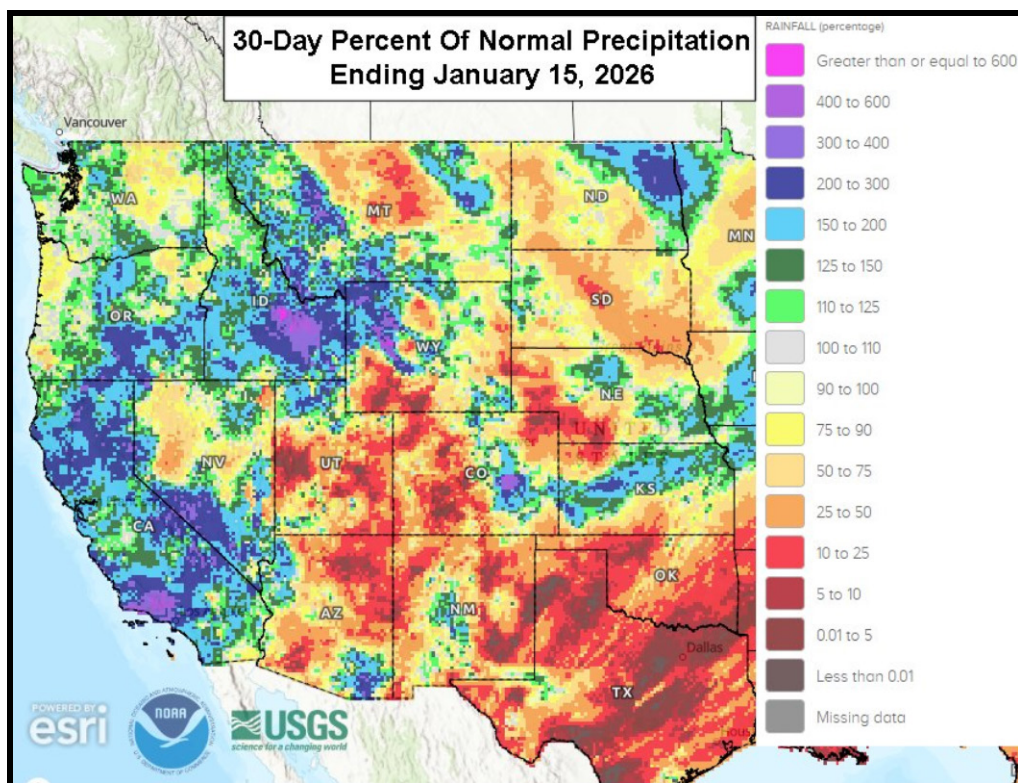


# Western U.S. Will Be Drier Than Usual From Nearby Ridge

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, January 16 (World Weather Inc.) – Mountain snowpack is below or well below normal for much of the Cascade Mountains, central Rocky Mountains, and portions of California outside the Sierra Nevada. California received above normal precipitation in recent weeks and the water situation is generally good. Long-term production potentials for the upcoming season are favorable as well due to the good water supply. The Pacific Northwest, Oregon and southern Washington in particular, are otherwise in growing need of precipitation to fill reservoirs and bolster snowpack. The central Rocky Mountains would also welcome increased precipitation. However, much of the western United States will be under the influence of a strong high-pressure ridge through the end of next week. Precipitation will be limited and what precipitation that does occur will be too light to impact the moisture profile long-term. A shift in the upper-air pattern during the last week of January will gradually increase precipitation potentials for the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountains region.

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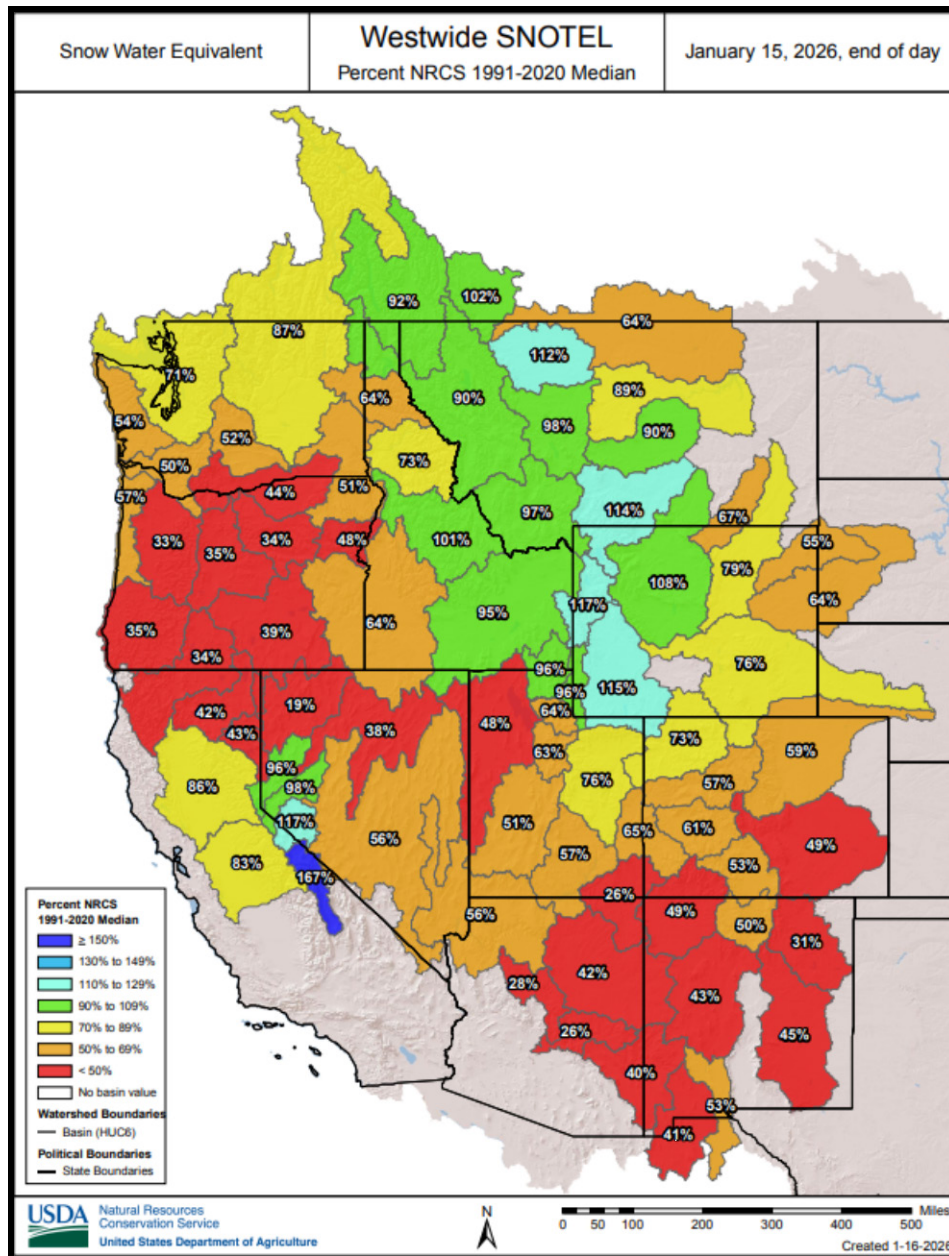


California was generally wetter or much wetter than usual during the past month. Much of the state received 150-400% of normal precipitation for the 30-day period ending January 15 with pockets that saw precipitation trend near or slightly above normal. Several areas in Oregon outside the northeast and western sections of the state into much of Idaho received 125-300% of normal precipitation as well with many areas in southern Idaho receiving more than four times' normal precipitation. Precipitation was closer to normal in Washington; though, pockets in the northwest and south were wetter than usual and many

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areas in central Washington were drier than usual. The central Rocky Mountains are another region in which precipitation has been below normal.

Mountain snowpack is generally near or above normal in southern and extreme northern Idaho, western Wyoming, and the highest elevated areas in California's Sierra Nevada as of January 15. Snow-water equivalencies are otherwise below normal in the remaining portions of the western United States. Several areas in Oregon, northern California, and the central Rocky Mountains region have less than 50% of normal snow-water equivalents.

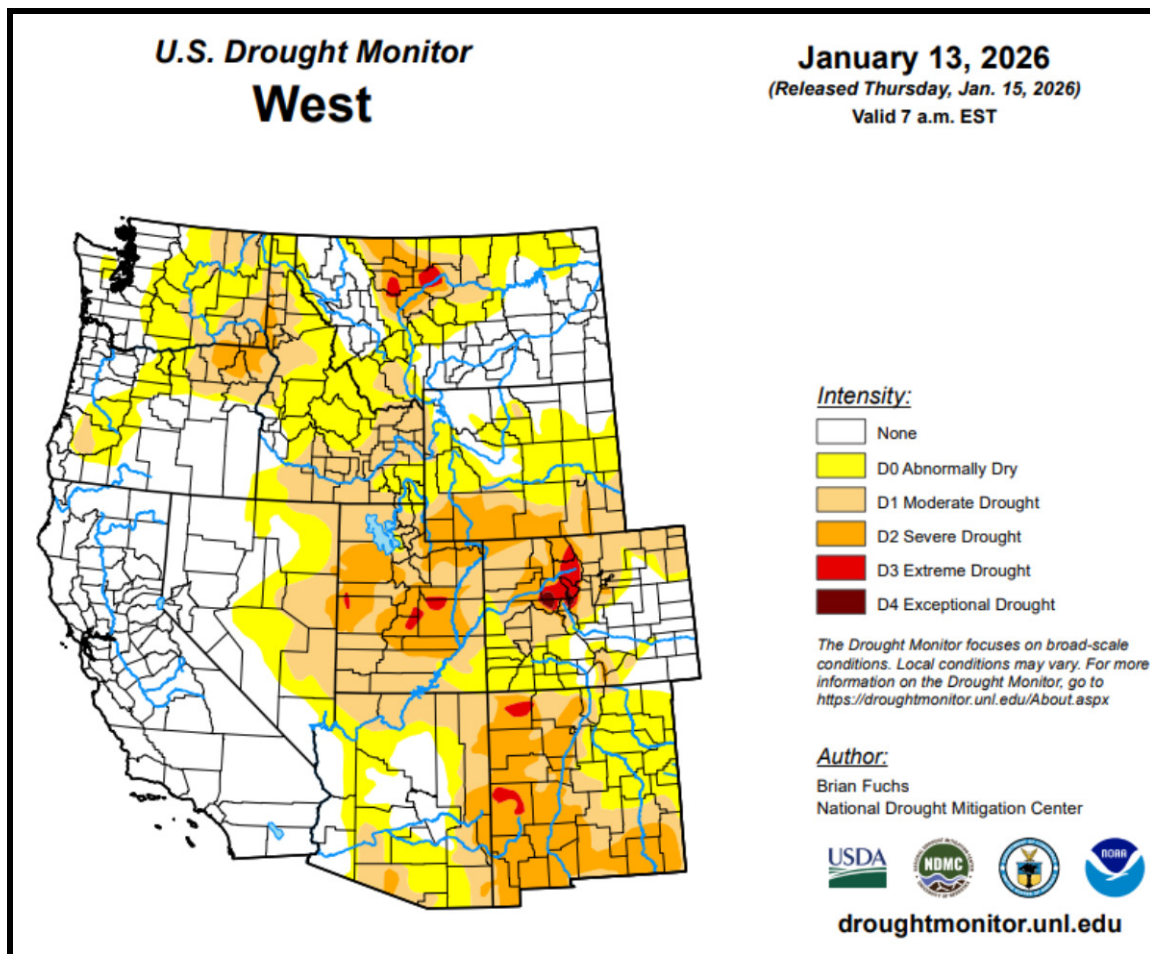


Ample snowpack in the Sierra Nevada combined with near or above historical reservoir levels will promote a good outlook for the upcoming season in California. The most recent [\*U.S. Drought Monitor has California completely drought-free as of January\*](#)

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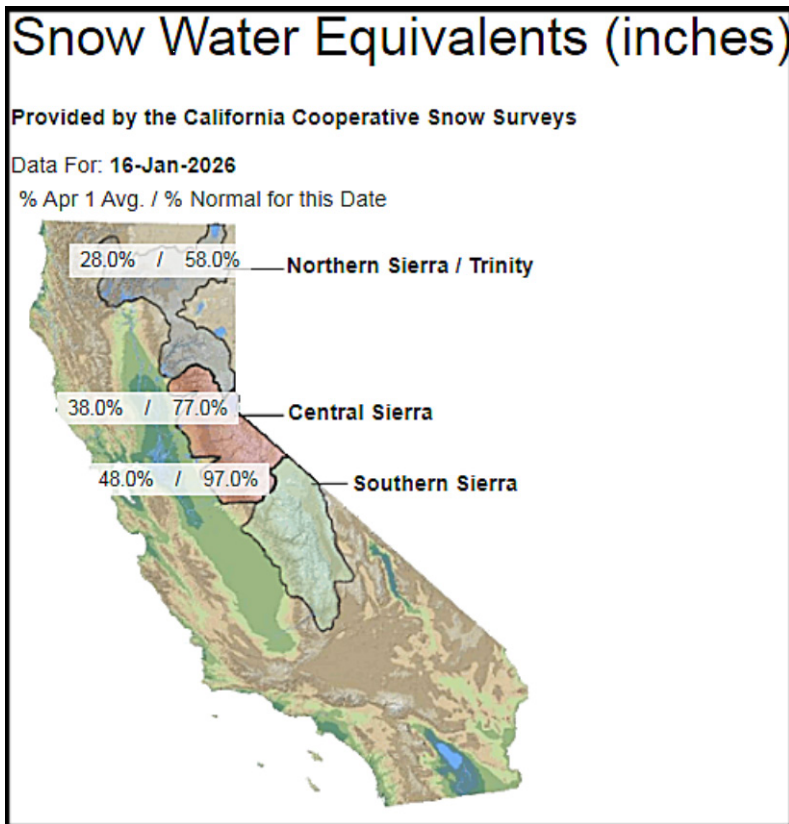
13. The last time the state was drought-free was in December of 2020. Flooding was noted in portions of California during the past month due to atmospheric rivers promoting periods of heavy rain and clean-up efforts may still be underway.

Water storage levels in Washington are relatively good as well despite the lower than usual snowpack. Southern Idaho snowpack levels are relatively favorable outside the southwest corner. However, much of the Pacific Northwest and central Rocky Mountains region are in need of more frequent precipitation later this winter. Drought or abnormally dry conditions were noted in the eastern two-thirds of Washington, portions of northern and western Oregon, Idaho, and much of the remaining Rocky Mountains region as of January 13. There is still plenty of time for better precipitation. However, the driest locations will need abundant precipitation to fix the moisture deficits.



The western United States will be impacted by a strong high-pressure ridge as it meanders around the region through the end of next week. The ridge will restrict precipitation for much of California, the Pacific Northwest, and Rocky Mountains region. Brief periods of light precipitation will still occur, most notably along the Rocky Mountain front range. However, resulting precipitation will be too light to significantly bolster snowpack or water storage. Temperatures will also trend warmer than usual due to the ridge and may enhance drying rates.

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The ridge is expected to slowly shift into the Gulf of Alaska and eventually Alaska during the January 24 – 30 period. During this time, a trough of low pressure will intensify over central Canada as another trough potentially builds over the northeastern Pacific Ocean. This upper-air pattern will help increase precipitation potentials for the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain region. The boost in precipitation should help increase mountain snowpack, though not enough precipitation is expected to lift snowpack to more normal levels. Additional precipitation will be needed in February and

March. California will likely remain drier than usual during this time outside a few brief periods of light precipitation in the north.

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