rainfall across the already soaked eastern part of the state. The rain from that storm system could spread into the Carolinas and Middle Atlantic region, potentially providing beneficial rainfall to those drought-stricken states.

The Climate Prediction Center projects above normal temperatures over a large part of the country during the next 6 to 10 days, with the exception of Texas which could experience below normal temperatures next week. Above average precipitation is expected in the next 6 to 10 days over a large part of the West, as well as the Southern and Eastern United States.

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