

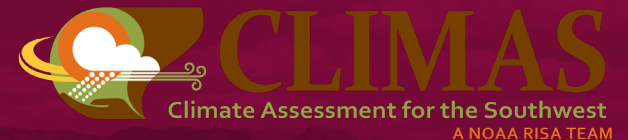
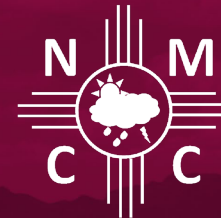
Extreme Heat and Extended Drought: Trends, Impacts, and What Comes Next

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College of Agricultural, Consumer and
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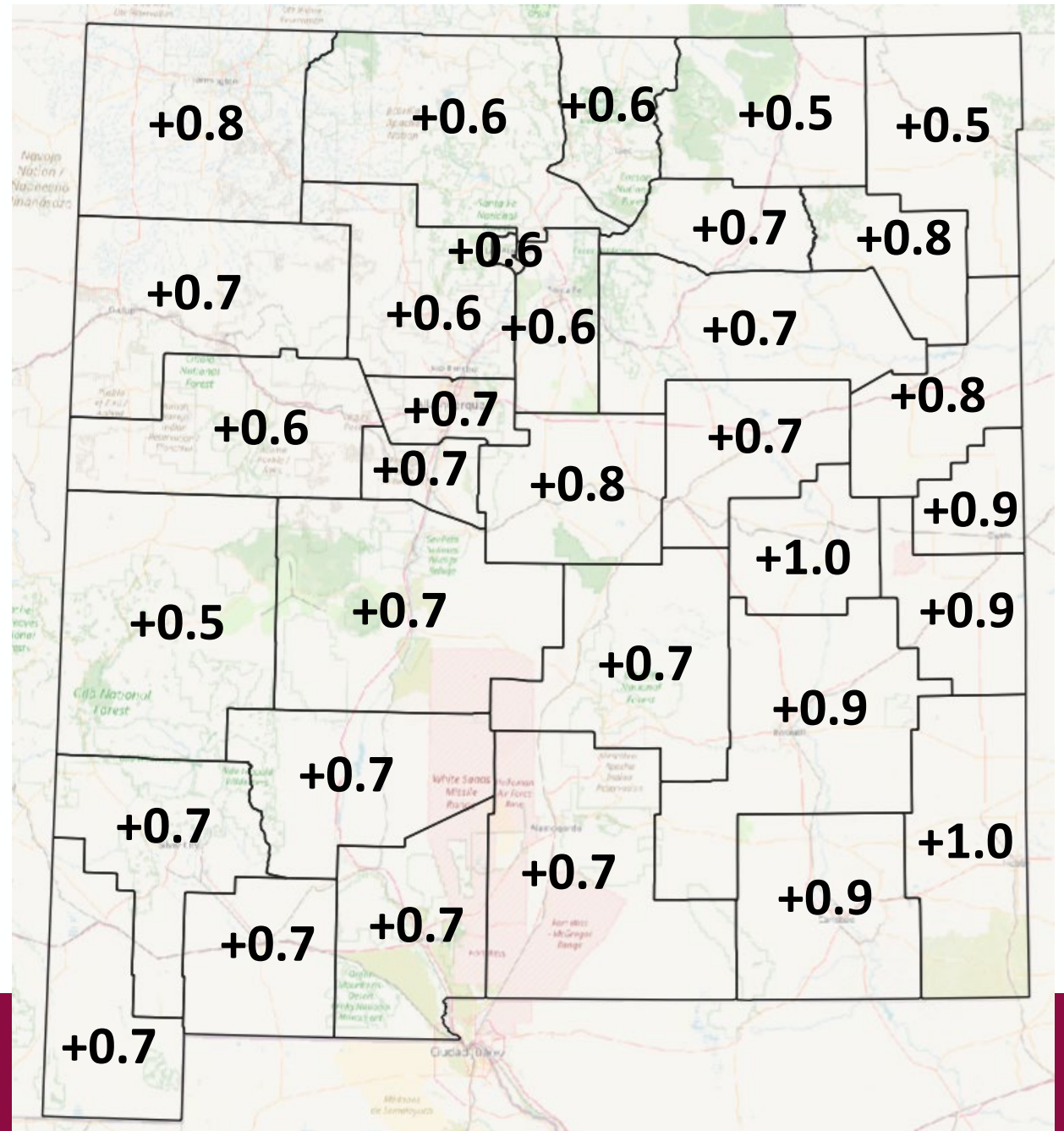
Presented for the Legislative Health & Human Services Committee. September 29, 2026

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Increasing decadal trends in summer high temperatures

These are the trends in June to August high temperatures in °F per decade from 1970 to 2025 by county.

Source: NCEI divisional data



The March 2026 heat wave

The contiguous U.S. average temperature was 9.4°F above the 20th-century average, making March 2026 the warmest March in the 132-year record.

1,432 counties—over half the CONUS area and one-third of the population—observed their single warmest March day on record (1950–present).

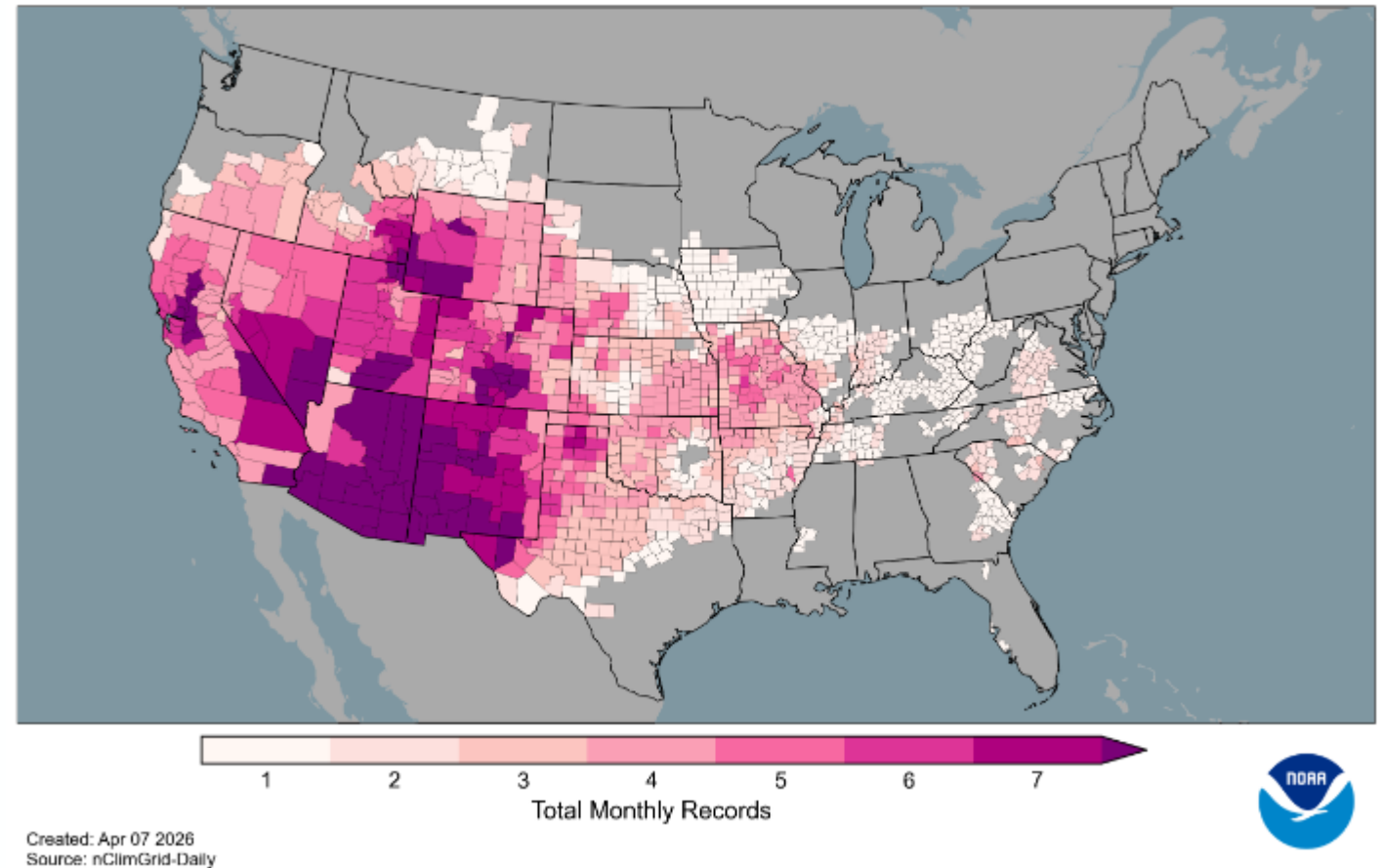
Martinez Lake, AZ reached 112°F on March 20, the highest temperature ever recorded on a March day in the US

Maximum Temperature Monthly Records

March 1–31, 2026

Total Days Setting March Records (1950–2025)
NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information

Counties: 1,432
CONUS Area: 58.2%
Est. Pop: 129.8M (38%)



Map of the U.S. Maximum Temperature Monthly Records in March 2026.



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Source: NOAA NCEI

<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/national-climate-202603>

March 2026 heat wave in NM

Records that month

103° Loving

100° Carlsbad

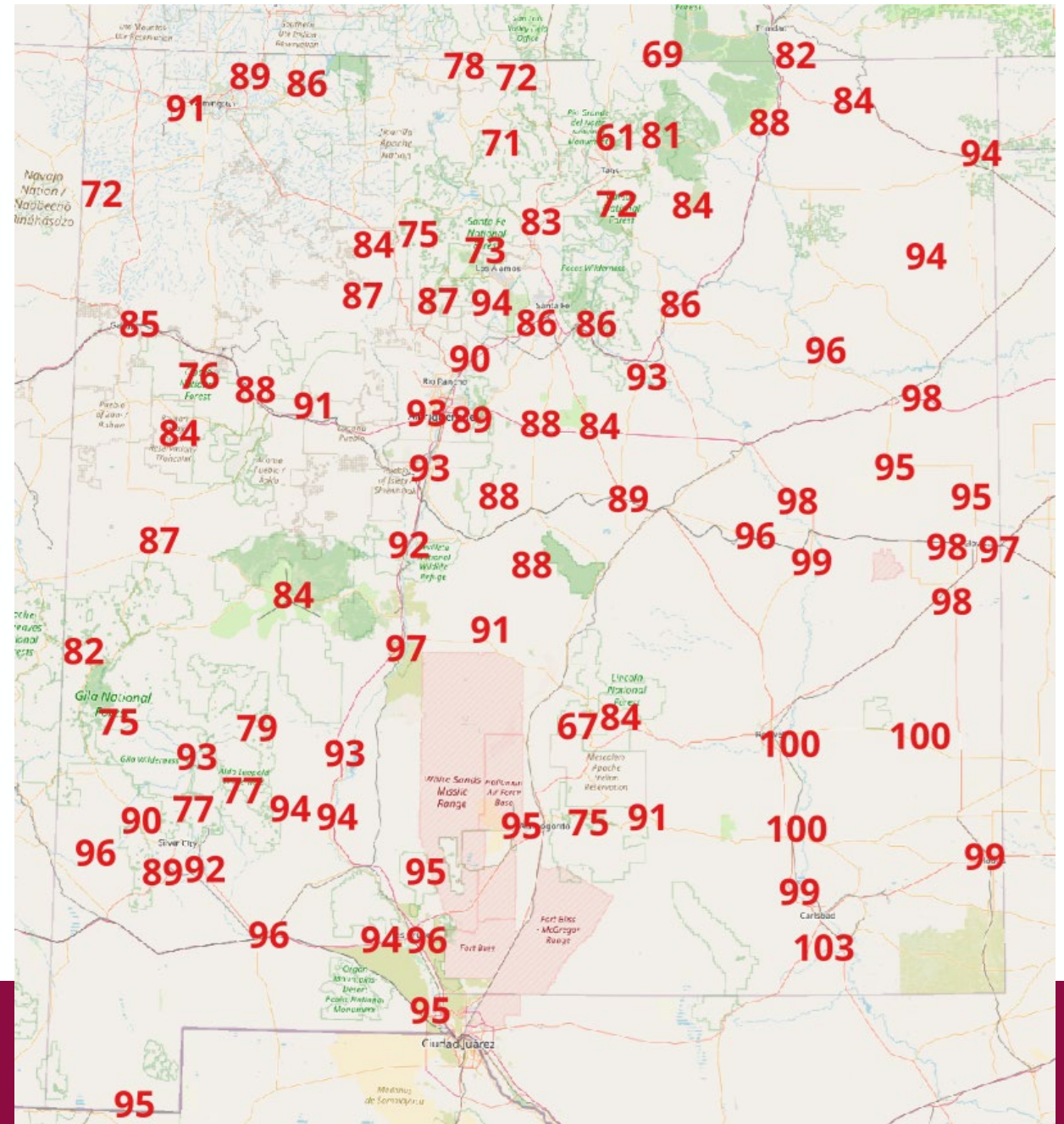
100° Artesia

100° Roswell

98° Tucumcari

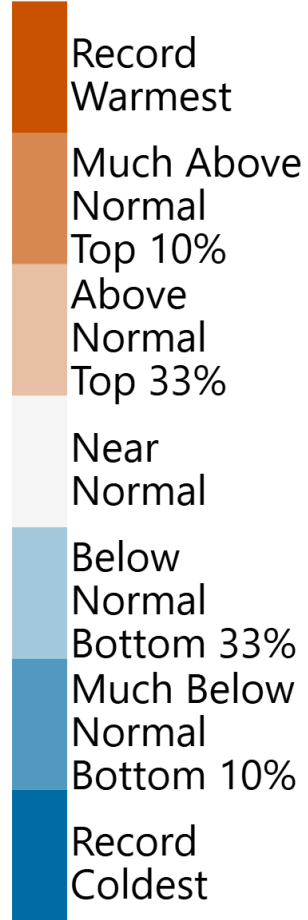
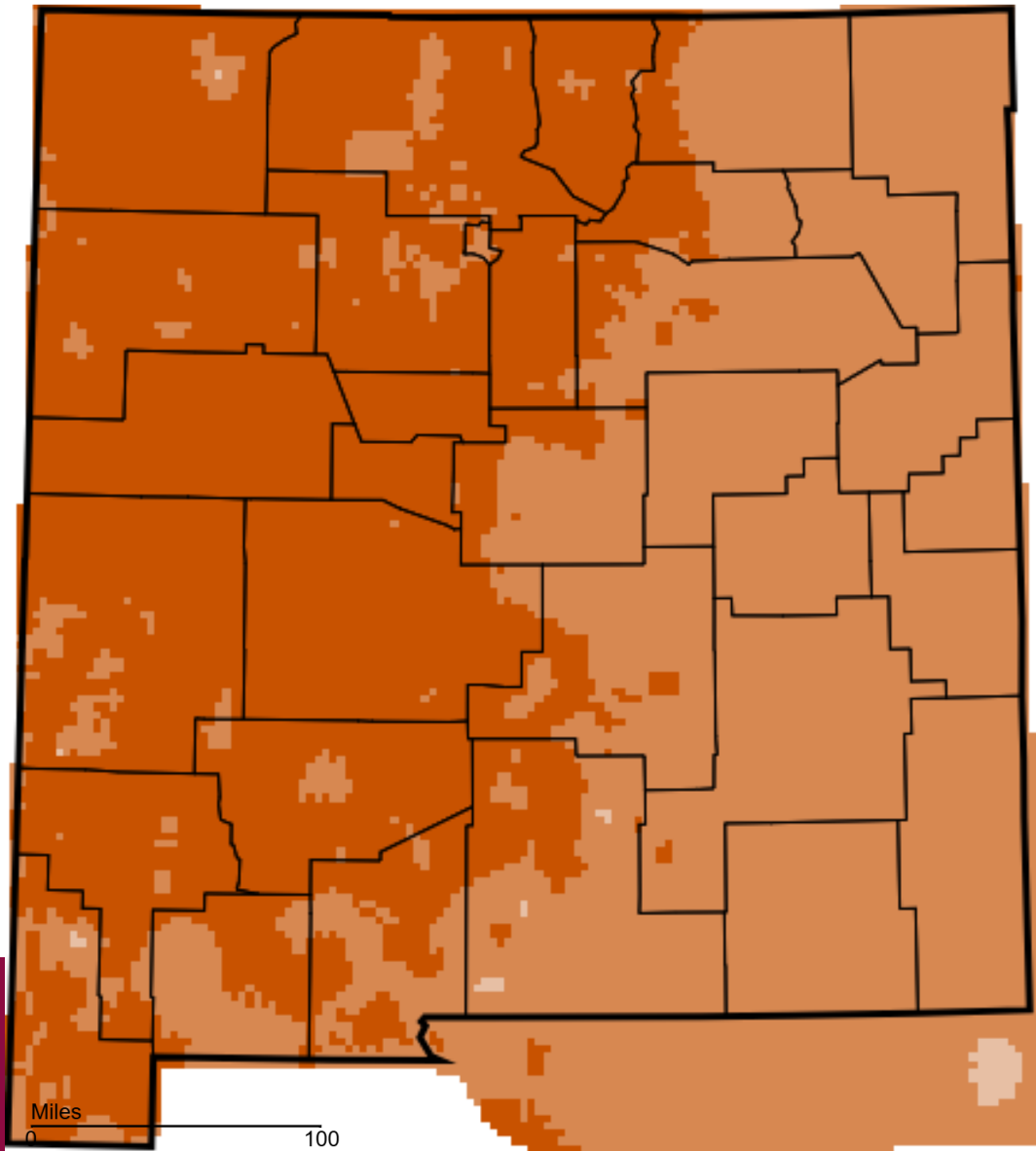
91° Farmington

We also had record high temperatures at our Snotel monitoring stations in the mountains. 61°F at Taos Powerhorn at 11,057' on March 25. Low was 42°F.



New Mexico - Mean Temperature

June - August 2026, Percentile



Rankings (1895-2026)

Based on the past 132 years of data

State-wide the summer (JJA) was the warmest on record

22 counties had their warmest on record

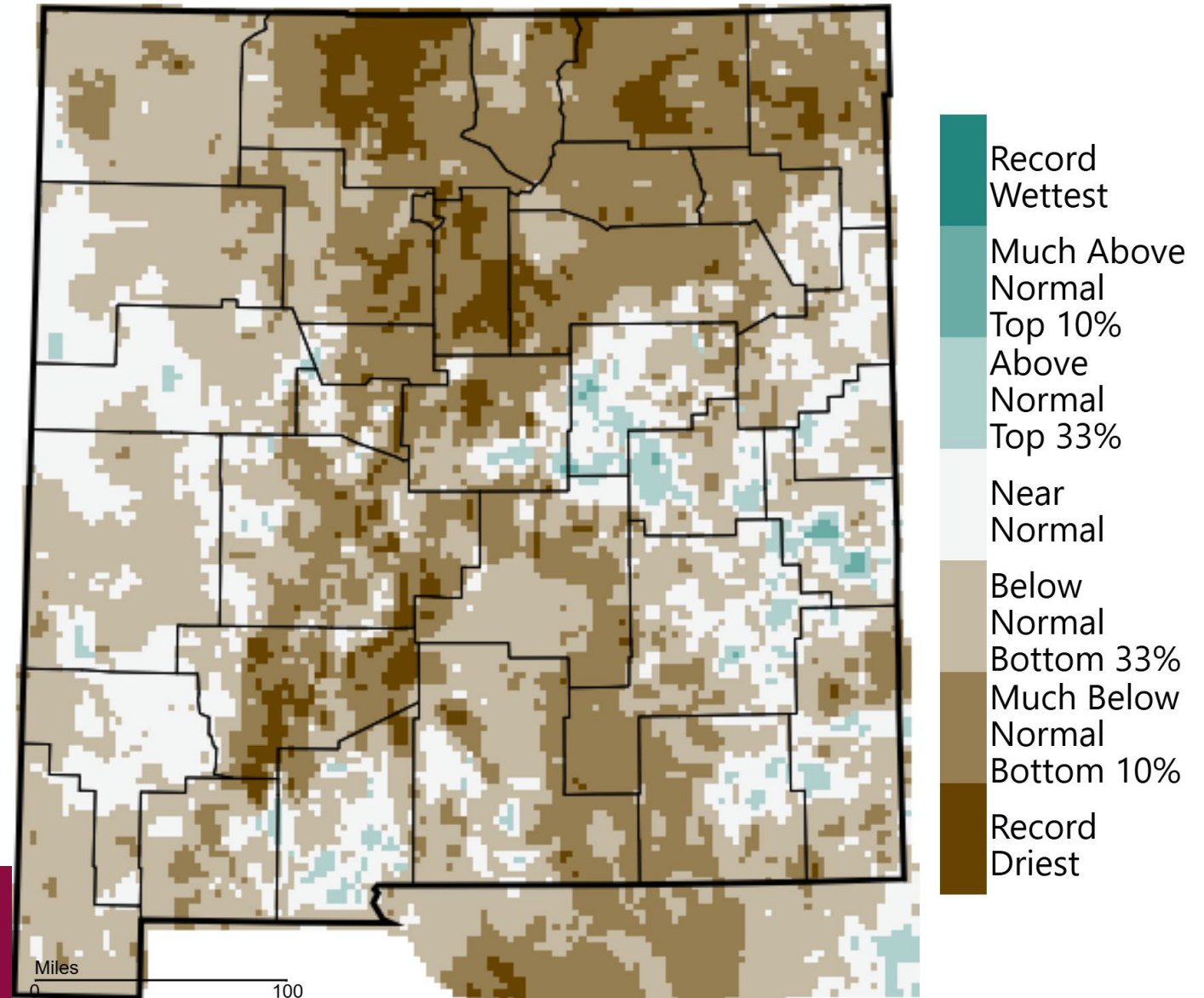
New Mexico - Precipitation

June - August 2026, Percentile

June through August was the 11th driest on record state-wide

Many locations recorded their record driest (darkest brown on map)

Just a few locations received above average rainfall.



Rankings (1895-2026)



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Total Precipitation Anomaly: 01 Sep 2026 - 26 Sep 2026

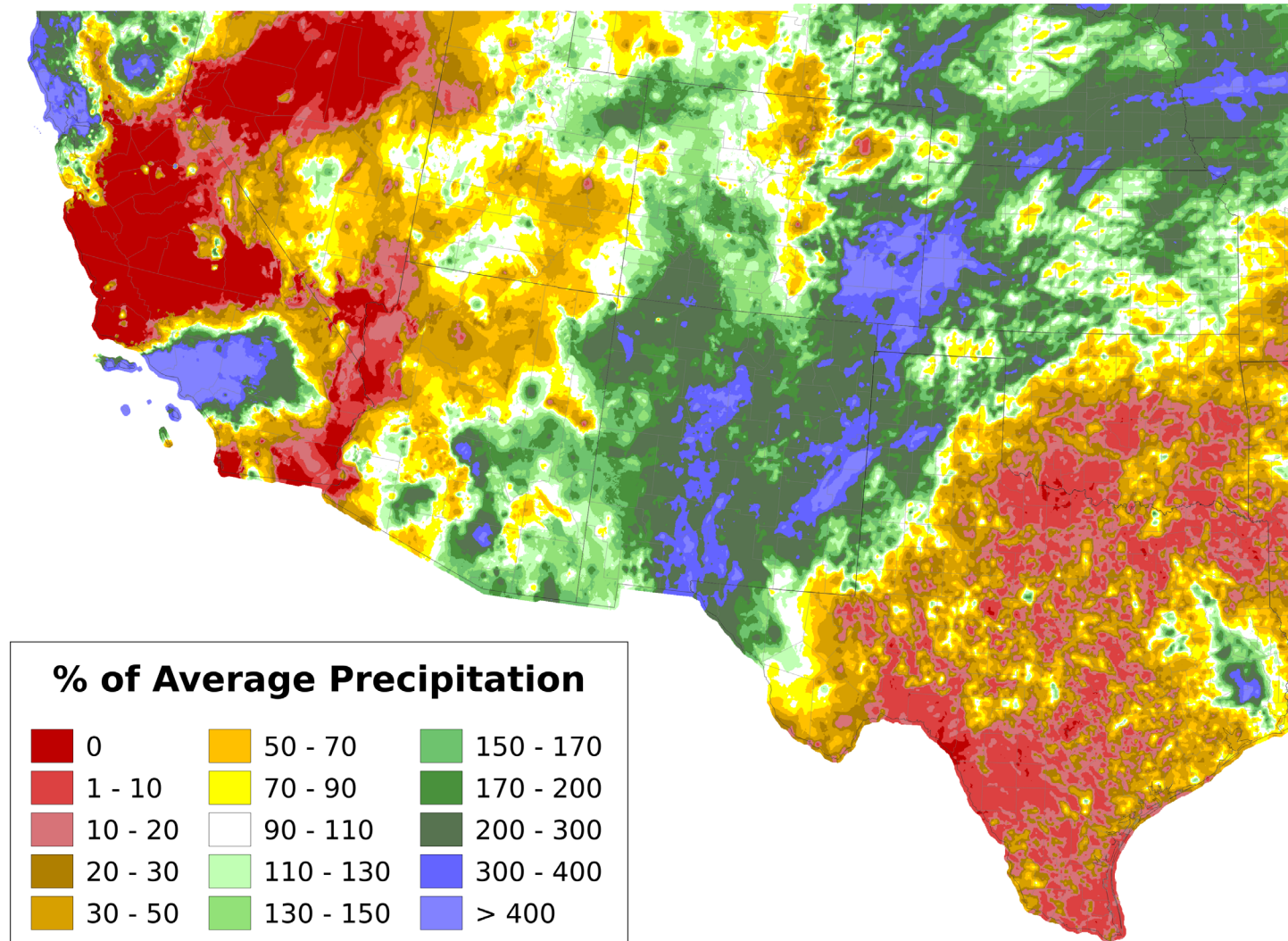
Period ending 7 AM EST 26 Sep 2026

Base period: 1991 - 2020

(Map graphic created 27 Sep 2026)

September is
another story
for another
time.

This is percent
of average prior
to remnants of
tropical system
Polo

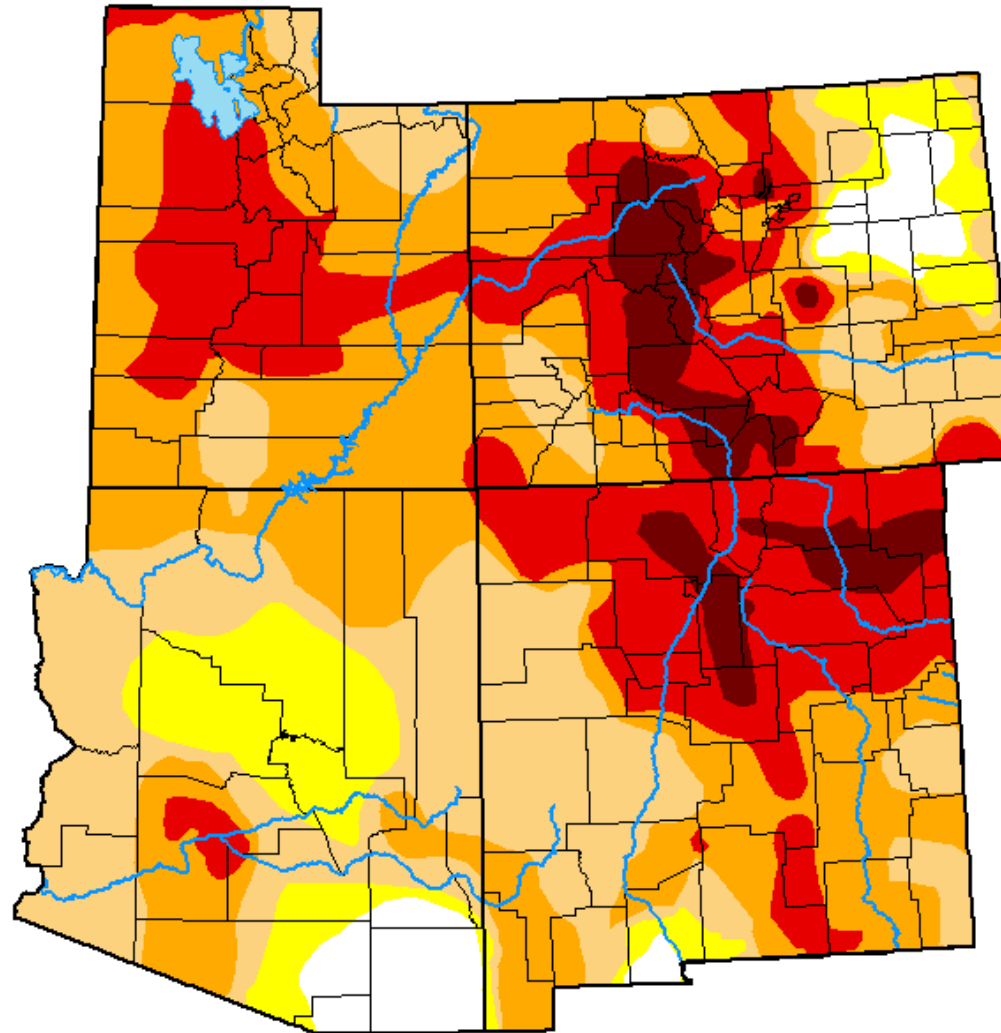


U.S. Drought Monitor Four Corners (States)

This is a view of drought prior to the heavy rainfall over the last week

87% of NM in drought

28% of state in extreme to exceptional categories



September 22, 2026
(Released Thursday, Sep. 24, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	4.30	95.70	87.17	61.05	27.90	5.53
Last Week 09-15-2026	3.60	96.40	90.16	68.42	29.67	6.05
3 Months Ago 06-23-2026	1.85	98.15	94.70	80.59	23.65	2.34
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	13.87	86.13	63.36	30.86	2.68	0.16
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	16.94	83.06	77.59	59.17	17.27	1.09
One Year Ago 09-23-2025	16.35	83.65	77.83	61.74	18.70	1.17

Intensity:



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:

David Mocko
NASA/GSFC/SSAI



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droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Hottest temperatures in 2026

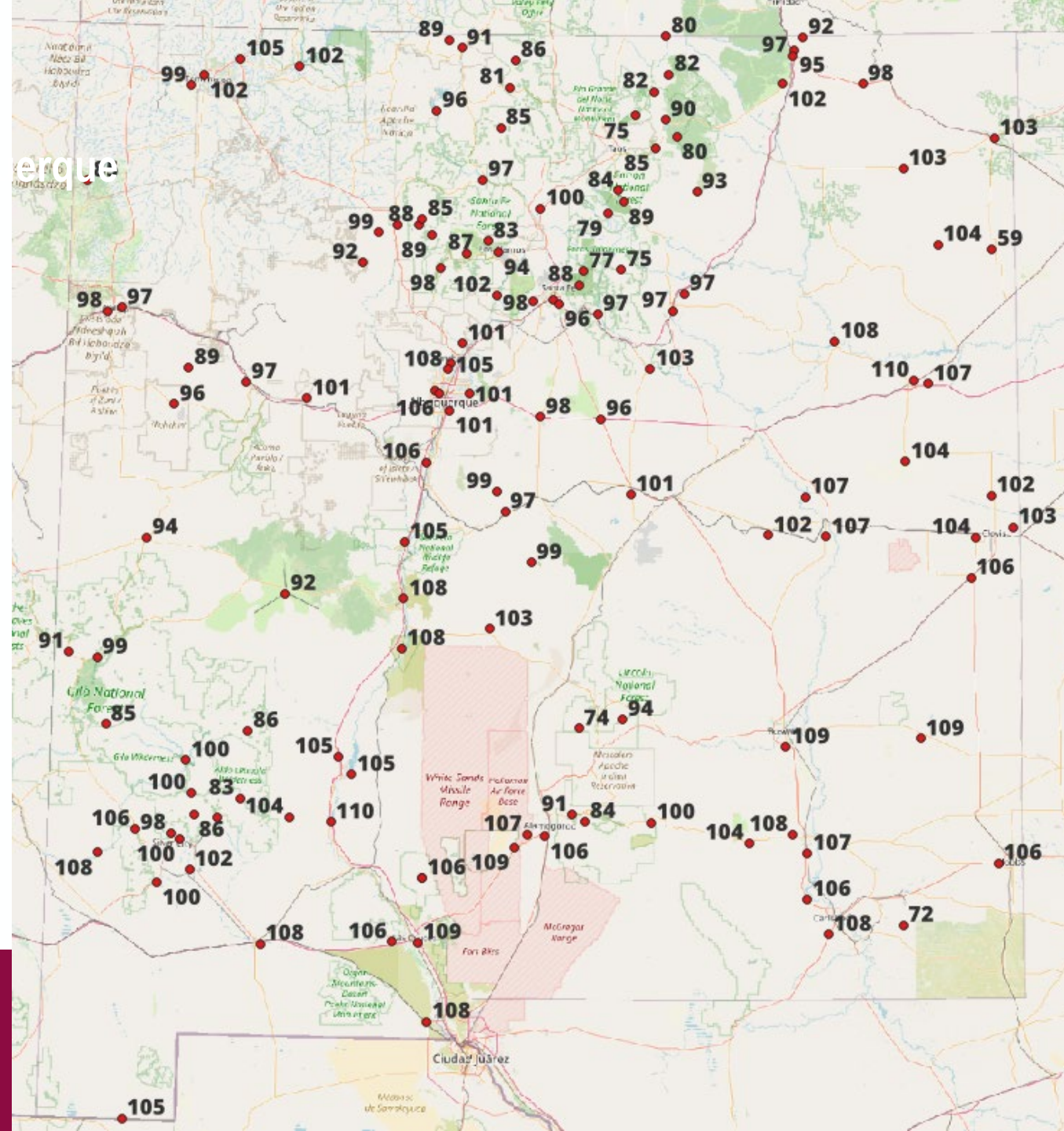
Reached 110° at Caballo Dam and Tucumcari

109° in Las Cruces and Roswell

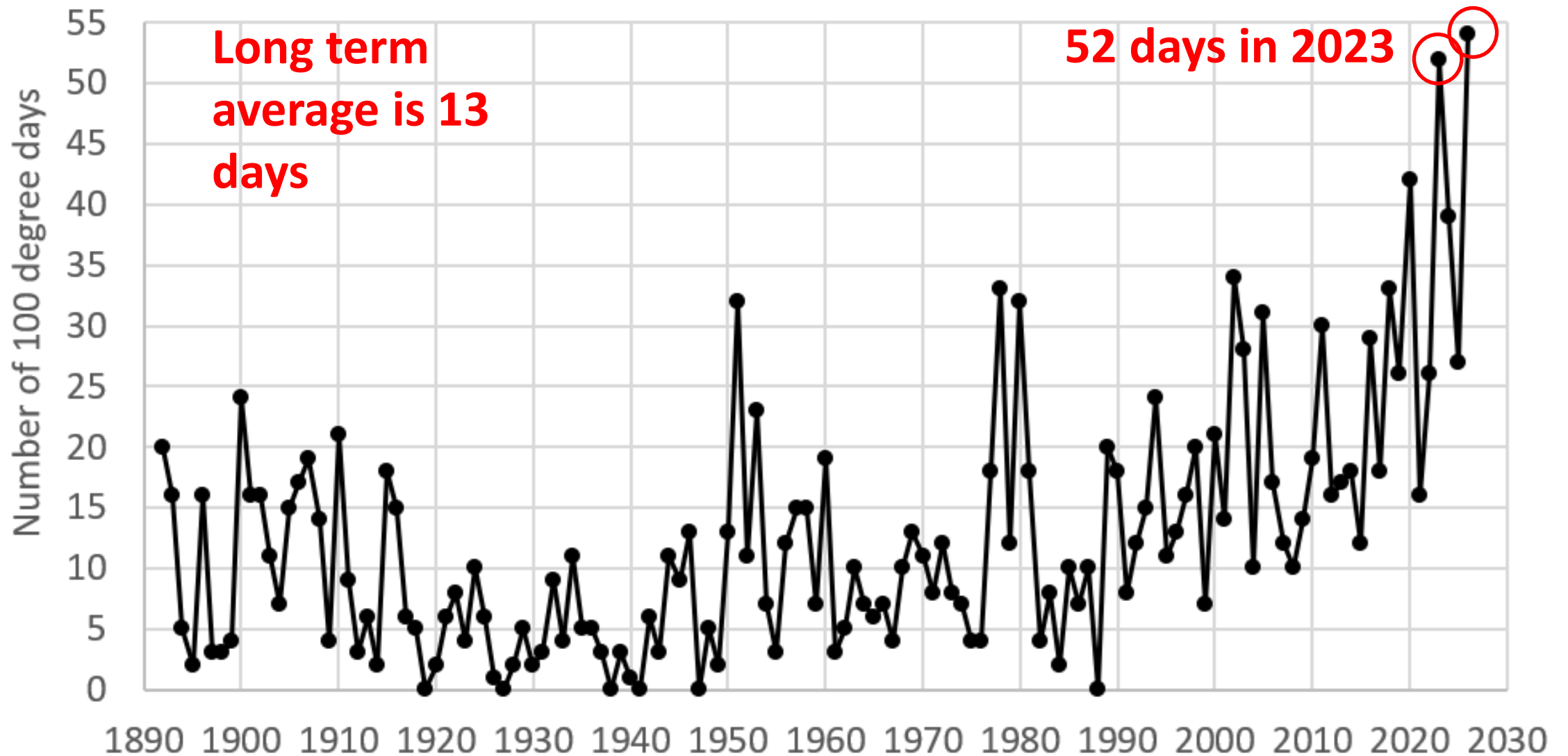
106° at the Rio Grande Nature Center

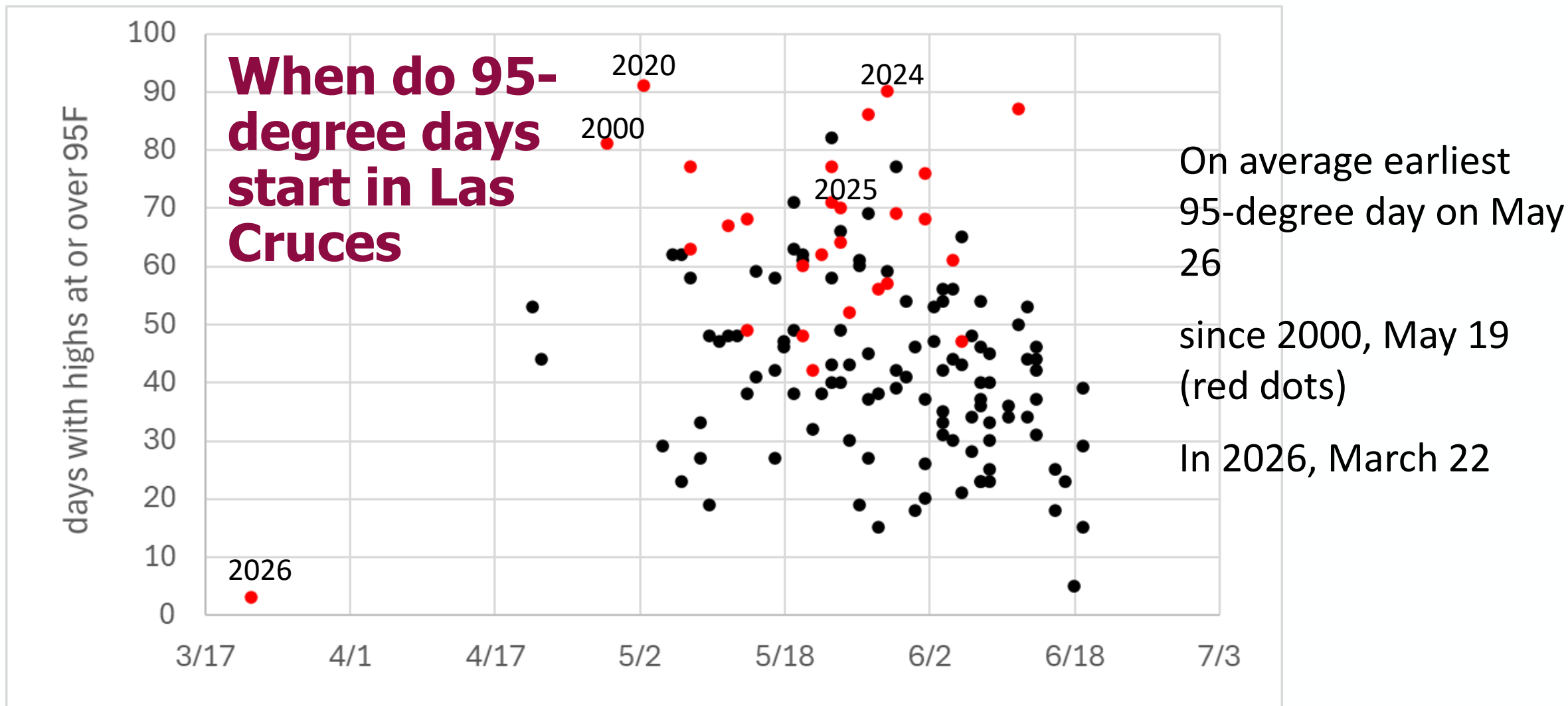
105° at Aztec Ruins NM

101° at the Albuquerque airport



Trend of 100° days in Las Cruces



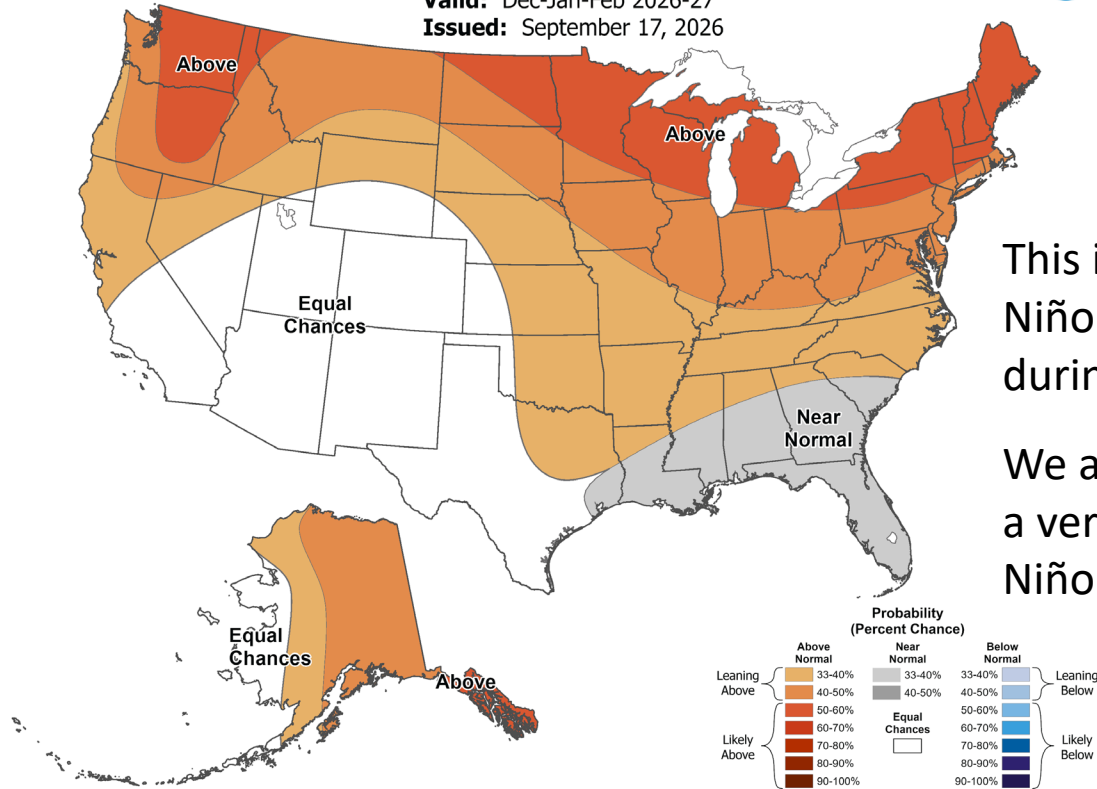


Official outlook for winter (Dec-Jan)



Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2026-27
Issued: September 17, 2026



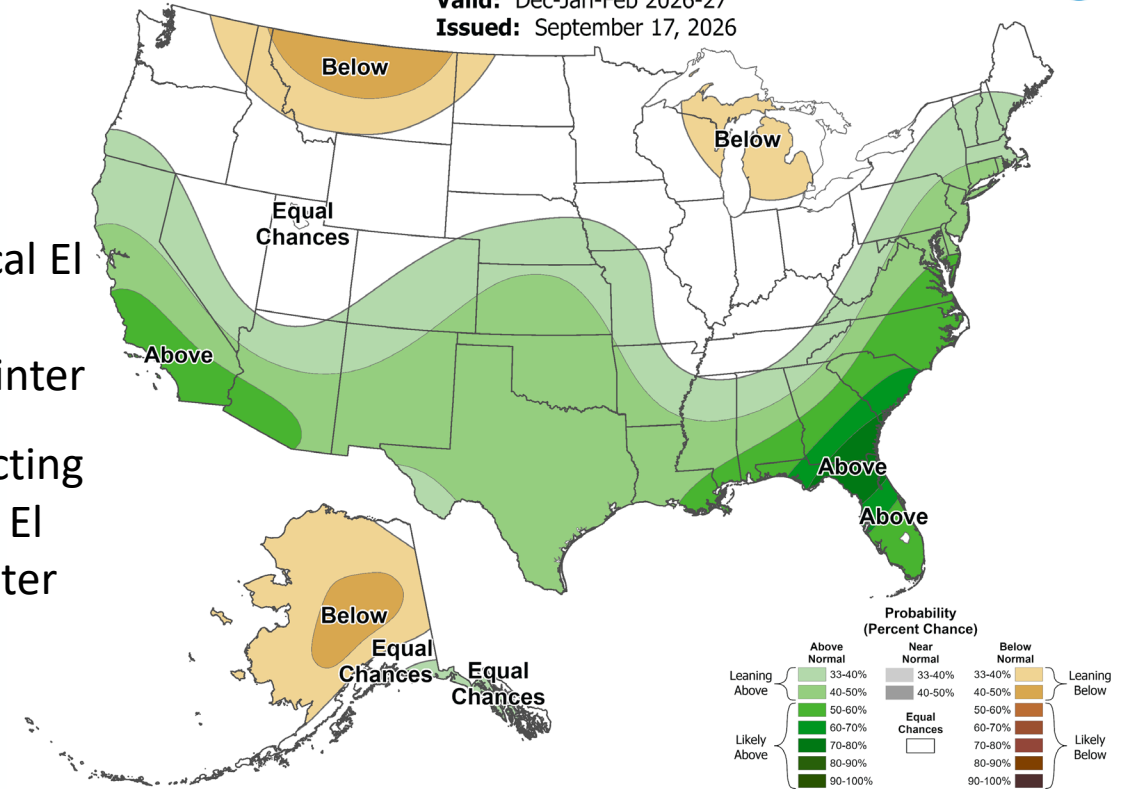
This is a typical El Niño pattern during the winter

We are expecting a very strong El Niño this winter



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

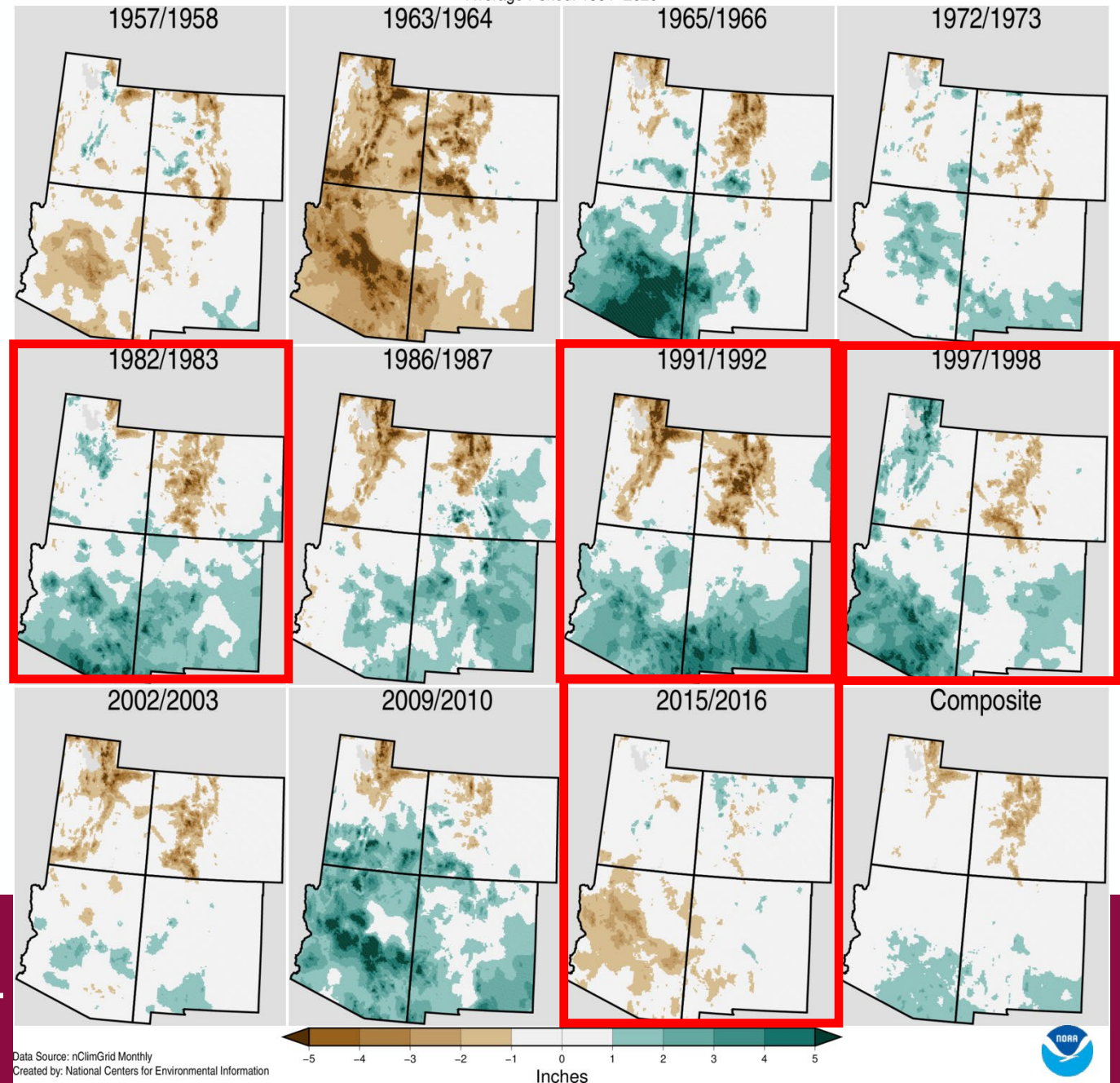
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Precipitation departures for 11 strong and very strong El Niño events in the past

1957-58, 1963-64,
1965-66, 1972-73,
1982-83, 1986-87,
1991-92, **1997-98**,
2002-03, 2009-10 and
2015-16

Highlighted are very strong
events ($>2^{\circ}\text{C}$ peak SST)



Contact Information

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