



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
PO Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000

Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC)

Monday, October 13, 2025, 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Zoom: [Click to join.](#) (Call-in: 253.205.0468; Meeting ID: 876 1551 6506; Passcode: 676572)

Time a.m.	Topic	Lead
9:00 – 9:05	Greetings and introductions <i>Start the meeting</i>	Heather Clements , Web Coordinator, WRP
9:05 – 9:15	Water Resources Program updates <i>Information sharing</i>	Ria Berns , Program Manager, WRP
9:15 – 9:30	Legal updates <i>Information sharing</i>	Stephen North , ATG
9:30 – 9:45	Yakima curtailment update <i>Information sharing</i>	Heather Simmons , Section Manager, WRP Central Region
9:45 – 9:55	Lake Roosevelt Adjudication <i>Information sharing</i>	Robin McPherson , Adjudication Manager
9:55 – 10:10	Streamflow Restoration Competitive Grants update <i>Information sharing</i>	Vanessa Brinkhuis , Streamflow Restoration Grant Unit Supervisor
10:10 – 10:25	Water supply update <i>Information sharing</i>	Caroline Mellor , Statewide Drought Lead
10:25 – 10:30	Closing Q&A <i>End of meeting</i>	Heather Clements , Web Coordinator, WRP



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000

Committee Purpose

The Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) is a forum for issues related to water resources management in Washington state.

This membership represents state agencies, local governments, water utilities, tribes, environmental groups, consultants, law firms, and other water stakeholders. Typical discussion topics include rules, policies, legislation, budget development, and litigation. The group was established in 1996.

Resources

WRAC Website: [Water Resources Advisory Committee - WA State Department of Ecology](#)

WRAC LEGAL UPDATE

October 13, 2025

STEVE NORTH, AAG



WRAC LEGAL UPDATE

TOPICS:

- Update on Wagner vs. Ecology
- Settlement Update on US Golden Eagle vs. Ecology
- Settlement Update on RAN General P-ship vs. Ecology
- Appellate Argument *this week* in Fode vs. Ecology
- New Appeals (Chelan County PUD vs. Ecology, KV Ranches vs. Ecology)
- New \$100,000 Penalty

Wagner update

- Wagner's appealed the PCHB remand on availability:
 - Motion to dismiss rule challenge GRANTED
 - Wagner's Motion to Reconsider DENIED
 - Argument on the merits on August 19
 - September 3 Court enters Order Denying Petition for Judicial review
 - No subsequent appeal—application is now remanded

US Golden Eagle update

- 2021 appeals of Ecology denials of trust/banking application and USGE application for mitigated permit
- 2023 PCHB stays appeal while USGE applies for interruptible permit and storage
- 2025 USGE secures all necessary permits for construction of istorage reservoir
- Ecology issues permits on September 4
- PCHB enters order of dismissal on October 7

Ran Partnership update

PCHB No. 24-072

- \$20,000 penalty for illegal irrigation
- Settlement general stipulations:
 - \$5000 of \$20000 suspended for 36 months-no violations or due
 - \$15000 due within 30 days of dismissal
 - RAN agrees to metering and telemetric real-time reporting of water use on site
 - Metering and reporting requirement
 - Access/site visit requirements (6 over 36 months, 90, minutes notice)

Fode appellate argument update

- Docketed for 10 am in Divison III on **October 16**
 - **Did Ecology satisfy statutory requirements for technical assistance under RCW 90.03.605?**
 - **Did the PCHB err when it concluded that Fode could only be penalized for days where Ecology directly observed unauthorized irrigation/wet fields (what's a violation)?**
- Watch on TVW or attend live
 - <https://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/index.cfm?fa=newsinfo.virtualcourtproceedings>

New PCHB Appeals

- ***PUD No 1 of Chelan County vs. Ecology, PCHB No. 25-059***
- August 18 appeal of Ecology final decision related to a CWRE Proof of Examination Report
- CWRE recommended muni right for non-additive annual volume of 191.65 acre-feet per year
- Ecology approved for 166.8 acre-feet per year in July
- Ecology amended decision in August and approved 174.31 acre-feet per year

New PCHB Appeals

- ***KV Ranches et. al vs. Ecology, PCHB 25-068***
- Appeals by KVR and Interstate Concrete of Aug 4 decision reversing DCWCB
- Interstate Concrete applies to add place of use, point of diversion, and new purpose to existing right
- Intent to use a portion of the right downstream for industrial purposes
- Inadequate tentative determination and potential enlargement

New Penalty

- ***Greiff v. Ecology***
- 69 acres of unauthorized irrigation North of Spokane
- \$100,000 Penalty for 20 days of unauthorized irrigation, \$5000/ day
- History of non-compliance
- Appeal of decision September 22

Yakima Basin Curtailment

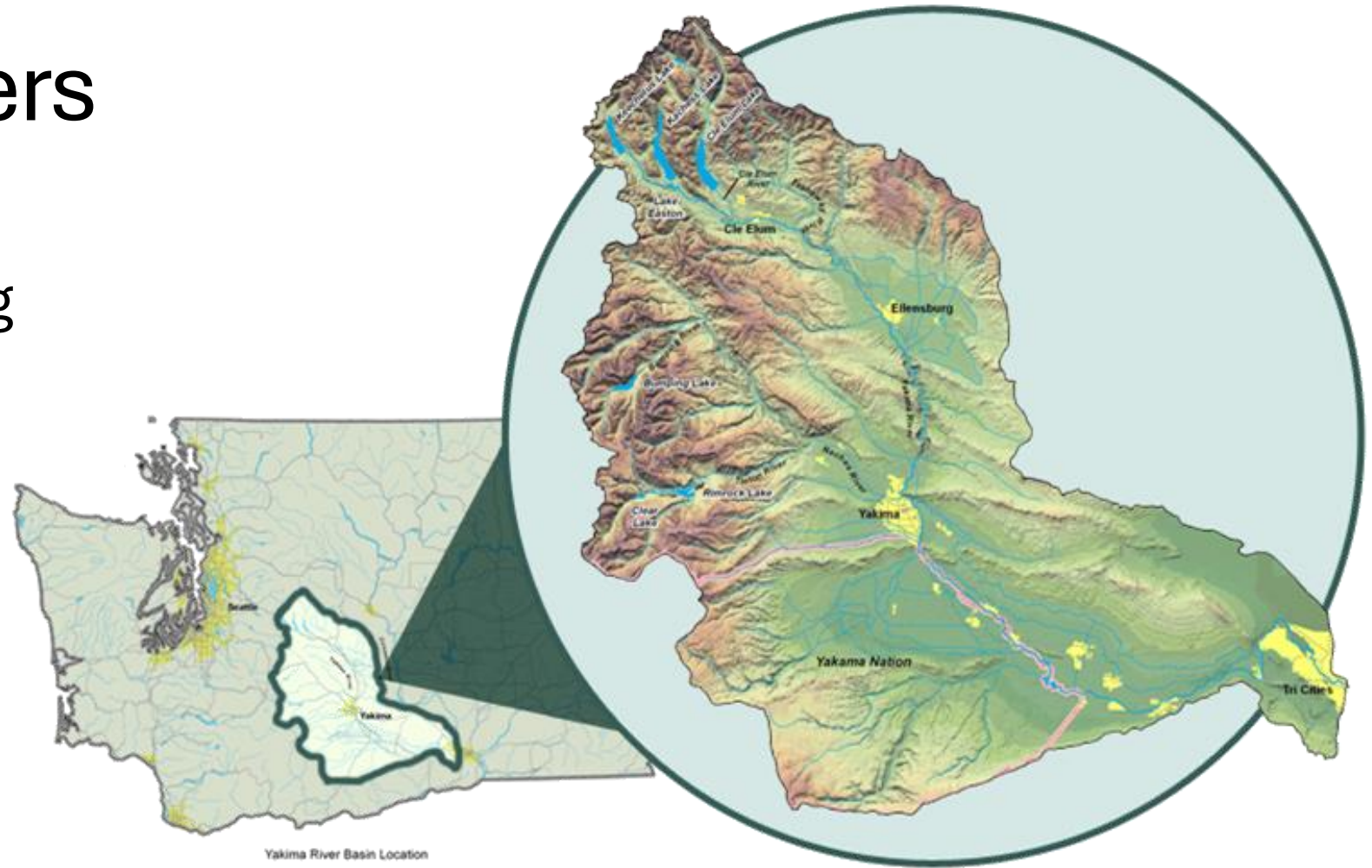
Water Resources
Program
2025



Yakima River, Umtanum Bridge, Oct 9, 2025

Curtailment Orders

- First time ever curtailing all senior rights.
- All surface water right holders ordered to turn off since flows can't satisfy THE MOST SENIOR RIGHT (1855).

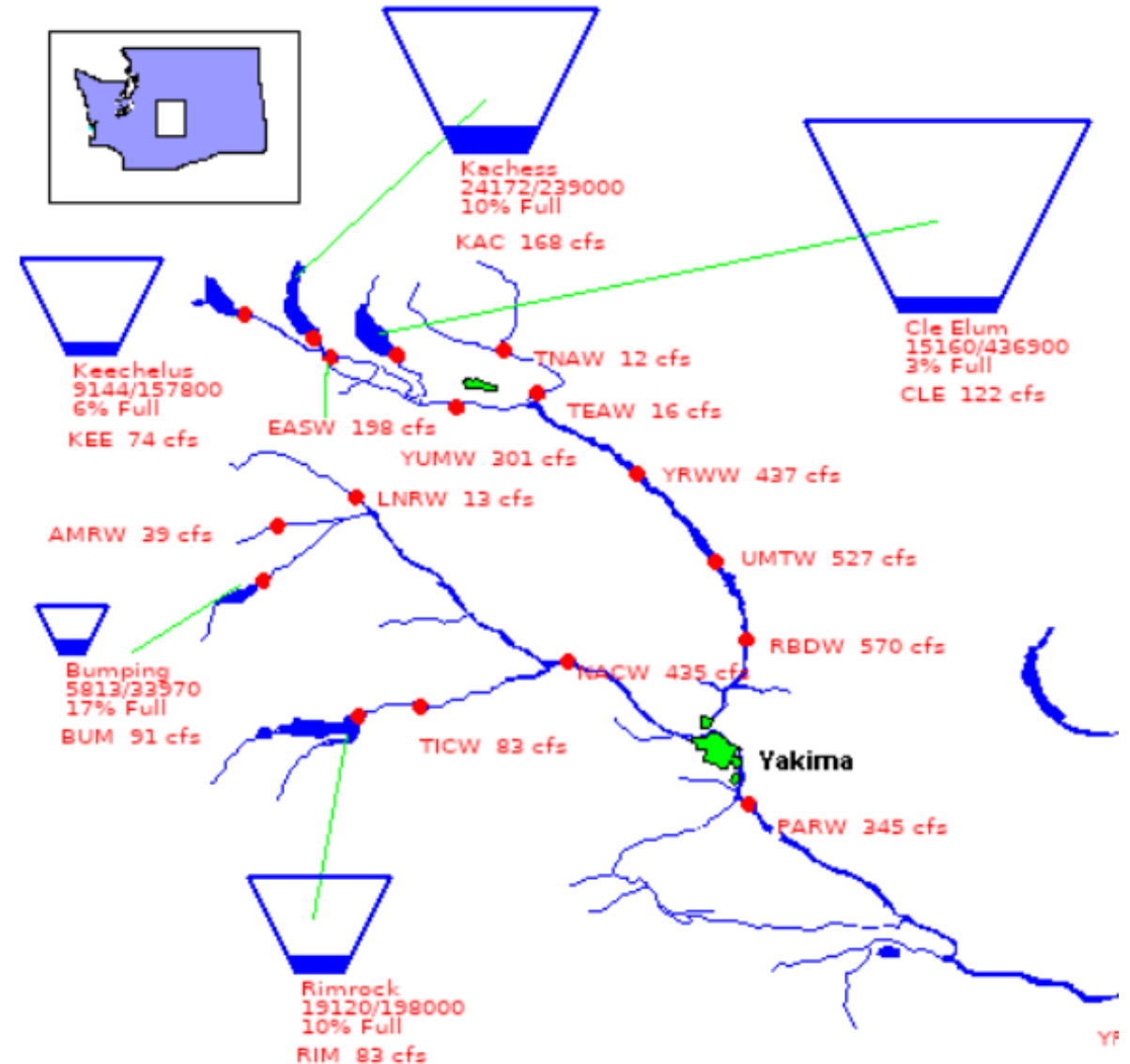


- 1365 curtailment orders mailed October 2-3.
- Curtailment period: October 6 – 31, unless conditions change

Managing October Water

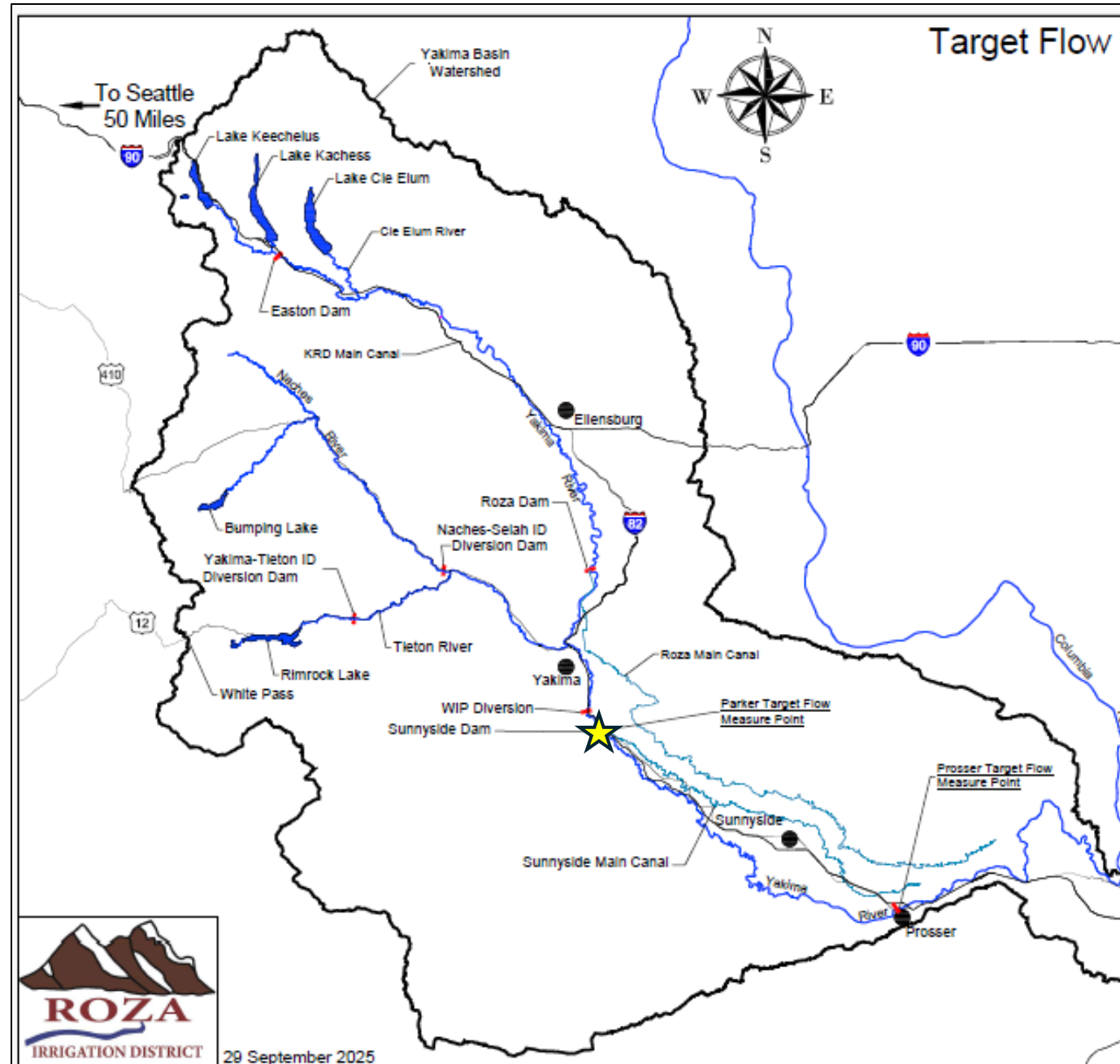
10/11/2025

- October 1 - beginning of a new water year
 - System dependent on late season rain.
 - After three droughts and little rain, reservoir releases must ramp down early to preserve storage to meet fish survival targets through the winter (300 cfs at parker).
- April thru September - Reclamation manages releases to ensure full senior entitlements and fish targets are met.
- Extremely low reservoir levels could result in ZERO deliveries to large proratable districts (less senior) to ensure full senior rights up to September 30th.
- Therefore, there are no system wide curtailments prior to October 1st.



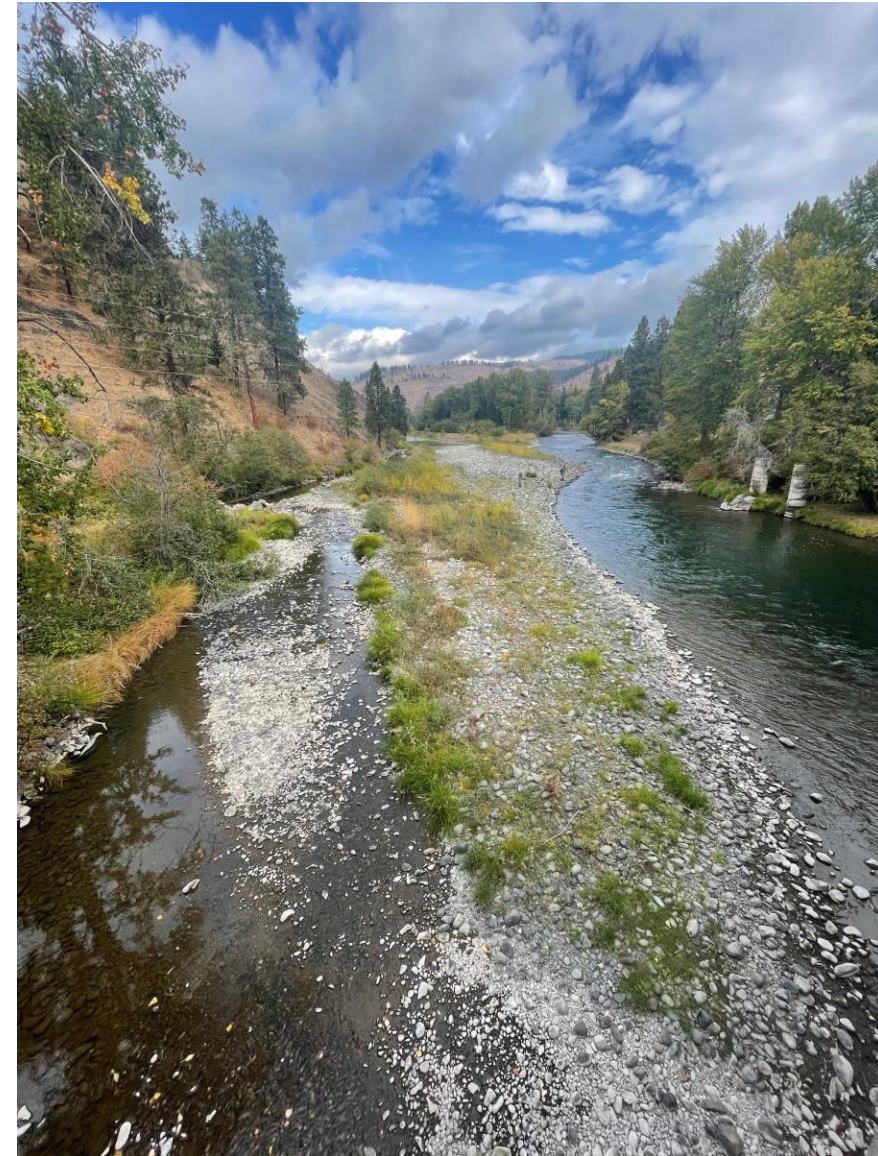
October 2025

- On September 26, Reclamation estimated that natural flows and forecasted precipitation could not satisfy the senior most 1855 irrigation rights after storage ramp down.
- Therefore, all other surface water right holders had to cease diverting when Reclamation started ramping down on October 6th.
- Without significant precipitation, curtailment will remain in effect until October 31st.



Impacts

- Water users have been responsive to orders.
- Irrigators have promptly shut down despite fields needing late season water.
- Municipalities have been responsive, switching to groundwater or reducing use as much as possible.
- All year-round users are eager to see an end to curtailment, especially towns and cities whose drinking water sources are impacted.
- If flows improve significantly, curtailment could end before October 31. If so, we will announce in a press release and contact individual water right holders.



Naches River, Oct. 11, 2025



Tieton River, Oct. 11, 2025

Challenges

- Court ordered updates to contact information – but most haven't.
- Although after three years of drought, public and water right holders still surprised.
- Drought response requires extremely close coordination with Bureau.
- Order was based on a prediction of impairment, and this early action avoided that impairment.
- We issued 1,300 orders in less than five days – had to get very creative.
- This was the first time “testing” the adjudication – there will be a lot of lessons learned.

Questions?



Yakima River above Roza dam, Oct. 9, 2025



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

2026 Streamflow Restoration Competitive Grants



¹
Photo Credit: I CEEG

Streamflow Restoration Competitive Grants Overview

- **15 Year Competitive Grant Program**
\$300 M Legislatively Authorized
 - Pilot Round (2018/2019)
 - 2nd Round (2020)
 - 3rd Round (2021/2022)
 - 4th Round (2023/2024)
 - 5th Round (2025/2026) – Current: \$40 million
- **Statewide Opportunity**
- **Funding Rule**
 - Chapter 173-566 WAC
- **Funding Guidance**
 - Publication 25-11-021

South Fork Toutle River Restoration (LCFEG)



Funding Priorities

- Projects that actively manage water to improve streamflow.
- Projects in adopted watershed plans, or in a designated RCW 90.94.040 metering pilot area.
- Projects that benefit native fish or aquatic species of concern, including threatened or endangered salmonids.
- Projects that benefit overburdened communities or vulnerable populations.



Eligible Applicants

- Washington state agencies
- Local governments
- Quasi-governments in the state
- Federal agencies
- Tribal governments with reservation lands or treaty rights in Washington
- Non-profit organizations

Project Types



Water right acquisitions.



Water storage, (e.g. managed aquifer recharge, surface storage, cisterns, etc.)



Altered water management or infrastructure.



Watershed function, riparian and fish habitat improvement.



Feasibility studies.



Environmental monitoring.

Grant Round Timeline



Applicant Resources

- Webpage: ecology.wa.gov/streamflowgrants
 - Applicant workshop dates and how to register.
 - Sign up for email list!
- Workshop materials will be available online
 - Funding guidelines ([Publication 25-11-021](#))
 - Workshop handout (coming soon)
 - Applicant prep tool (coming soon)
 - Recording of 2025 applicant workshop available mid-November.

Pre-Application Meetings

- Discuss project with Ecology prior to applying.
- Required for water right acquisition projects.
- Optional for all other projects but encouraged for:
 - Land acquisition
 - Managed aquifer recharge
 - Aquifer storage recovery
 - Groundwater augmentation
 - Stormwater infiltration



How to Request a Pre-App Meeting?

1. Complete a [pre-application meeting request form](#).
2. Email it to sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov by **Mar. 3, 2026**.





DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Thank you!

Vanessa Brinkhuis

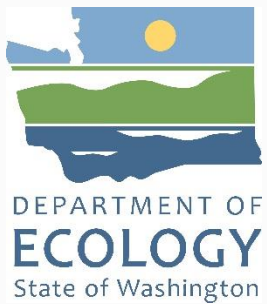
(509)-406-6505

Email: sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov

Webpages:

ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowRestoration

ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowGrants



WRAC Drought Update

WR Statewide Drought Lead, Caroline Mellor
October 13, 2025

Overview

- 1** Goals for WRAC
- 2** Recap: Drought declaration and process
- 3** Water supply update
- 4** Next steps for ongoing drought management

Drought Emergency Declaration

On June 5, 2025, Ecology issued a drought emergency declaration **in the North and Central Cascade Mountains and parts of the Puget Sound area**, due to low snowpack, early and rapid snowmelt and a dry April and May.

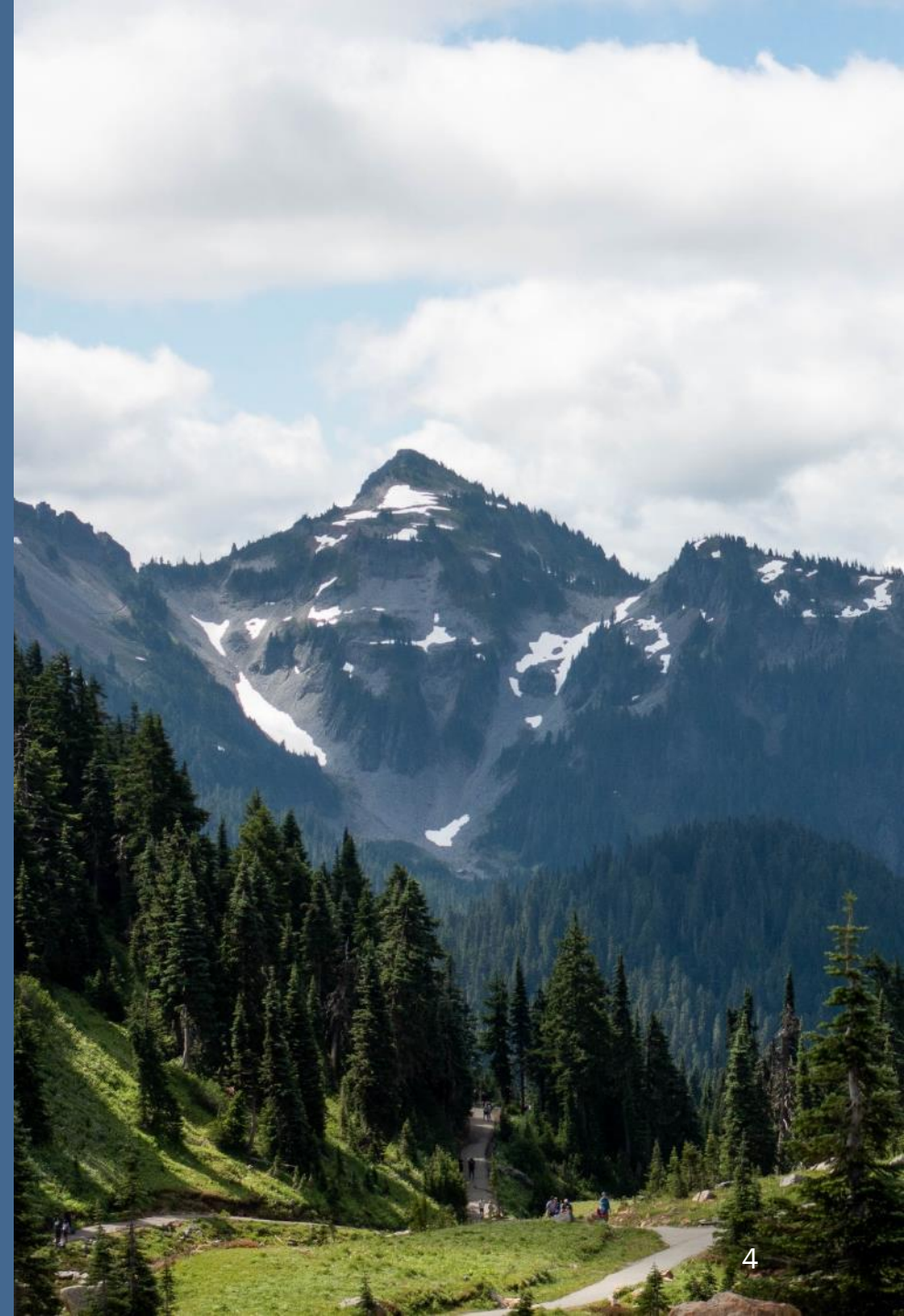
This served as an expansion of the April 8, 2025, drought declaration for **the Yakima Basin watersheds**.

*The utilities of Everett, Seattle and Tacoma do not expect issues for their customers.





Drought Declaration Process



Drought Conditions

Drought conditions - two requirements:

- 1. Hydrologic threshold** – An area is receiving, or is projected to receive, less than seventy-five percent of normal water supply.
- 2. Hardship threshold** – Water users and the environment are or are expected to experience undue hardship.

See: [RCW 43.83B.405](#) and [WAC 173-166-050](#).

Water Supply Factors

Water
year to
date

- Snowpack
- Precipitation
- Temperature
- Soil moisture

Hydrologic
threshold
for
drought
was met
in 2025

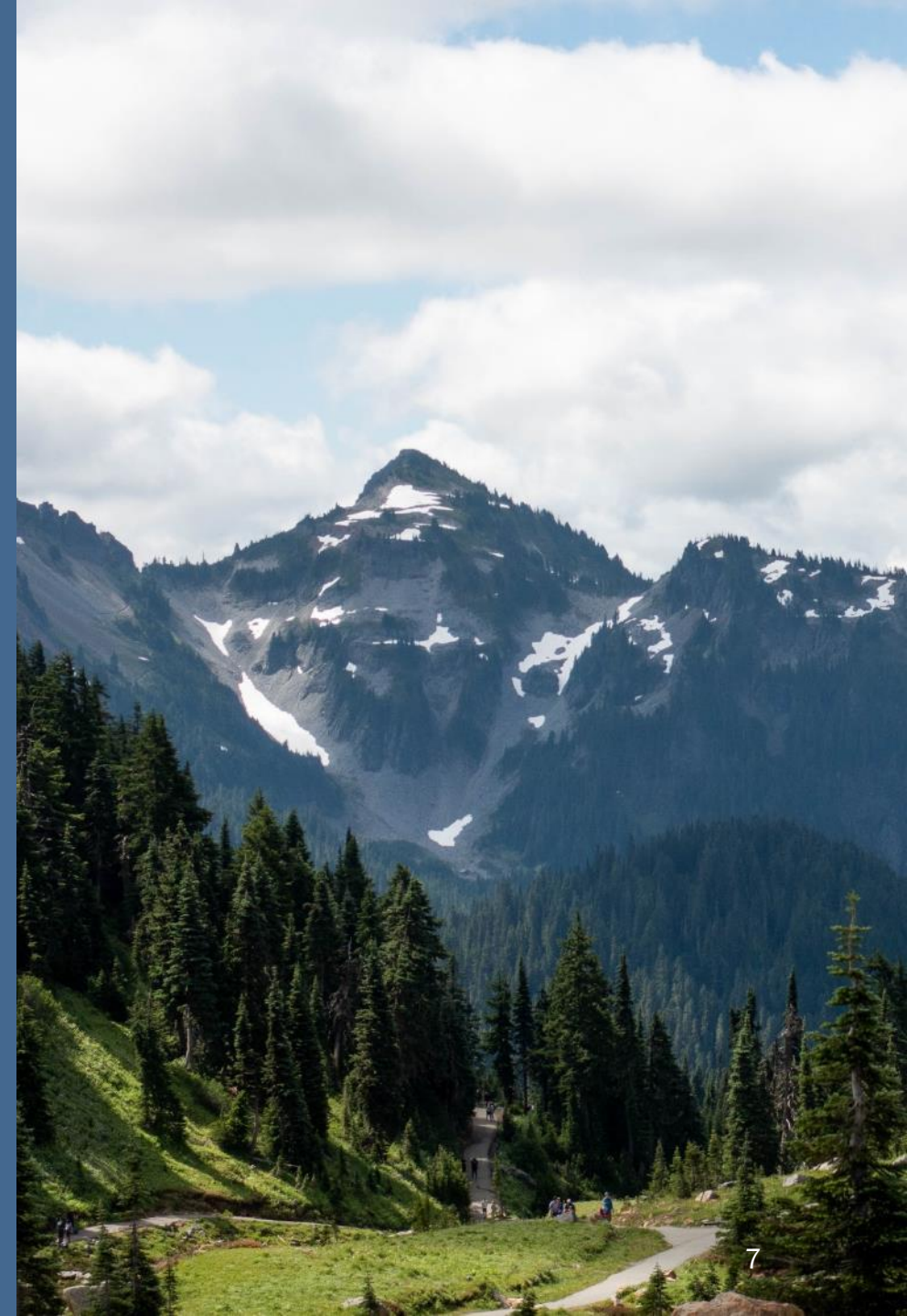
Forecasts

- Streamflow
- Precipitation
- Temperature
- Soil moisture





Implications of a Drought Declaration



What Does a Declaration Do?

Provides Ecology with the authority to:

1. Expedite emergency water transfer applications.
2. Establish a grant program to mitigate hardships to water users and the environment.



Drought Response Funding

Grants to governmental entities:

- Federally recognized Tribes
- Counties, cities, and towns
- Water and sewer districts
- Public utility districts
- Irrigation districts
- Conservation districts
- Port districts
- Watershed management partnerships

Additional Implications

State agencies – Ecology can enter into interagency agreements to fund drought response efforts

- Examples: DOH, DFW, SCC, AGR

Eligibility for federal drought funding

Important communications tool

Example Drought Response Grant Projects

Agriculture or livestock

- Purchasing or leasing water or water rights
- Replacing intakes, pumps, and related accessories

Public water supply

- Transporting emergency water supplies
- Implementing water conservation strategies

Fisheries and wildlife

- Eliminating migration barriers
- Modifying stream channels adjacent to a hatchery

Drought Advisory

Advisory tool:

- Indicates that drought conditions may develop.
- Public awareness & preparation tool to support readiness.
- Drought relief tools not available.
- Acknowledges there are multiple types of potential drought impacts.



State Declaration vs Federal Designation

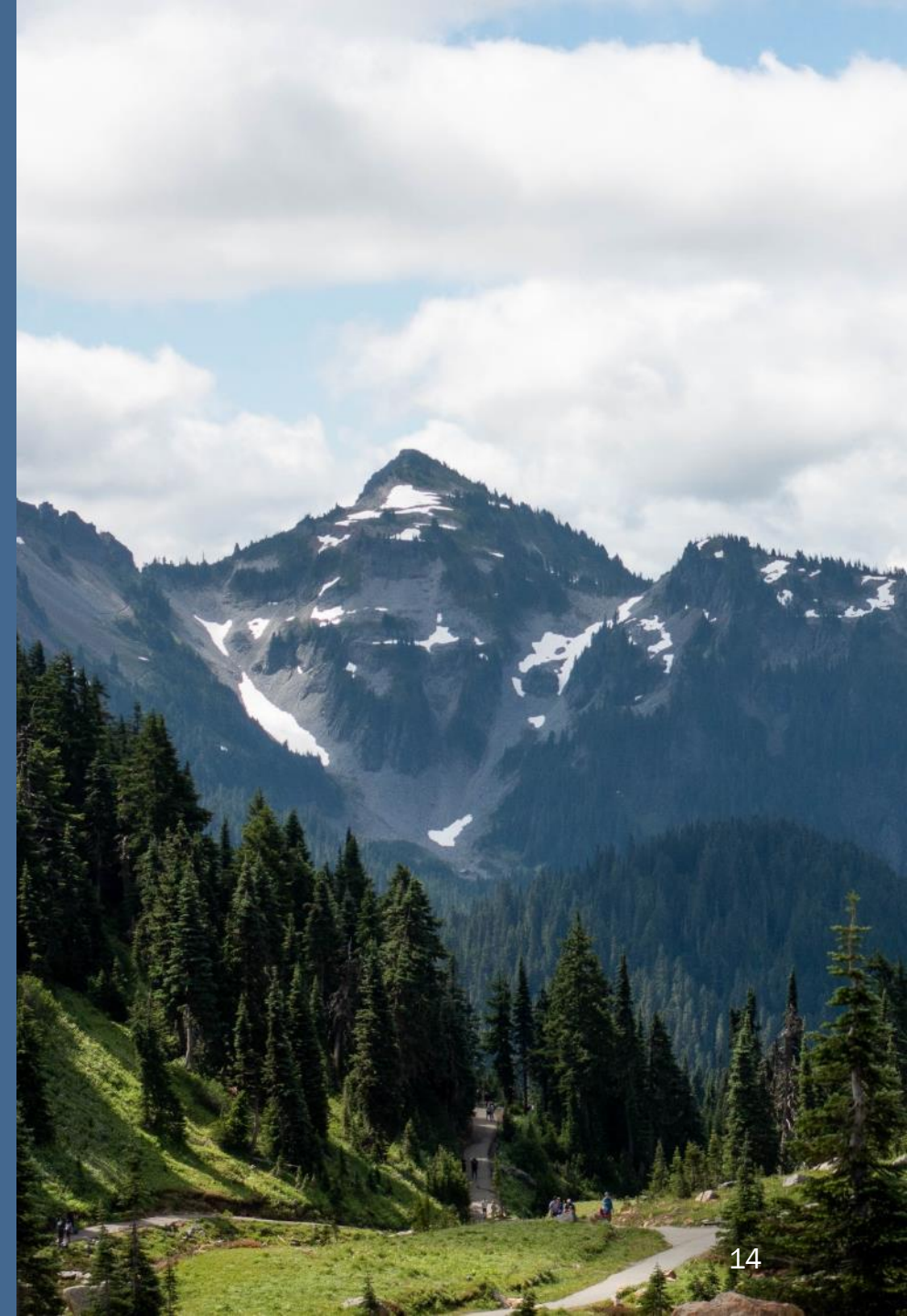


Different thresholds and different relief triggered

- Federal thresholds:
 - D2 level for 8 consecutive weeks or reach a D3 or D4 level for at least one day according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.
- Federal relief – main types:
 - Low-interest emergency loans for individual farmers.
 - Additional disaster relief for primary counties (example: livestock forage disaster aid) .



Water Supply Outlook



La Niña – Returned

- La Niña officially returned this past Oct 9.
- La Niña is currently expected to continue to February 2026.
- La Niña usually means wetter and colder but is currently weak = less of an impact.

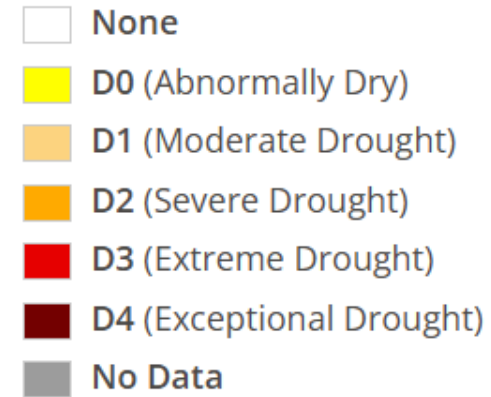


US Drought Monitor

Map released: Thurs. October 9, 2025

Data valid: October 7, 2025 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity



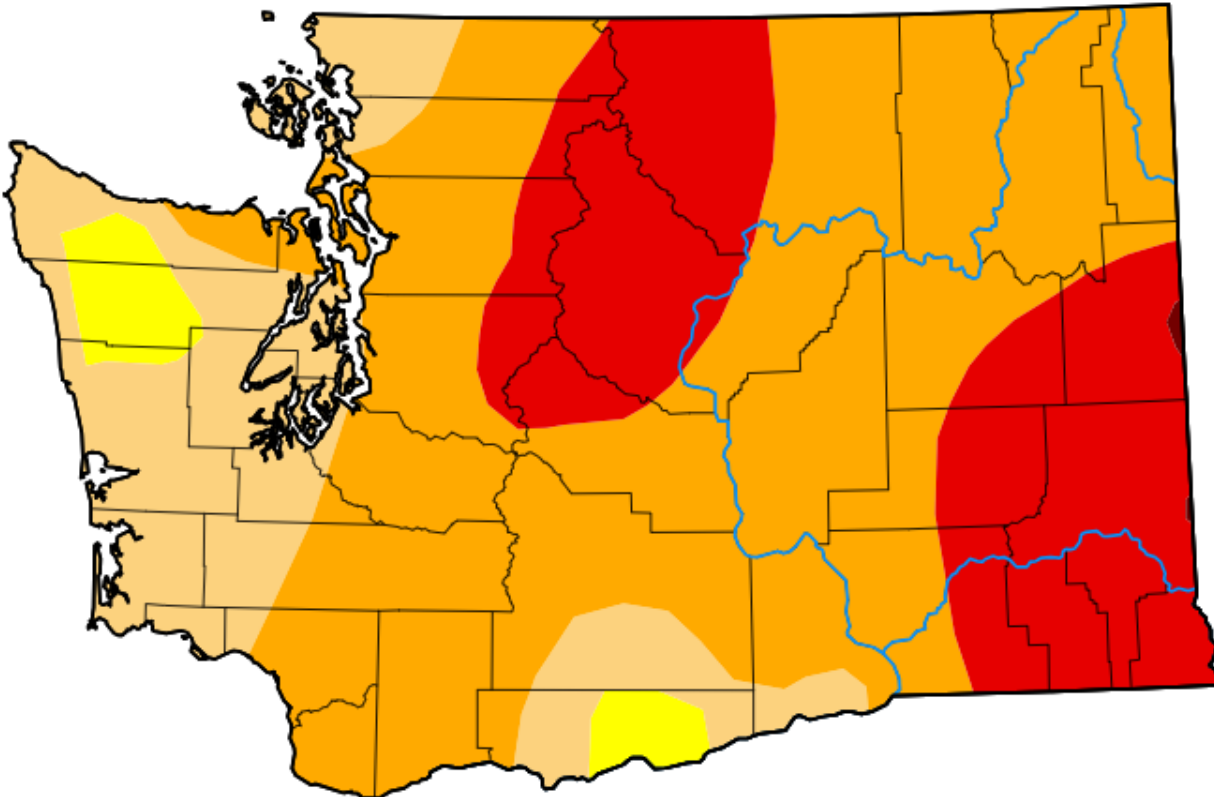
Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):

[Curtis Riganti](#), National Drought Mitigation Center

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):

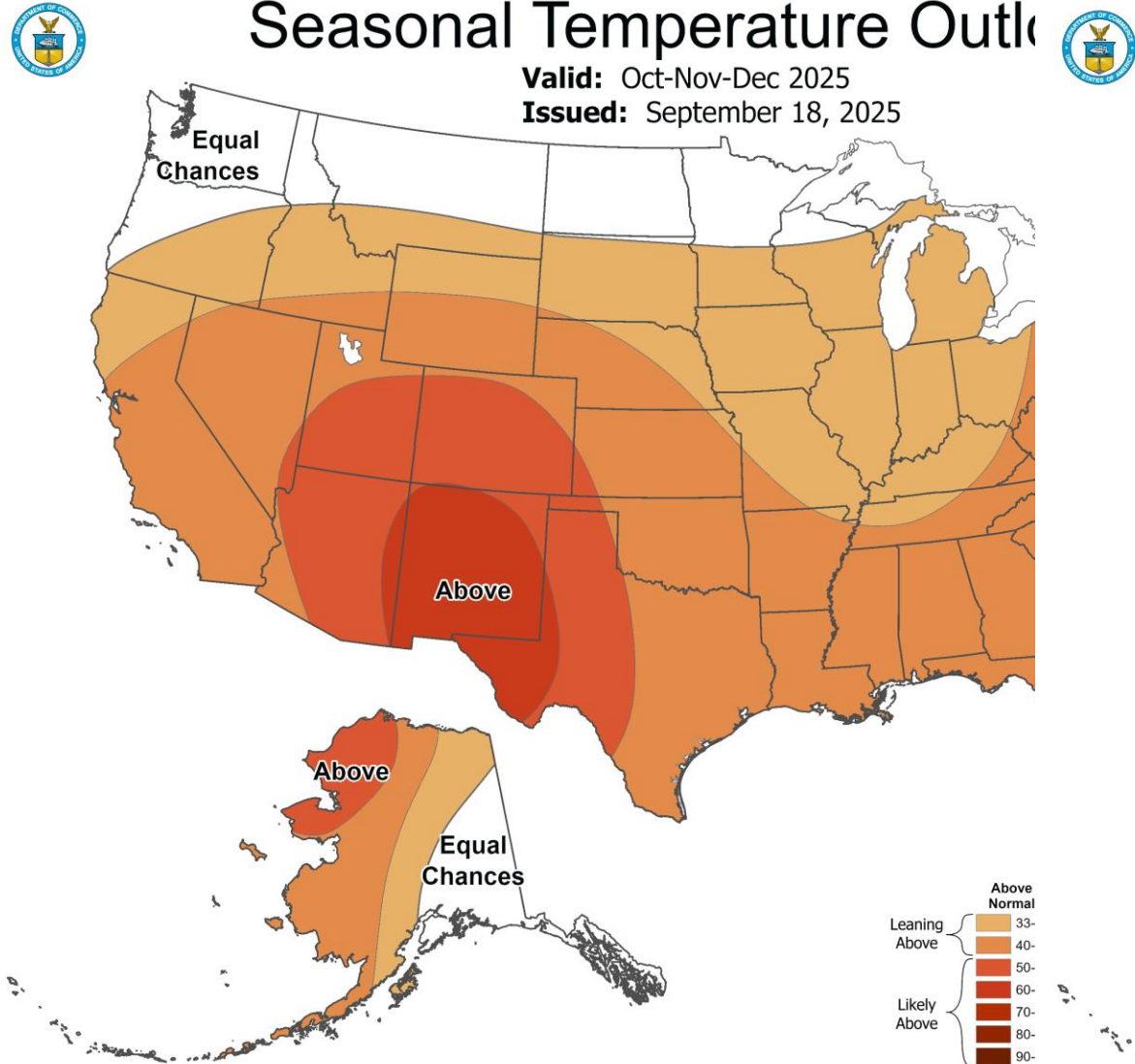
[Tsegaye Tadesse](#), National Drought Mitigation Center



Conditions: Three-month Outlook

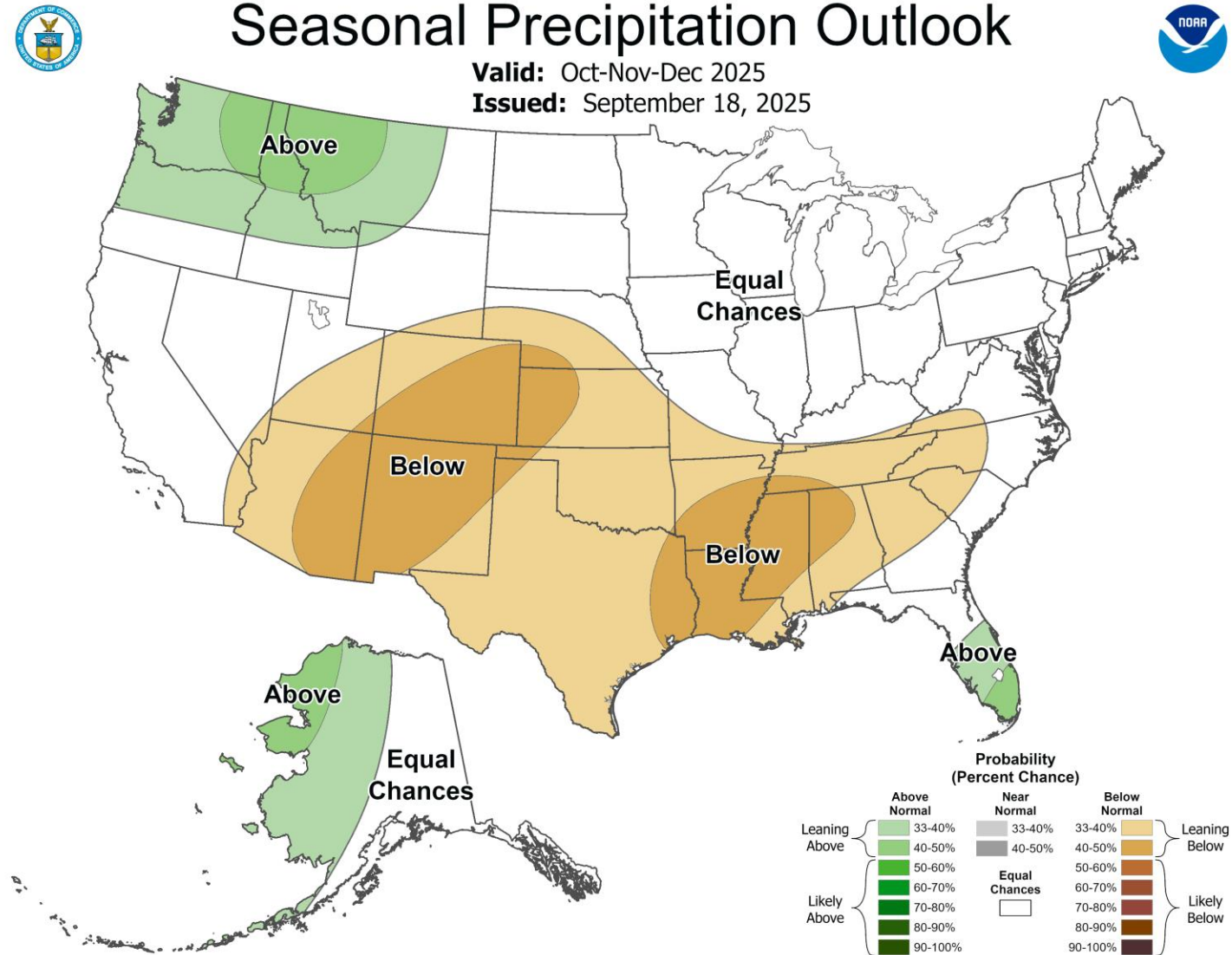
Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2025
Issued: September 18, 2025



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

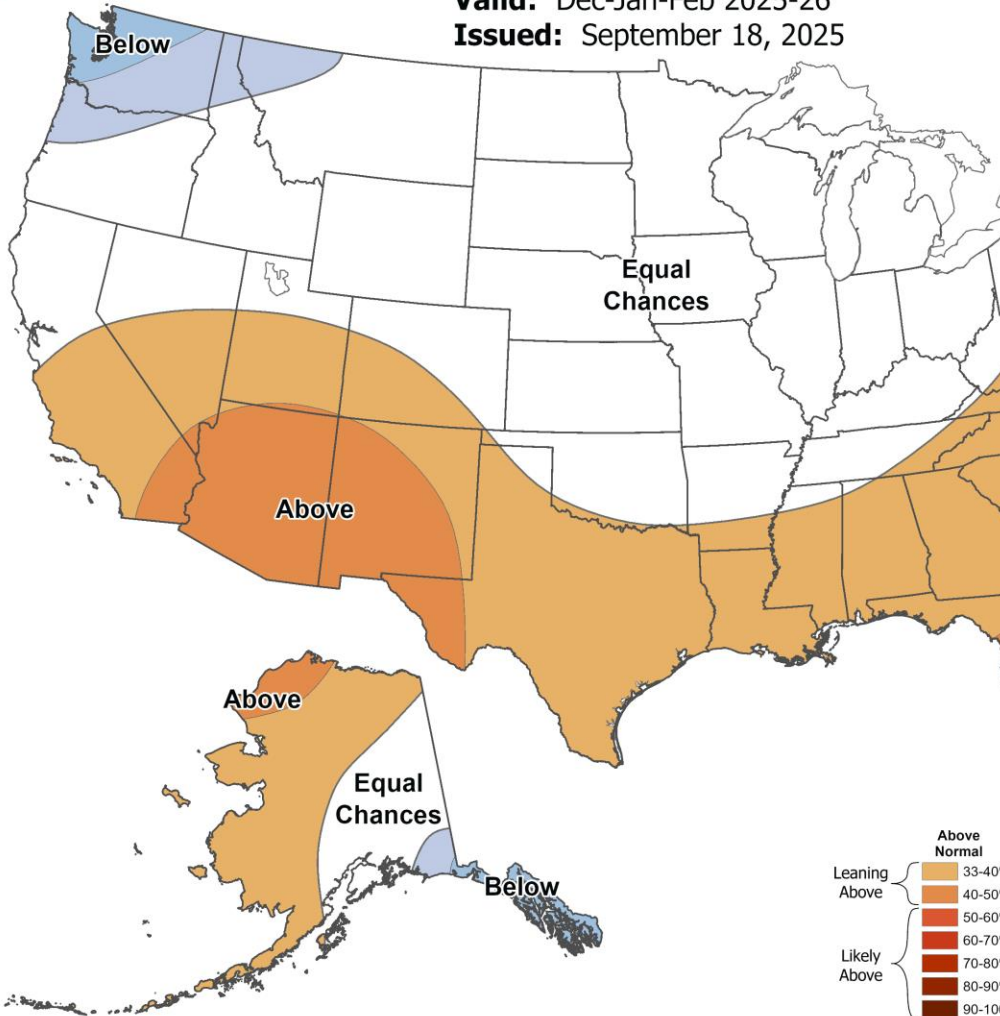
Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2025
Issued: September 18, 2025



Conditions: Three-month Outlook

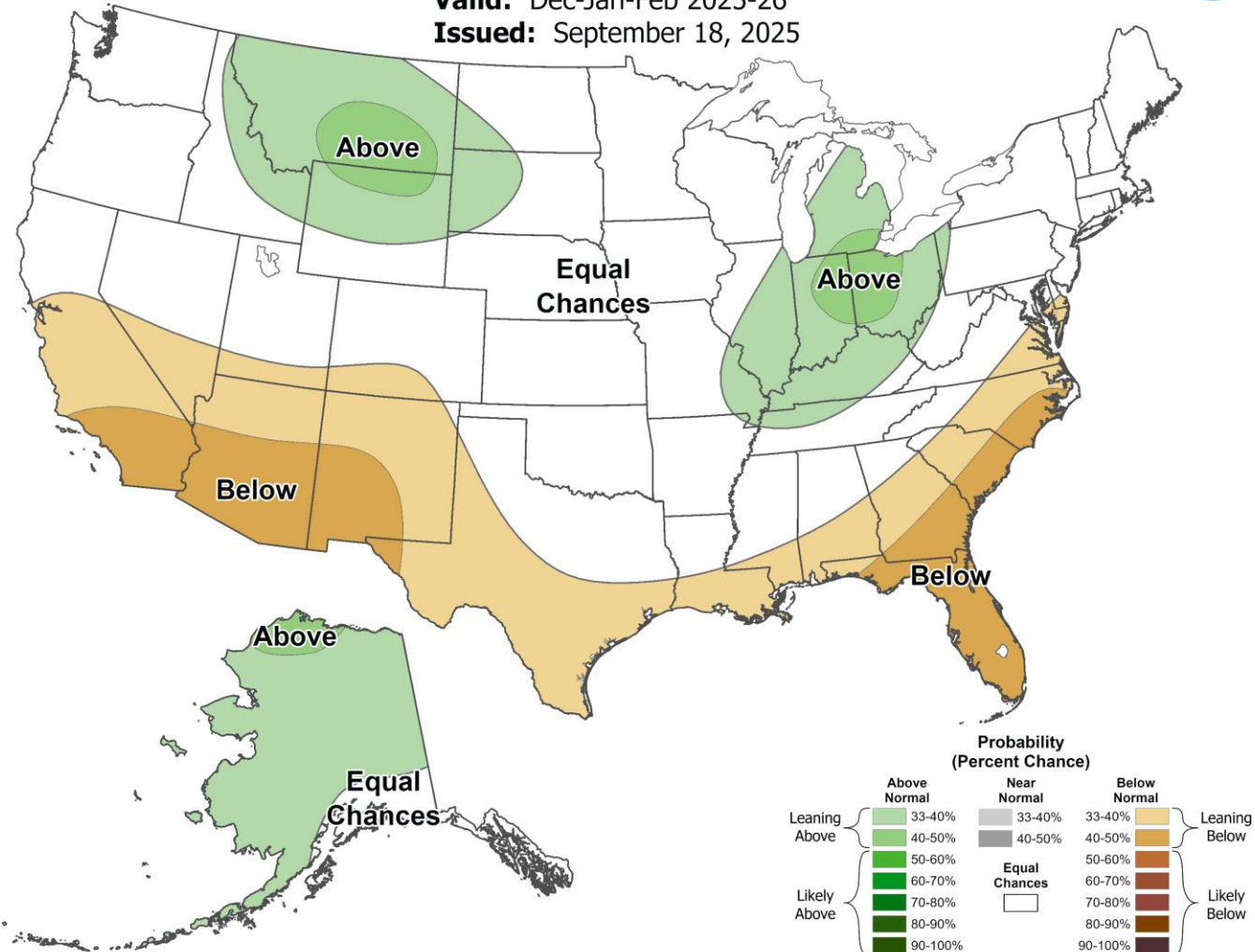
Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2025-26
Issued: September 18, 2025



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2025-26
Issued: September 18, 2025

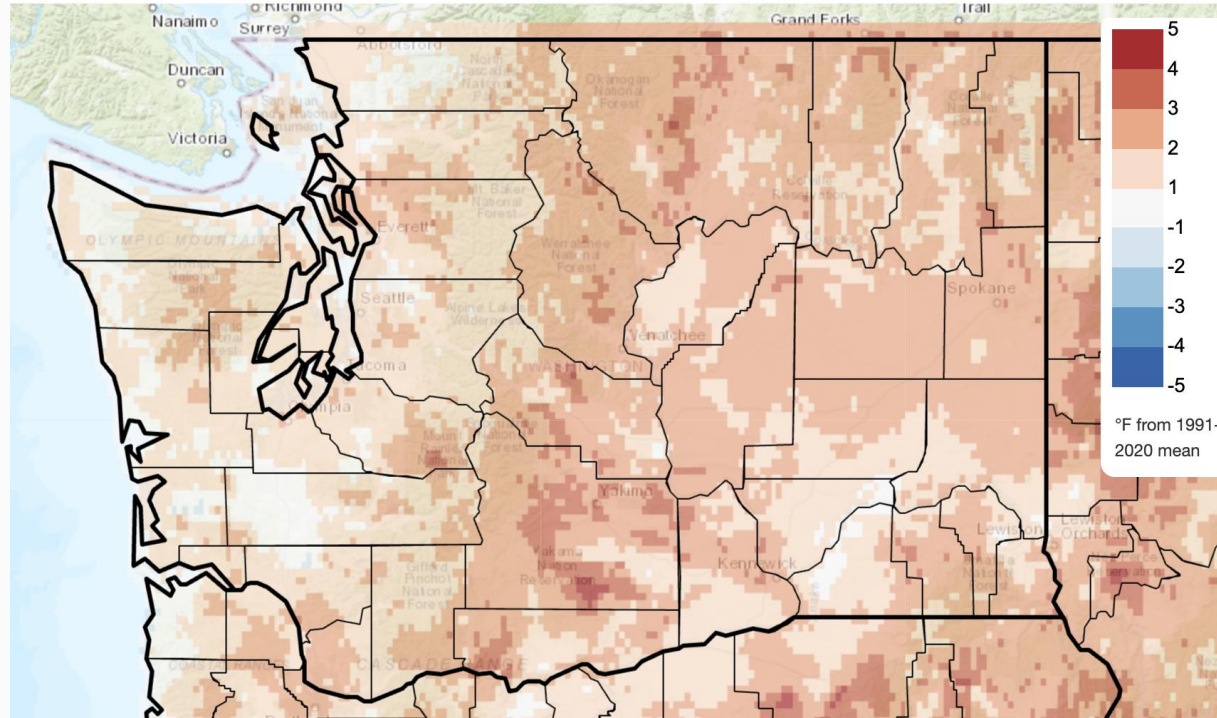


Water Year 2025

Temperature

Mean Daily Temperature Anomaly, Last Oct to Last Full Month

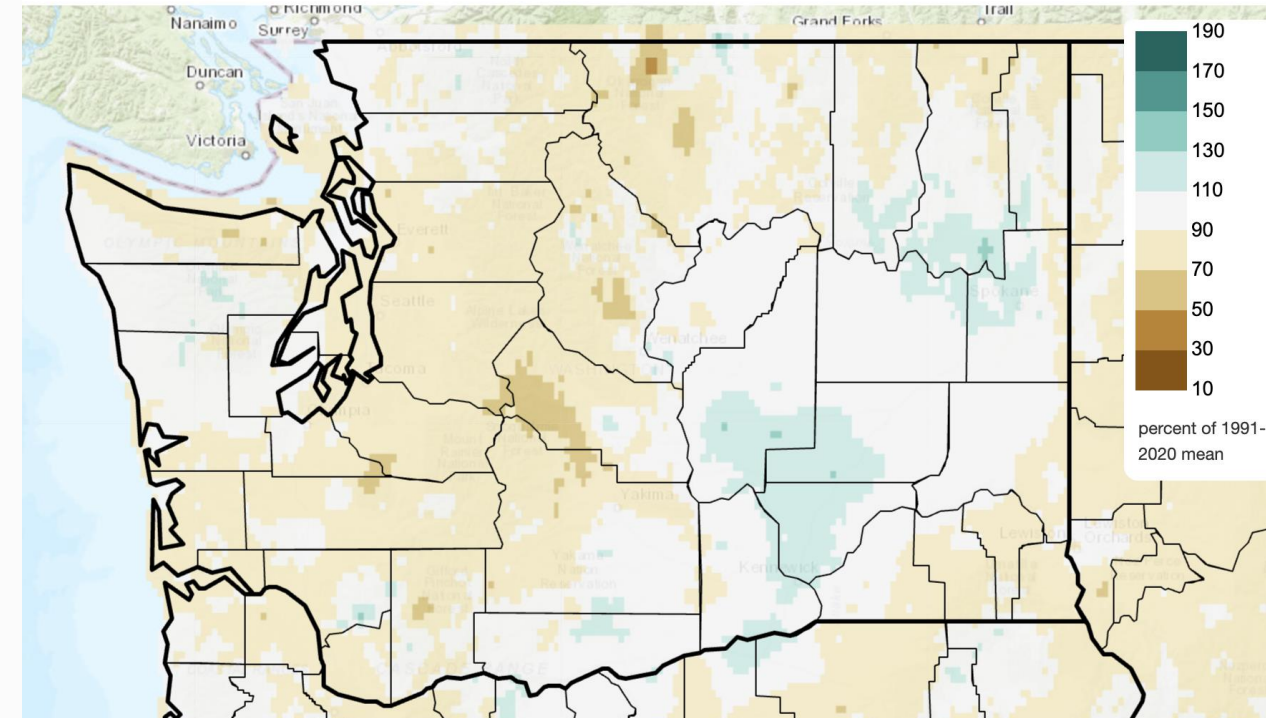
2024/10/01 - 2025/09/30



Precipitation

Total Precipitation Anomaly, Last Oct to Last Full Month

2024/10/01 - 2025/09/30



[Climate Toolbox](#)

- Averaged statewide, water year 2025 temperatures were above normal (+1.7 °F), ranking as approximately the 4th warmest* on record behind 2015, 1934, and 1992
- Averaged statewide, water year 2025 precipitation was below normal (-4.97"; 89% of normal), ranking as approximately the 37th driest

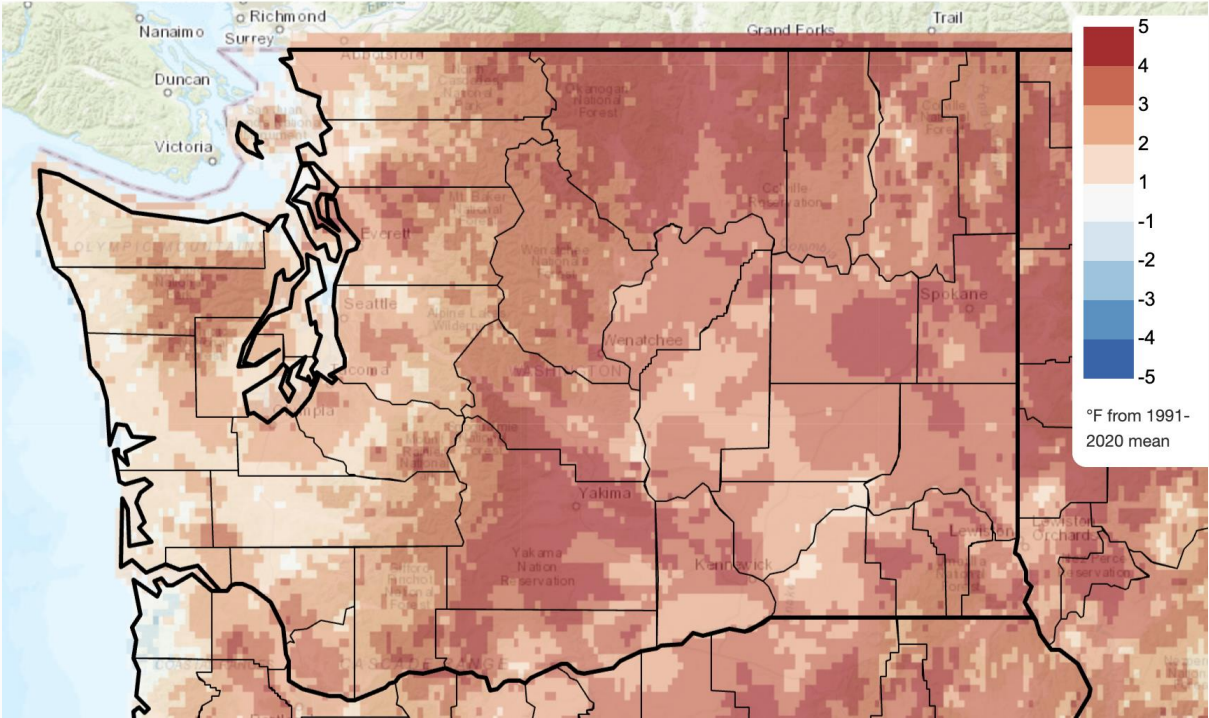
*Estimated from gridMET data due to the government shutdown; Normal is 1991-2020

Last 90 Days

Temperature

Mean Daily Temperature Anomaly, Last 90 Days

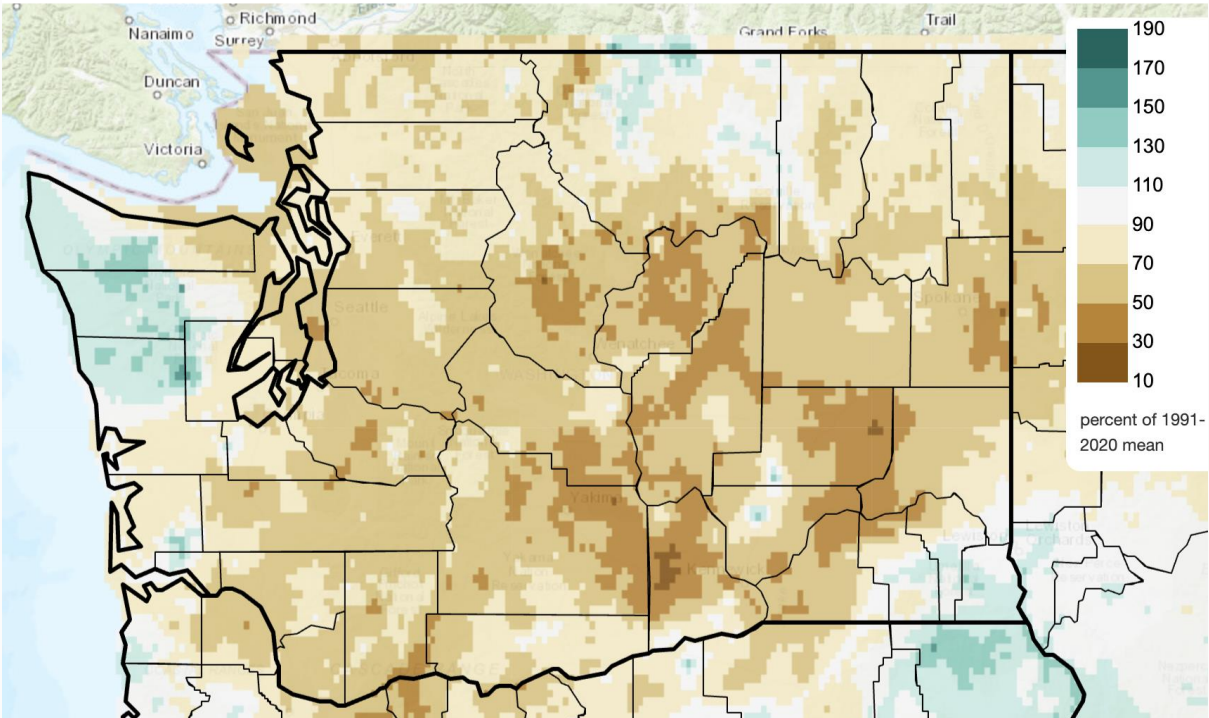
2025/07/09 - 2025/10/06



Precipitation

Total Precipitation Anomaly, Last 90 Days

2025/07/09 - 2025/10/06

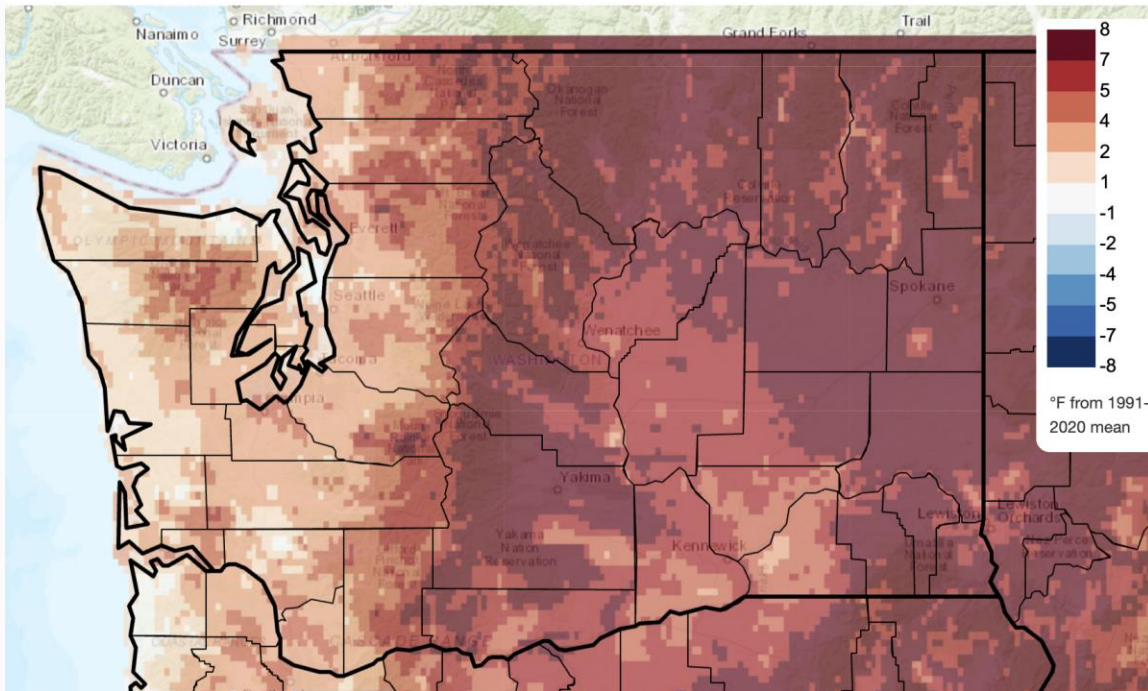


September 2025

Temperature

Mean Daily Temperature Anomaly, Last Full Month

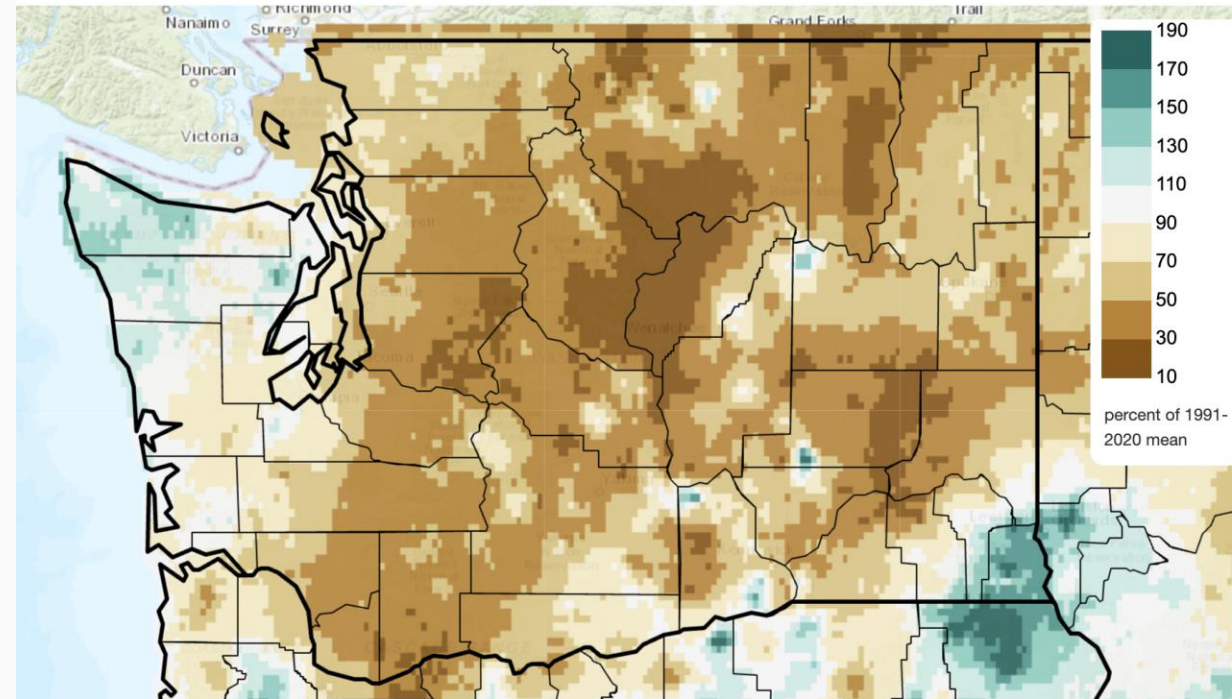
2025/09/01 - 2025/09/30



Precipitation

Total Precipitation Anomaly, Last Full Month

2025/09/01 - 2025/09/30



[Climate Toolbox](#)

- Averaged statewide, September temperatures ranked as (*possibly*) the warmest (+5.7 °F) on record*
- Averaged statewide, September precipitation ranked as approximately the 32nd driest on record, with 61% of normal precipitation (-0.67")*

*Estimated from gridMET data due to the government shutdown; Normal is 1991-2020

Water Supply Conditions – Yakima

- BOR Yakima storage at 25.1%*, compared to average for the time of year.
 - Historically low storage
 - Precipitation deficits from 2023
 - Low natural streamflows,
- Ecology has issued a curtailment order that halts **all surface water use** by Oct. 6 to protect the most senior water rights.



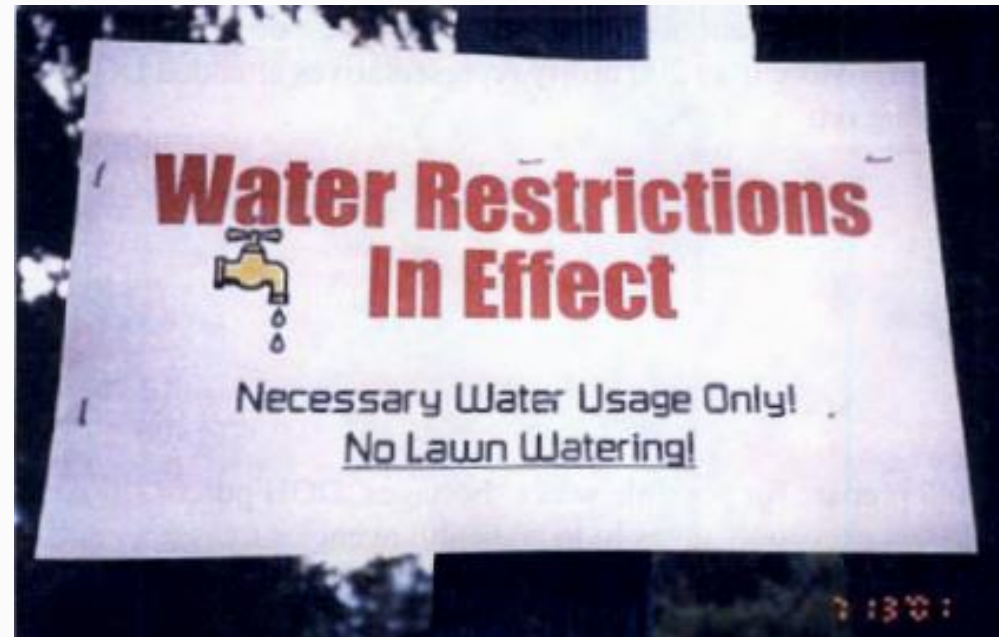
Yakima River, July 2024

*As of October 9, 2025.

Water Year in Review

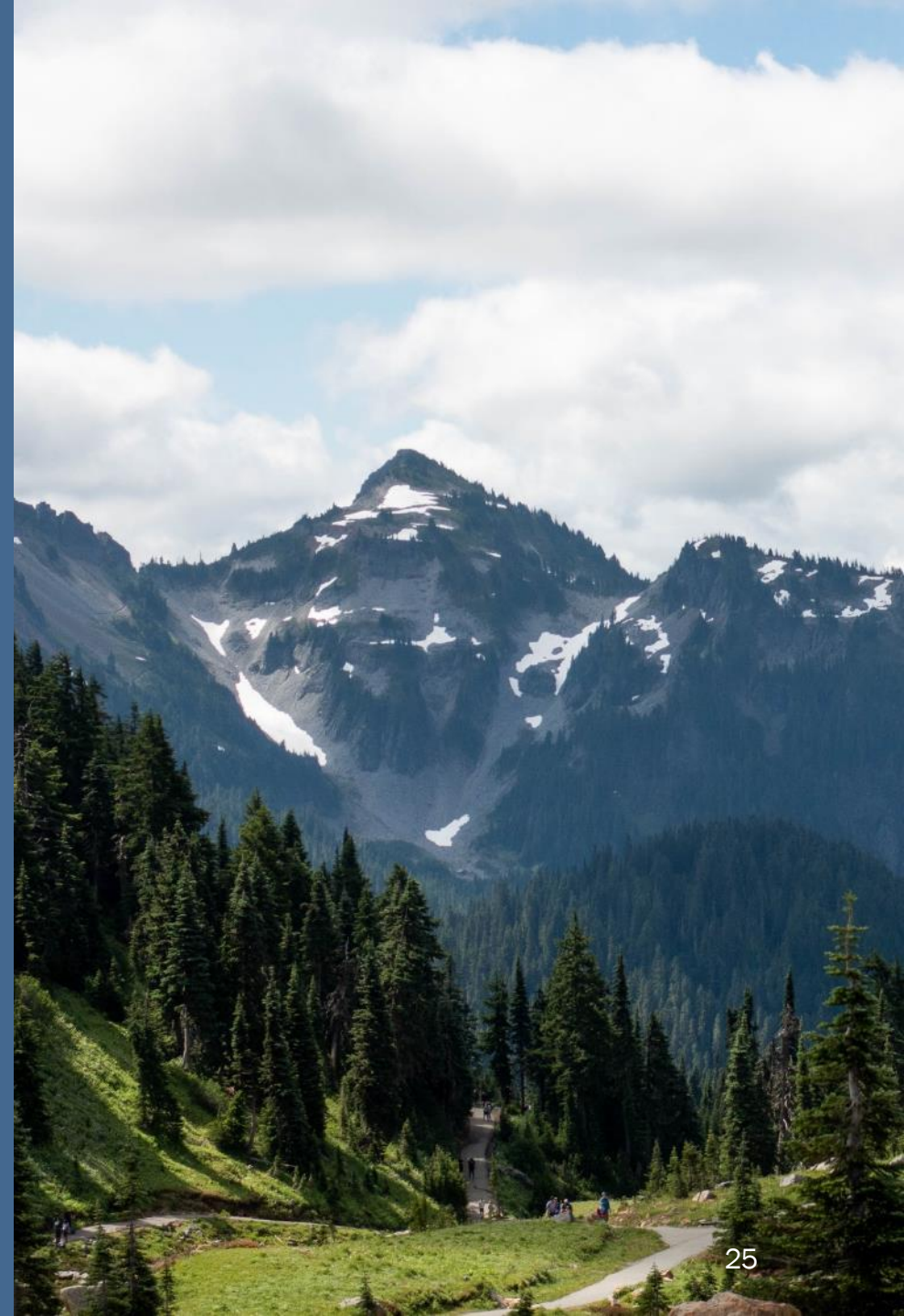
Drier than normal conditions have been more widespread across the state since January.

- Jan-Jul: 7th driest on record
- Apr-Jul: 3rd driest on record
 - Record back to 1895.





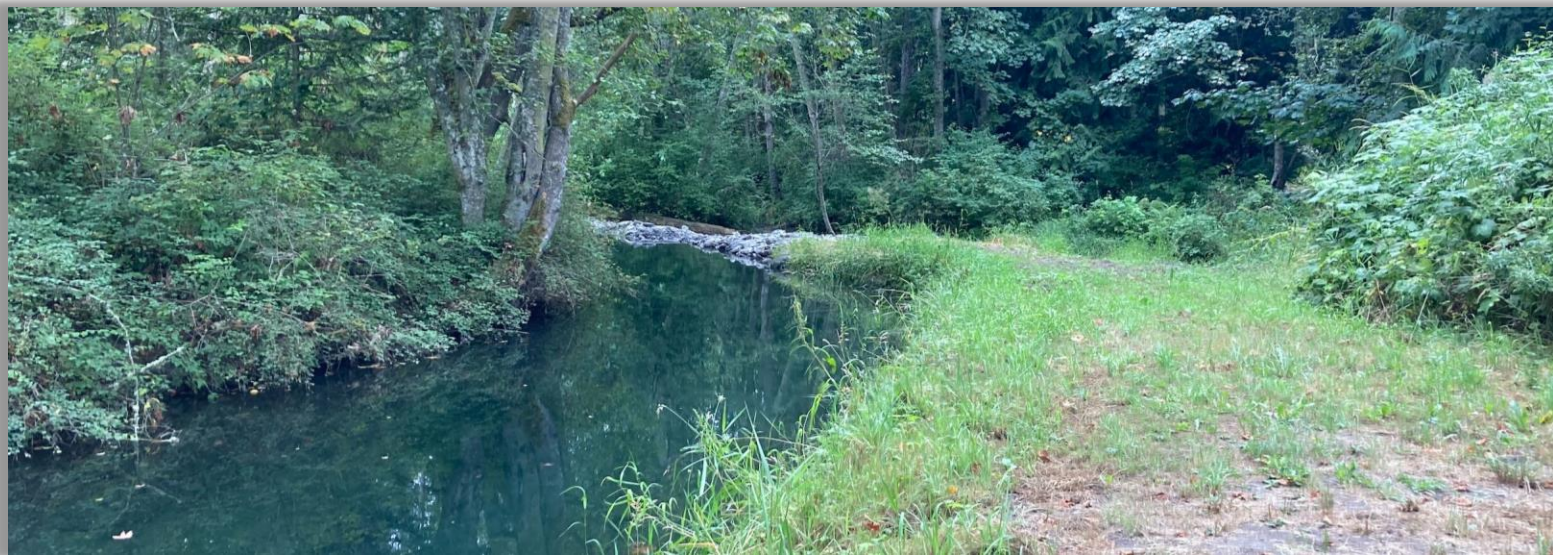
Ongoing drought management



Drought response continues

The Drought declaration is currently in place till April 2026.

- Ecology will continue to evaluate conditions throughout this fall and winter.



Share your impacts

Ways to share drought impacts

- The National Drought [Condition Monitoring Observer Reports \(CMOR\)](#) from the interagency [Drought Impacts toolkit](#).
 - Desktop and mobile submission options.
- Participate in the annual [PNW Water Year 2025 Recap and 2025 Outlook Meeting](#).
 - Click link to register. Virtual options ([past recaps](#)).
 - Take the [2025 Water Year Survey](#)!
 - Discussions & survey will help inform the PNW Water Year Impacts Assessment Report ([2024 Report](#)).

Takeaways

- Emergency drought response tools continue to be available for impacts from 2025 drought conditions.
- Ecology continues to closely monitoring conditions and coordinating with partners.
- Emergency response is important but work outside of drought is essential to build drought resilience, water security and address climate change impacts.

Drought Info

Drought website: [Drought Response](#)

- Declaration: [Order of Determination by the Director](#)
- Press release: [June 5](#)

[Water Supply Availability Committee \(WSAC\) website](#)

Recent Ecology drought blogs:

- [I thought this was called summer?](#)
- [July Update \(Federal vs state\)](#)
- [August blog \(Yes, it rained. No, the drought is not over\).](#)



Questions?



Thank you

Caroline Mellor

WR Statewide Drought Lead

Caroline.Mellor@ecy.wa.gov