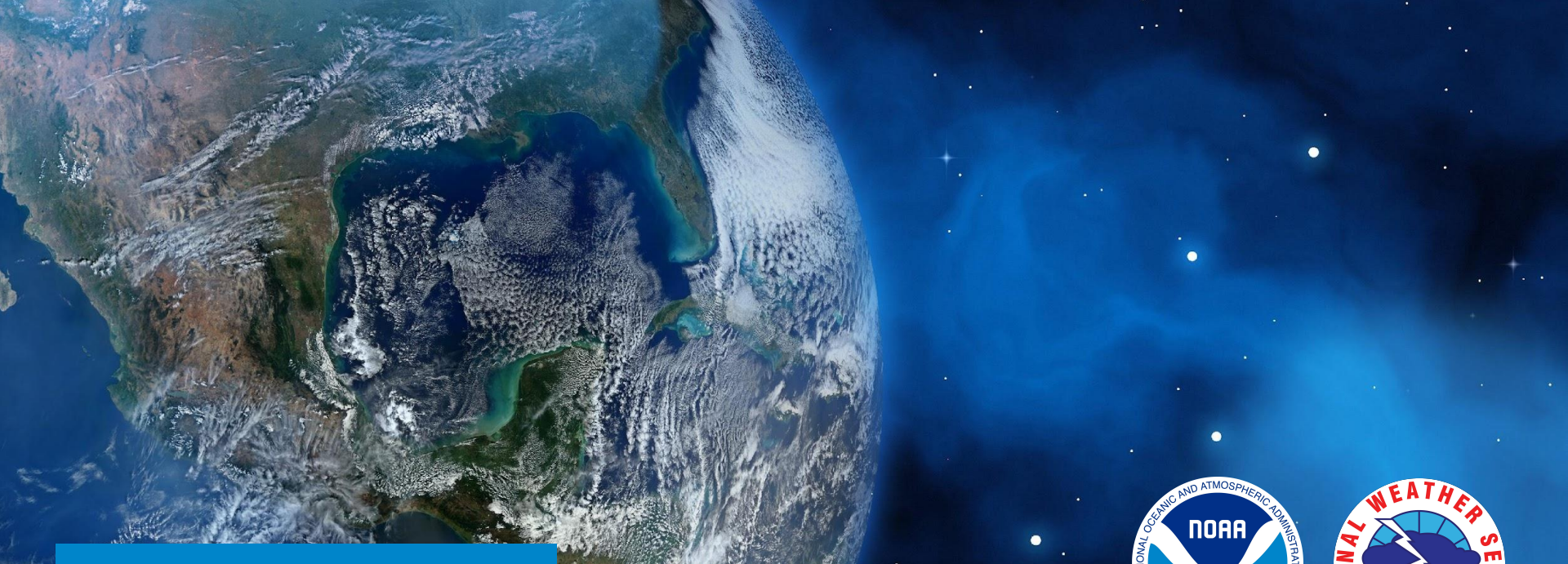


Winter Outlook 2025-2026

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

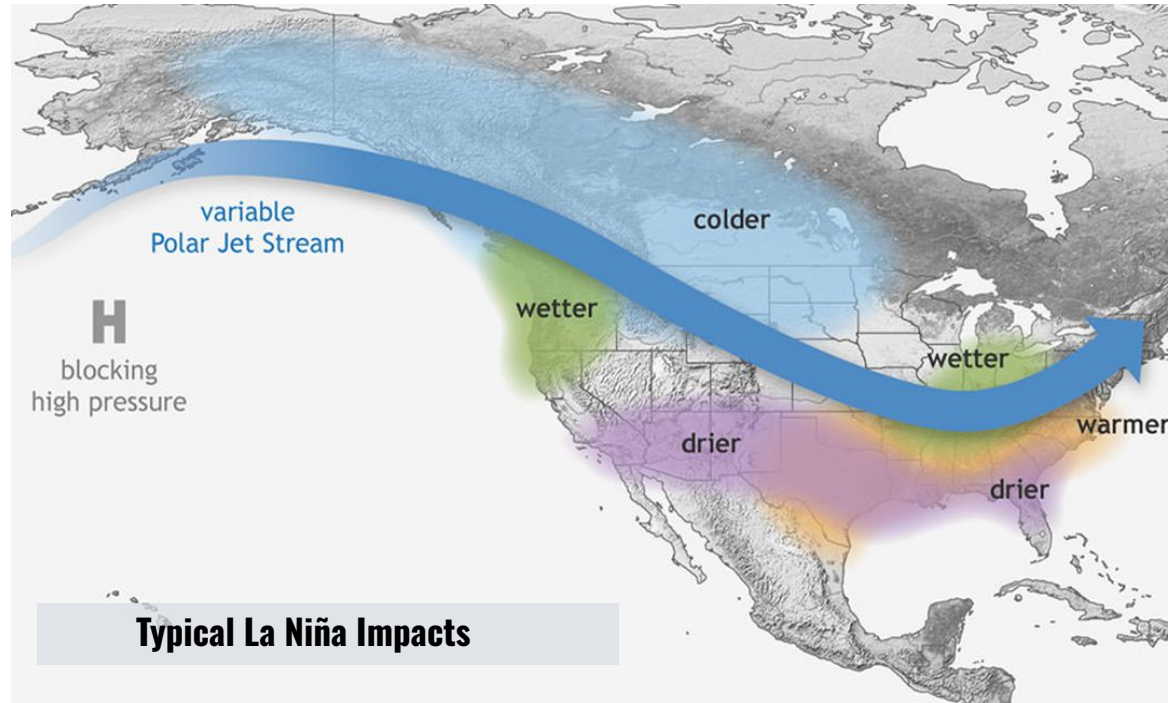
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service

Seasonal Outlooks Influenced by La Niña



El Niño/La Niña are the warm and cool phases of a recurring climate pattern across the tropical Pacific Ocean that can affect weather worldwide.

- **La Niña:** Conditions are present and favored to persist through December 2025 - February 2026, with a transition to neutral likely in January-March 2026 (55% chance).
- Current guidance suggests a **weak and short duration La Niña**, but still favors cooler and wetter conditions for the Northern Plains
- These are typical impacts, but every winter is unique!



U.S. Seasonal Temperature Outlook



December-January-February

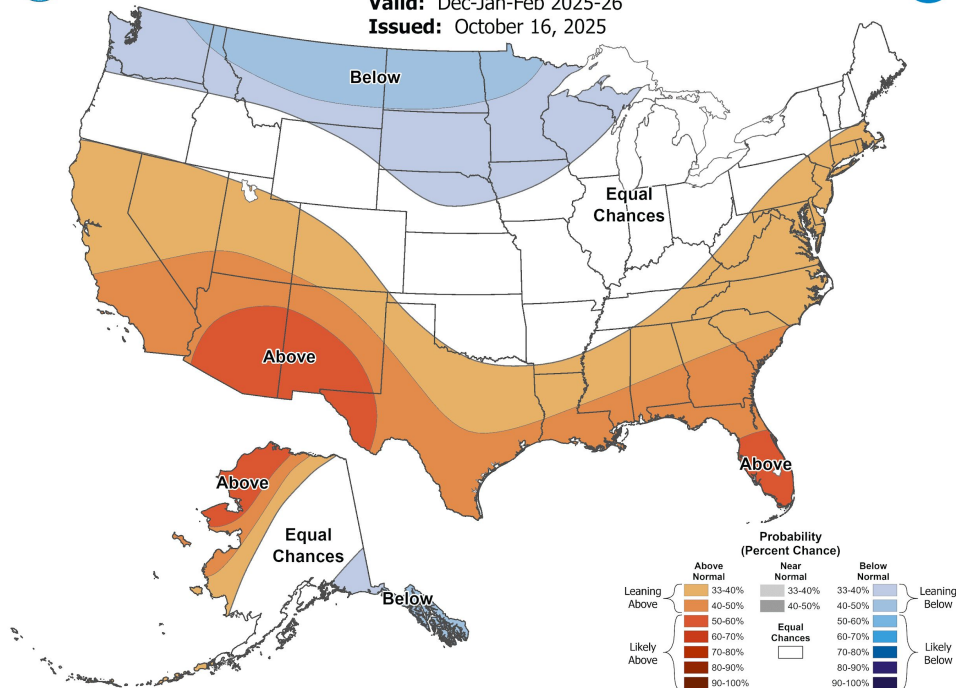
- Warmer-than-average temperatures are favored from the southern tier of the U.S. to the eastern seaboard and northern Alaska. These probabilities are strongest along the Southwest US and most of Florida.
- **Below-average temperatures** are slightly favored from the Pacific Northwest to the **Northern Plains** and western Great Lakes region. Below-average temperatures are also slightly favored across southern Alaska. The probabilities are strongest across Montana, North Dakota and northern Minnesota.
- The remaining areas have equal chances of below-, near-, or above-average seasonal mean temperatures.



Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2025-26

Issued: October 16, 2025

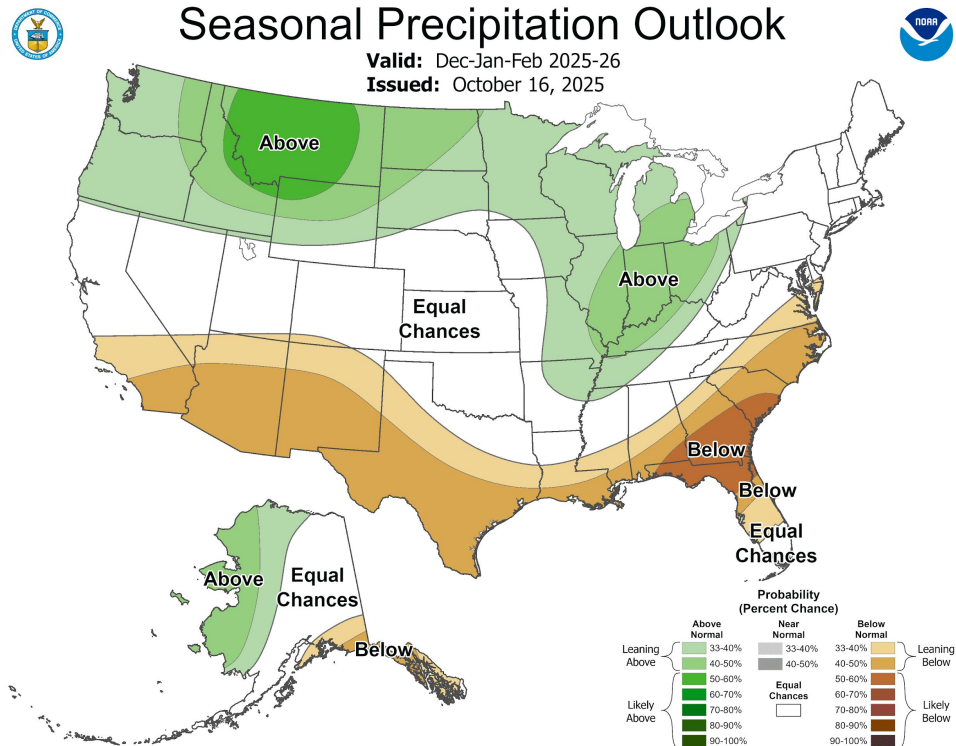


U.S. Seasonal Precipitation Outlook



December-January-February

- **Wetter-than-average** conditions are most likely over Montana, and above-average precipitation is also favored in northern and western Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, the **Northern Plains**, the Great Lakes region and Ohio River Valley.
- The greatest likelihood for drier-than-average conditions are over the far southeast U.S., but dryer-than-normal is favored across all of the southern tier States and southern Alaska.
- The remaining areas have equal chances of below-average, near-average or above-average seasonal total precipitation.



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

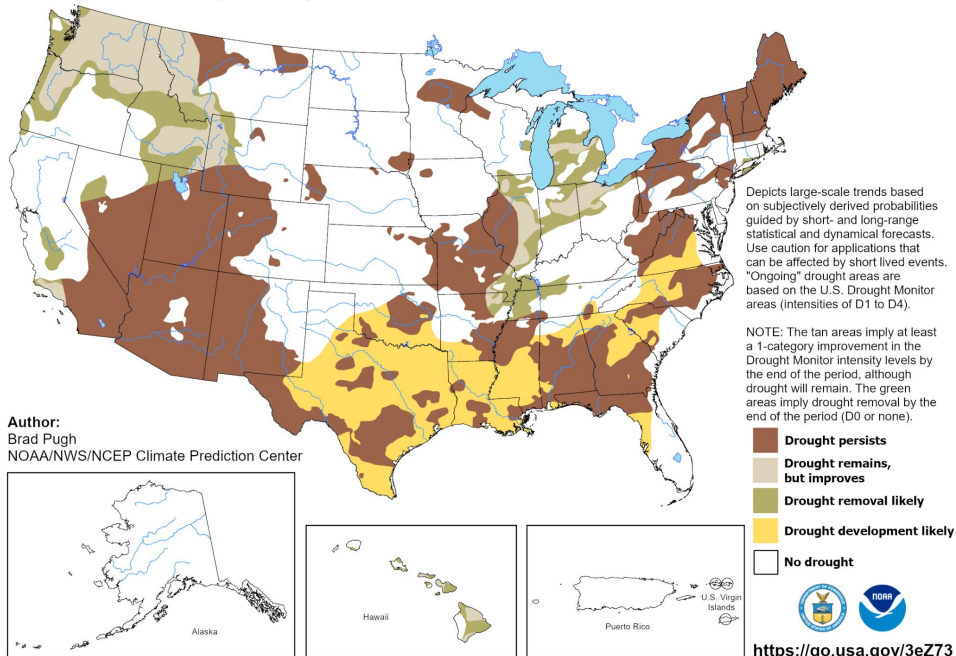


October 16, 2025-January 31, 2026

- Drought is expected to persist across the southwest, deep south, and portions of the northeast.
- Drought development is likely across the south central states
- Drought improvement is expected across the Pacific Northwest
- For central South Dakota and west central Minnesota no drought is expected

U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for October 16, 2025 - January 31, 2026
Released October 16, 2025



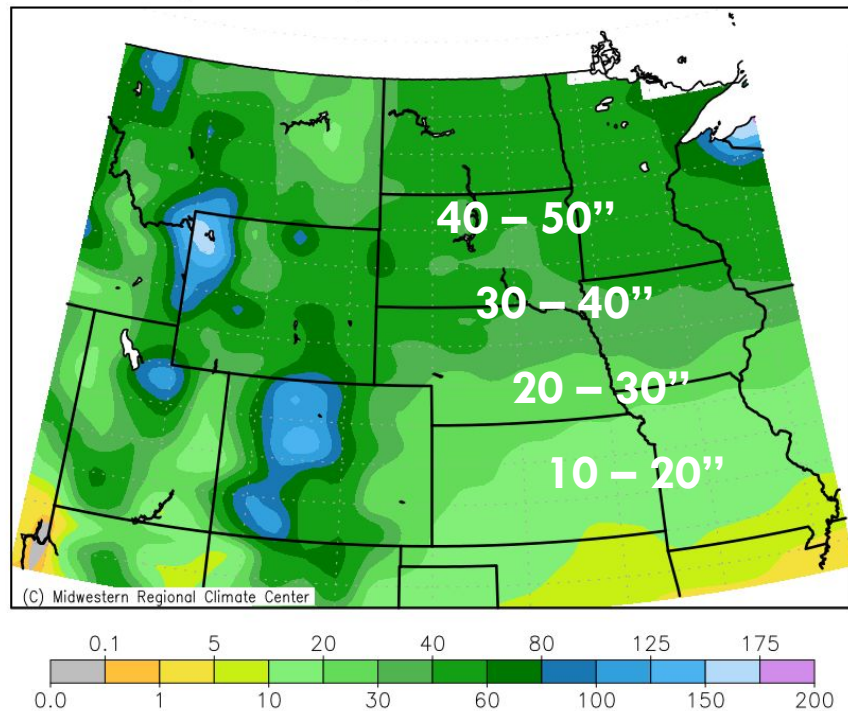
Local Discussion



Central & Northeast South Dakota & West Central Minnesota

- **Keep In Mind:** The outlook does not project seasonal snowfall accumulations as snow forecasts are generally not predictable more than a week in advance.
 - Normal seasonal snowfall values (image right) range from 30 to 50 inches across eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota.
- The **winter outlook** for this season **favors colder than normal temperatures**.
 - This aligns with local studies indicate that ~77% of the time a weak La Niña event will result in colder than normal temperatures across our area.
- The **winter outlook** for this season favors **above normal precipitation**.
 - Local studies show precipitation odds are split between above and below normal for weak La Niña years.

Normal Seasonal Snowfall

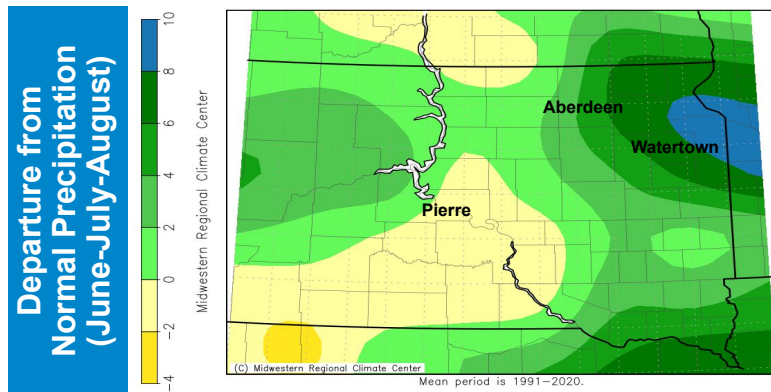
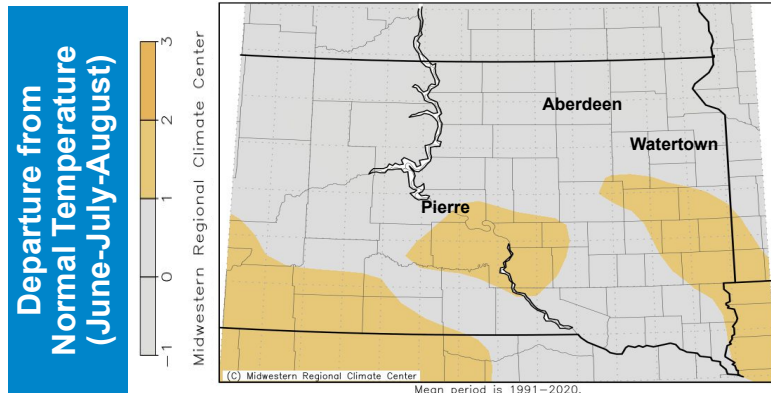


Midwestern Regional Climate Center

Past Summer (June-July-August) Pattern



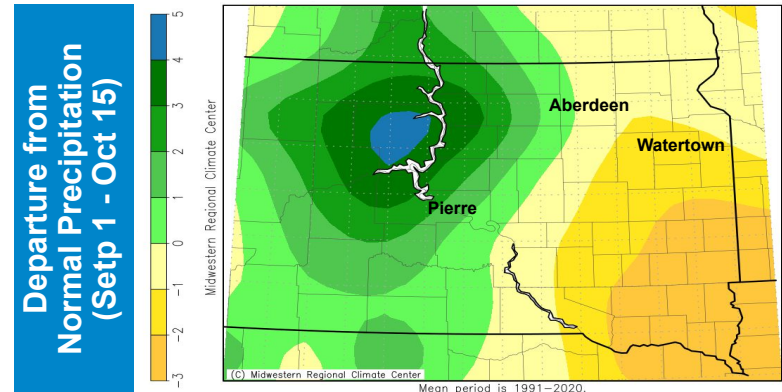
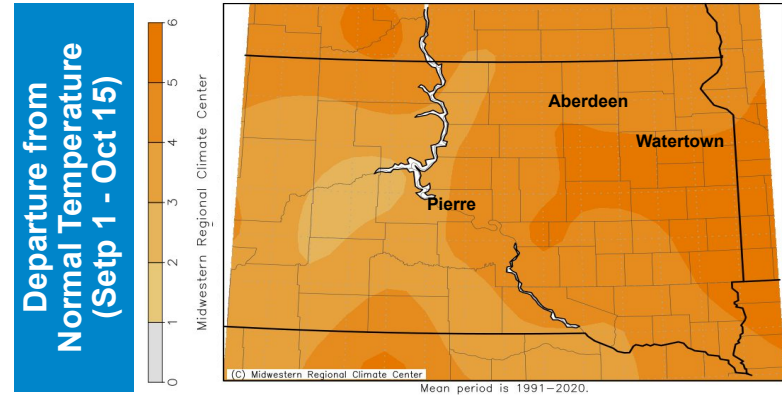
- The cooler-than-normal temperature outlook for winter (December-January-February) would be a pattern change from summer (June-July-August) temperatures which ranged from near normal to a couple of degrees above normal.
- Most of the region experienced a wet summer.
 - With the exception of south central South Dakota, northeast Campbell and northwest McPherson counties, summer (June-July-August) featured above normal precipitation.
- Northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota received the most summer rainfall.
 - This area accumulated 4 to 10 inches above normal summer rainfall.
 - In fact, many locations experienced their **wettest summer on record** including: Britton, Watertown, Milbank, Sisseton, and Wilmot in South Dakota and White Rock Dam in Minnesota.



Current Fall Pattern (Last 45 Days)



- The entire region has experienced a warm start to fall.
- **Temperatures** have ranged from two to six degrees **above normal** over the **last 45 days** (Sept 1-October 15).
 - The cooler-than-normal temperature outlook for winter (December-January-February) would be a pattern change from the last 45 day temperature trends.
- Central South Dakota has has above normal precipitation (1 to 5 inches above normal) in the last 45 days, while eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota have ranged from 1 to 3 inches below normal for precipitation.



Winter Preparedness



Regardless of what winter will ultimately bring for residents of the Northern Plains, now is the time to prepare!

Please join us in promoting winter weather safety now and during scheduled preparedness days:

- October 22: Winter Weather Preparedness Day in South Dakota
- November 17-21: Winter Weather Preparedness Week in Minnesota

The following resources can be used to help spread the winter safety message:

- <https://www.weather.gov/safety/winter>
- <https://www.weather.gov/wrn/winter-sm>

You can also follow us on social media and share our content when appropriate:

- [x.com/NWSAberdeen](https://twitter.com/NWSAberdeen)
- www.facebook.com/NWSAberdeen



A satellite image of Earth from space, showing the Arctic region and parts of North America and Europe. The image is set against a dark blue background with stars. The text "Winter Outlook 2025-2026" is overlaid in white.

Winter Outlook 2025-2026

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