

What are DROUGHT INDICATORS?

WE GIVE SPECIAL
THANKS TO:



FOR FIGURES
AND CONTENT

DROUGHT INDICATORS ARE VARIABLES
USED TO DESCRIBE DROUGHT CONDITIONS

1. THEY ARE USED TO MONITOR AND MANAGE DROUGHT

Popular Drought Indicators

Meteorological Indicators:

Precipitation (Rain and Snow)
Temperature and Cloud Cover
Wind Speed and Humidity

Agricultural Indicators:

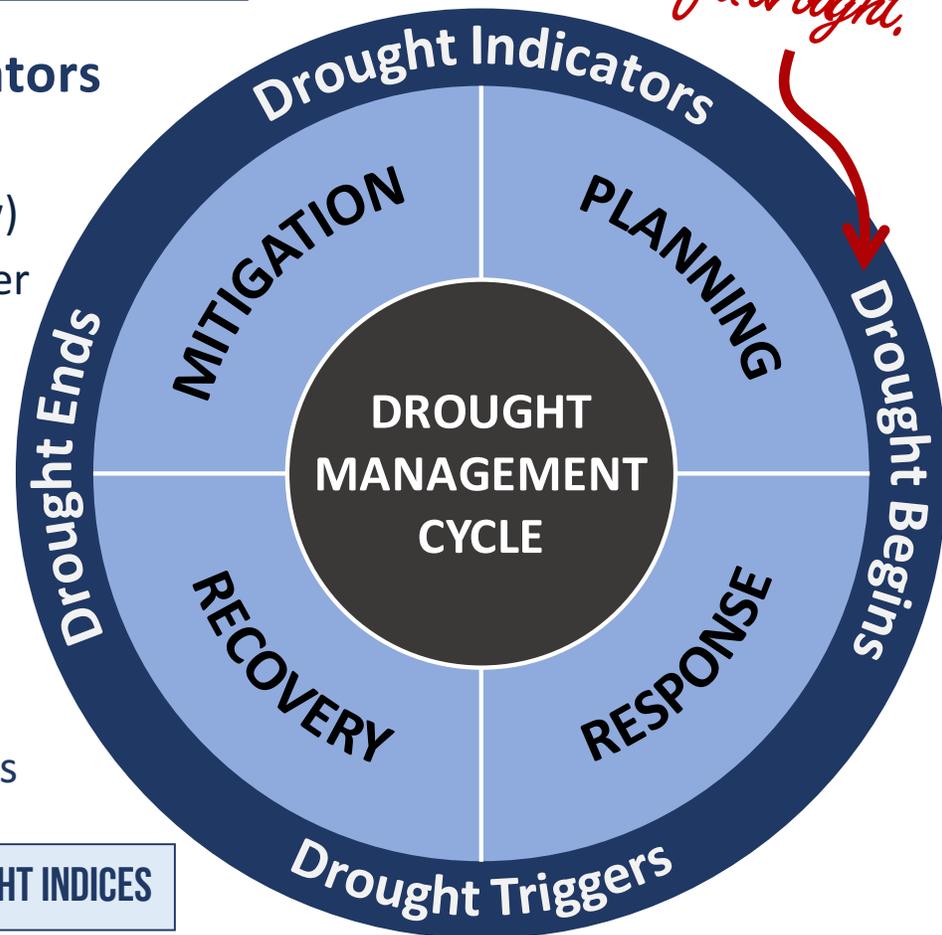
Soil Moisture
Crop Health (Color)

Hydrological Indicators:

Streamflow and Baseflow
Lake and Groundwater Levels

2. THEY ARE USED TO COMPUTE DROUGHT INDICES

*We use drought indicators to
declare a state of a drought.*

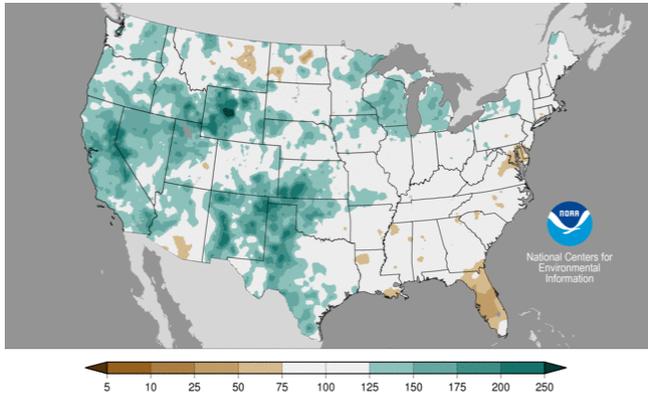


DROUGHT INDICES ARE COMPUTED NUMERICAL REPRESENTATIONS
OF A DROUGHT'S INTENSITY AND/OR POTENTIAL DROUGHT IMPACTS

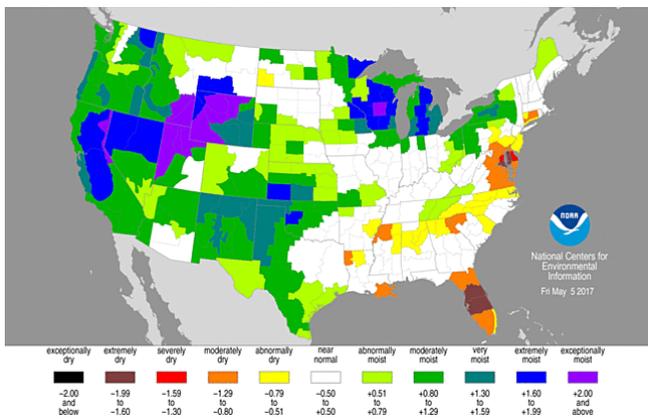
What are DROUGHT INDICATORS? (Continued)

3. THERE ARE MORE THAN 150 DROUGHT INDICES PUBLISHED AS OF 2017 — EXAMPLES SHOWN BELOW

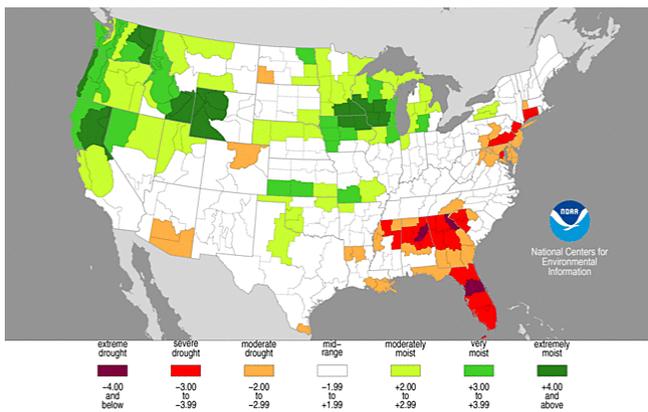
Percent of Normal Precipitation



Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)



Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI)



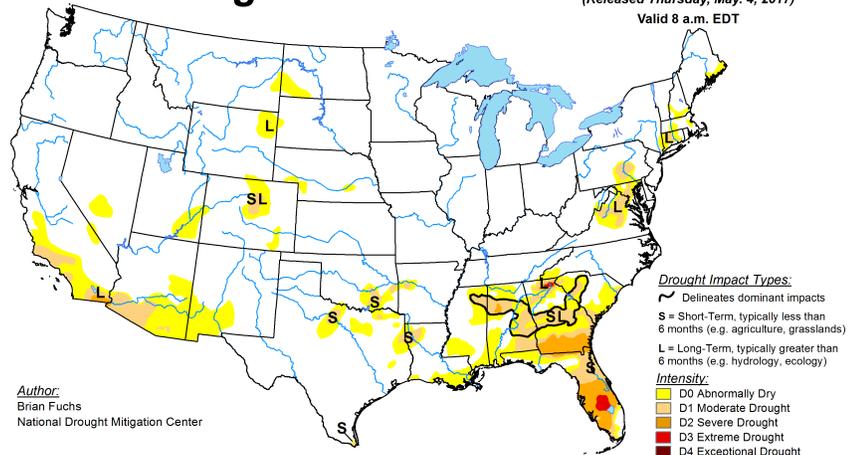
Some Facts About Drought Indices:

- Most drought indices are meteorological in nature; they measure atmospheric drought conditions.
- All drought indices are indicators of drought, but not all indicators have been used to make indices.
- The five most popular indices include: percent of normal precipitation, precipitation deciles, the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI), the Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI), and the United States Drought Monitor (USDM).
- The USDM is a popular composite drought index; it represents drought based on a host of indicators, indices, and expert interpretations of local data.

4. INDICES VARY IN COMPLEXITY, SKILL, & USEFULNESS

U.S. Drought Monitor

May 2, 2017
(Released Thursday, May 4, 2017)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



†The U.S. Drought Monitor is available at:
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

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