



Montana Drought Forecast Summary – Summer 2020

Current Conditions:

Abnormally dry to moderate and severe drought conditions developed quickly across the state in May and early June this year. The southern tier of the state, eastern and north central parts of Montana received much below normal precipitation during this critical juncture. Southwestern Montana was particularly hard-hit succumbing to D1 (moderate) and D2 (severe) drought across much of the region. Recall that this area received near record snowfall in February putting snowpack at much above normal for that point in the season. However, in evaluating prospects for summer conditions, it is especially important to keep in mind that April, May and early June are generally Montana’s wettest months of the year particularly on the eastern side of the continental divide. This year, unseasonable dryness in March, April, May and early June left this area in a deficit.

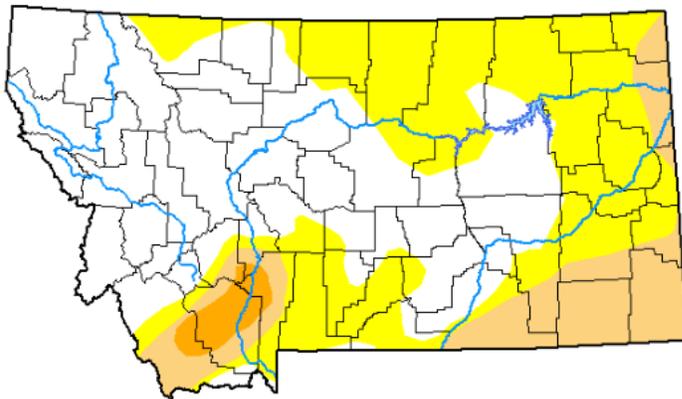
U.S. Drought Monitor Montana

June 30, 2020

(Released Thursday, Jul. 2, 2020)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	49.45	50.55	15.19	2.19	0.00	0.00
Last Week 06-23-2020	47.74	52.26	14.51	1.74	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 03-31-2020	88.24	11.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 12-31-2019	89.74	10.26	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 10-01-2019	97.38	2.62	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 07-02-2019	87.72	12.28	3.44	0.46	0.00	0.00



Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Adam Hartman
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

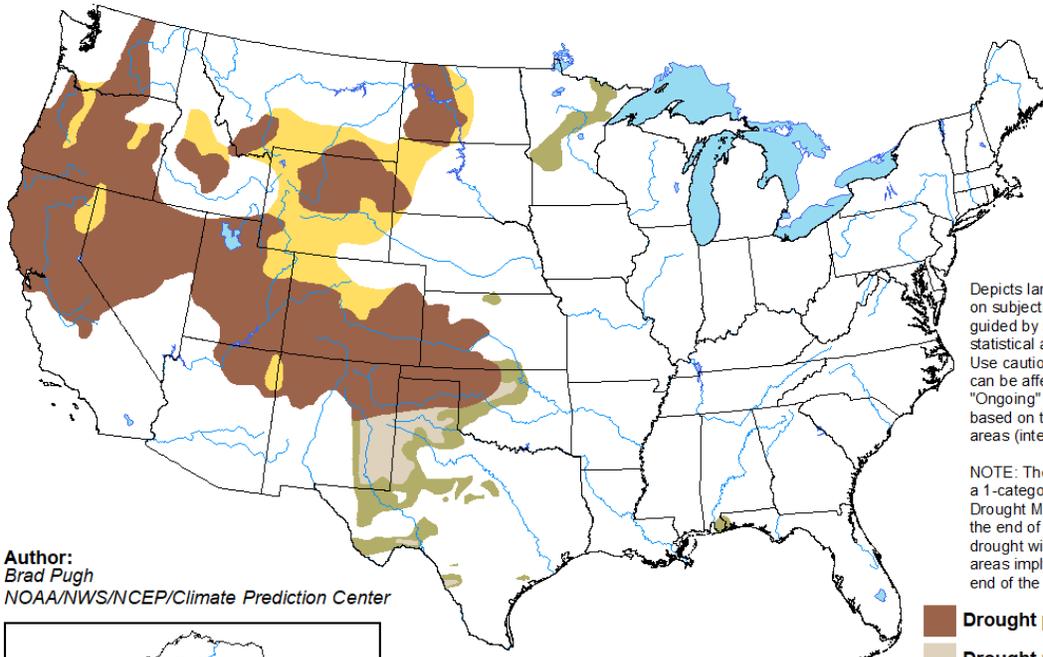
Seasonal Drought Forecast:

This summer’s seasonal drought outlook provided by NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center closely mirrors the current U.S. Drought Monitor Map (above). With drought developing quickly in Southwest Montana and drought in northern

Wyoming spilling into the southern reaches of Montana, drought conditions will likely worsen across all of Montana's southern tier and along the eastern border. Heavy rains in early and mid-June were not enough to overcome longer term deficits in these areas. With the onset of July, the potential for season changing precipitation events diminishes greatly. Following the 4th of July holiday, precipitation across much of the state commonly "shuts off" adding to concerns of drought development given the status of current conditions. The potential for drought development in north central Montana is unclear at this point. The eight to 14-day outlook indicates chances for below normal precipitation across most of the state. Normal to above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation forecast for July does not offer good hope for relief at this point. The 3-month forecast, though not always as accurate as shorter-term outlooks, forecasts above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. As the summer progresses, the evaluation of drought conditions becomes more difficult. Montana's drought monitoring group relies on reports from the field to inform decision making. Producers, recreationists, land managers and others can provide site specific reports of conditions through the [Montana Drought Impact Reporter](#). Maps, links and other drought information specific to conditions in Montana is provided there also.

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

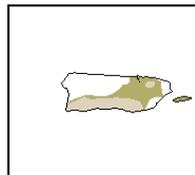
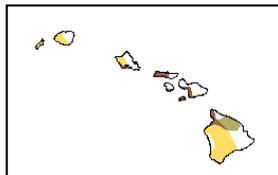
Valid for June 18 - September 30, 2020
Released June 18



Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Use caution for applications that can be affected by short lived events. "Ongoing" drought areas are based on the U.S. Drought Monitor areas (intensities of D1 to D4).

NOTE: The tan areas imply at least a 1-category improvement in the Drought Monitor intensity levels by the end of the period, although drought will remain. The green areas imply drought removal by the end of the period (D0 or none).

Author:
Brad Pugh
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Climate Prediction Center



- Drought persists
- Drought remains but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely

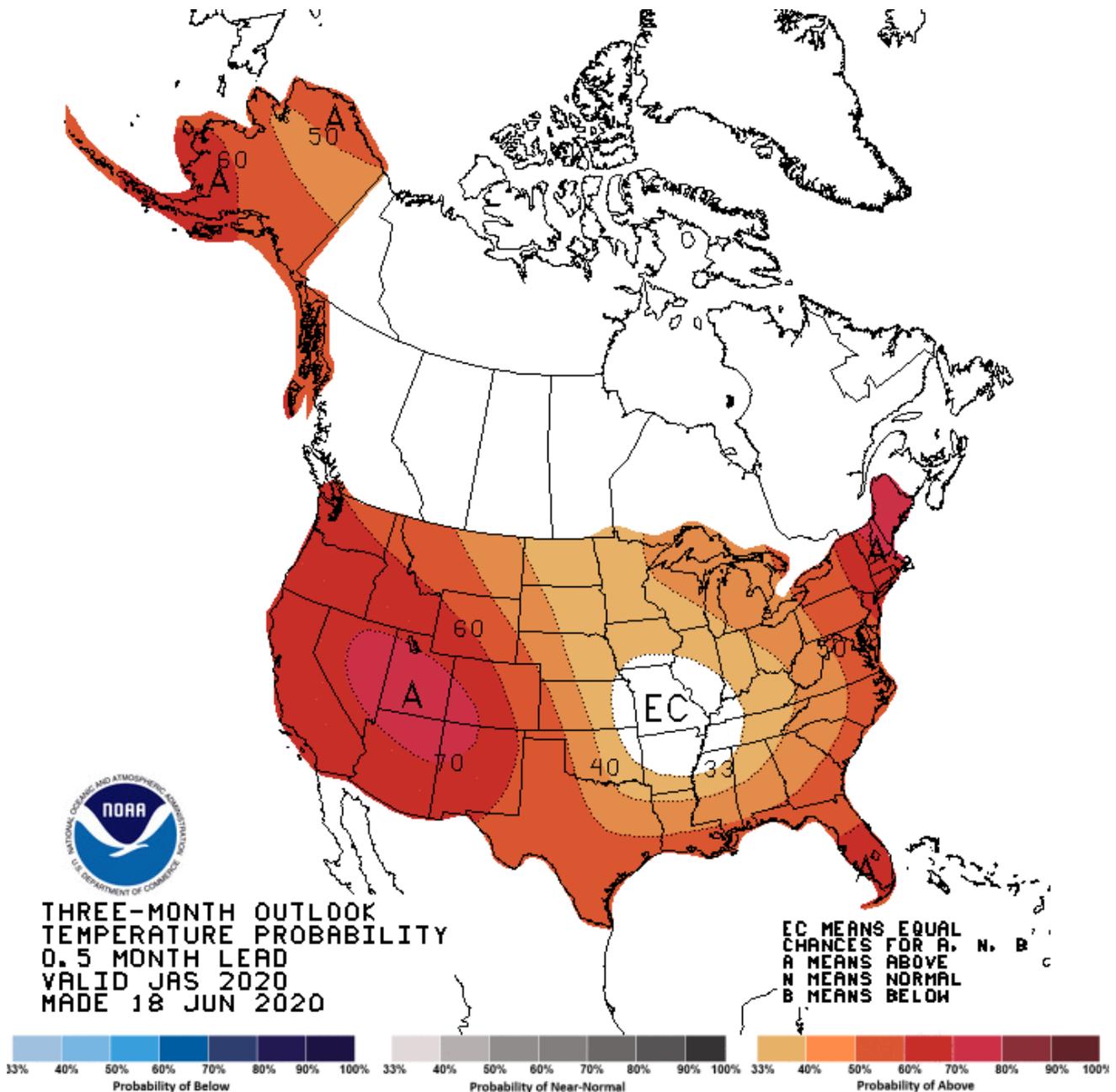


<http://go.usa.gov/3eZ73>

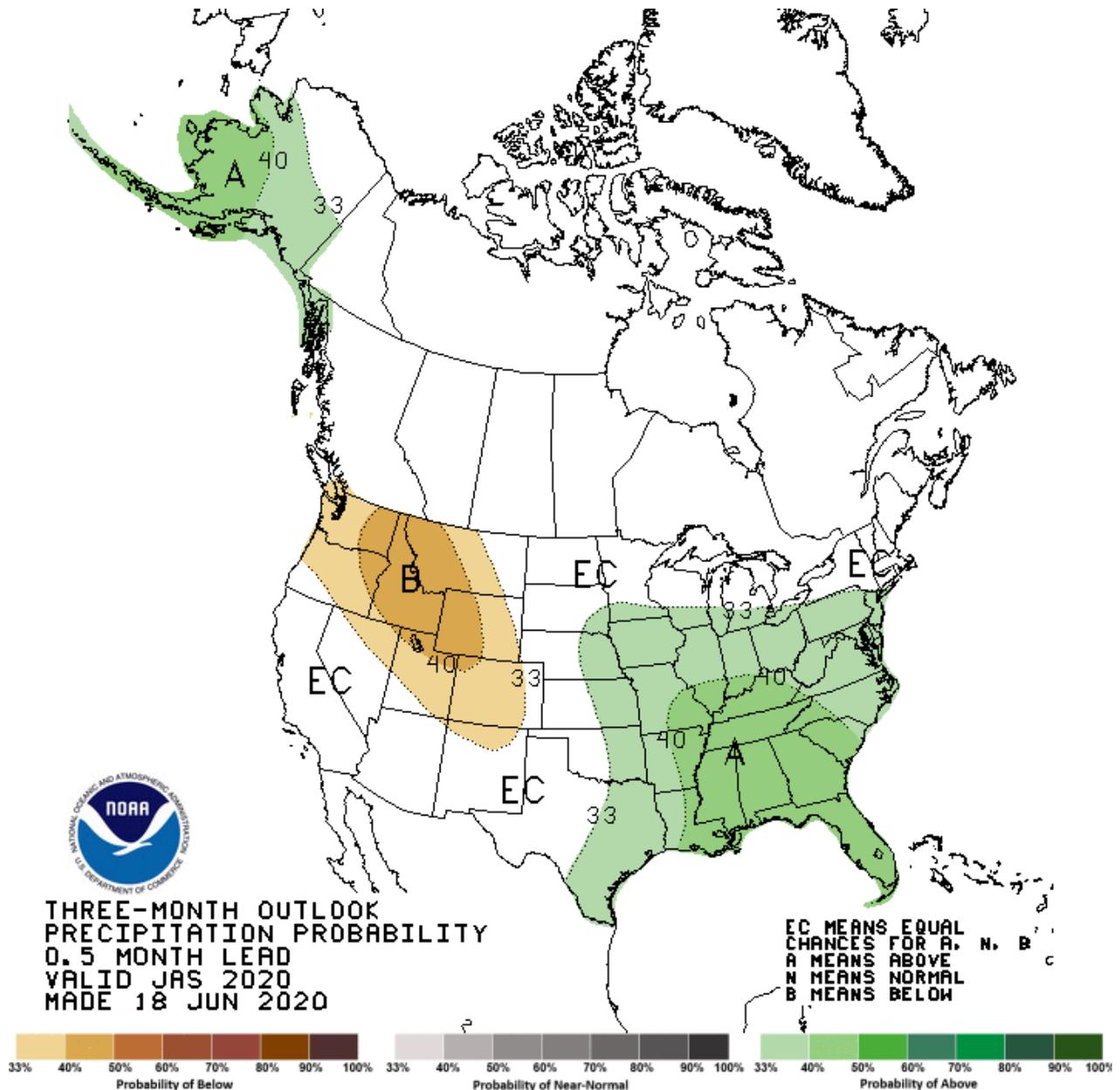
Long Term Weather Forecast:

The [Climate Prediction Center](#), a division of the National Weather Service, provides long-term forecasts for the contiguous United States, Alaska and Hawaii. The current temperature outlook for June, July and August calls for 40% to 50% chance of above normal temperatures across much of Montana. The precipitation outlook indicates below normal precipitation across much of the state with eastern Montana not showing a clear indication in one direction or the other. The maps below show the 3-month forecast for both temperature and precipitation.

3 Month Temperature Forecast:



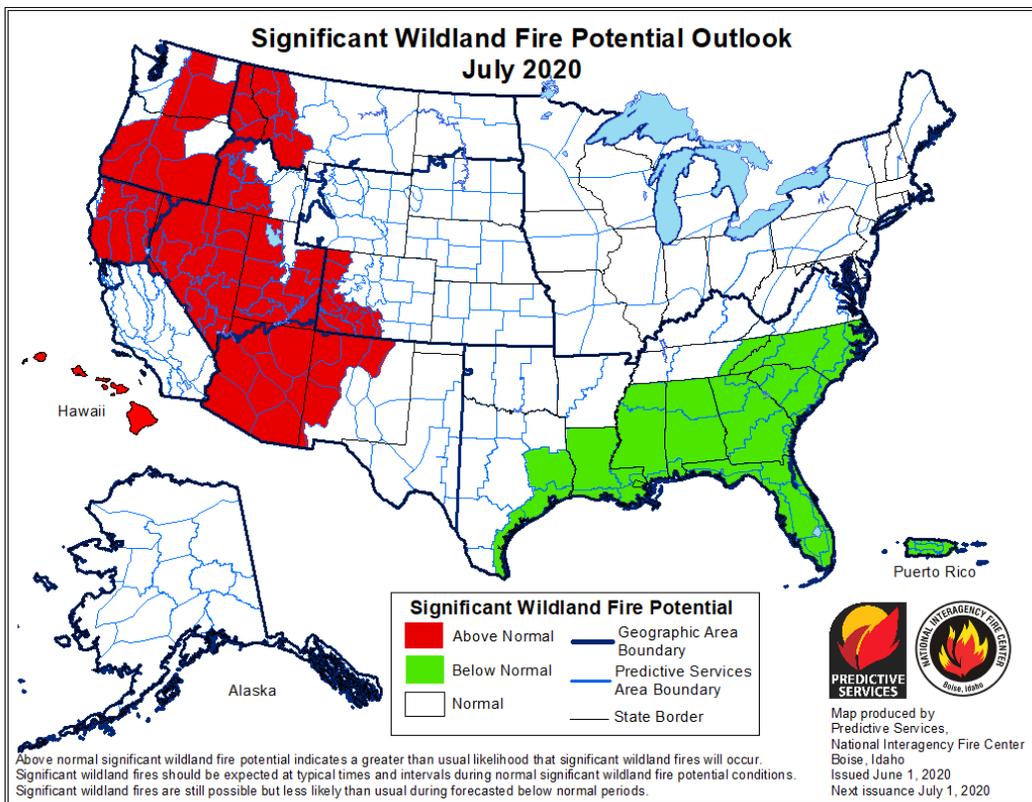
3 Month Precipitation Forecast:



Wildfire Outlook:

Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected in the areas shown on the maps below due primarily to increasing drought conditions, early loss of mountain snowpack, anticipated lightning activity, and overall hot and dry conditions that should persist through August. As is typically the case, the peak season fire activity across the northwestern portion of the country should diminish by mid-September as the seasonal transition begins and allows for wet fronts to begin to bring precipitation to impacted areas.

Normal significant large fire potential is expected across the region during June followed by Above Normal fire potential for western Montana and northern Idaho for July, August, and September. Eastern Montana and the Dakotas can expect Normal significant large fire potential during the outlook period.



Much of the information contained in this report comes from the [NRCs Water Supply Outlook Report](#), [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), [Climate Prediction Center](#), [National Integrated Drought Information System](#), [National Interagency Fire Center](#) and others. This report would not be possible without the ongoing participation and contributions of our local, university, state, tribal and federal partners, some of which are listed below. This report was developed by the MT DNRC on behalf of the Governor’s Drought & Water Supply Advisory Committee pursuant to MCA 2-15-3308(5). For more information contact: Michael Downey, mdowney2@mt.gov, (406) 444-9748.

