

Nevada State Climate Office

Quarterly Report & Outlook
October - December 2019

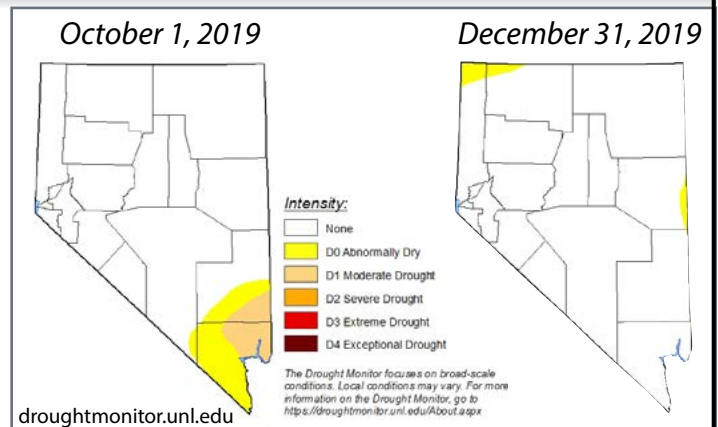
Photo by A. Csank

Notable Weather & Climate in Nevada

This past autumn was overall dry and mostly cool to the north, wet and mostly cool to the south. The individual months were all quite different. Across almost all of the state, October was cold and dry. The daytime high in Reno on October 1, for example, was 58°F, 18° below normal. In Elko, the nighttime low at the airport dropped to 4°F (21.2° below normal) on the 30th, with a cold night (10°F - brr!) for Halloween as well.

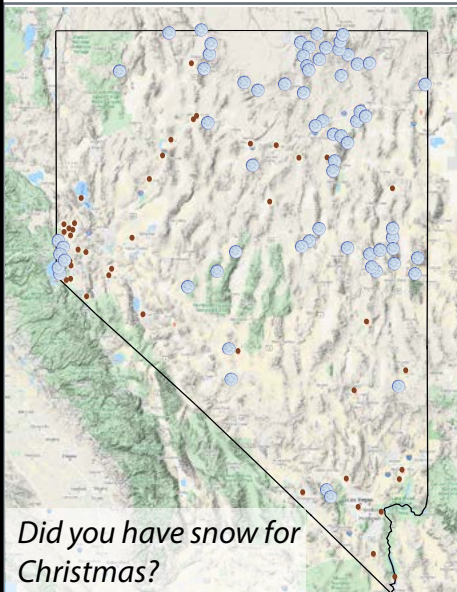
Beginning in November, the southern part of the state started receiving precipitation, with storms moving into the northern part of the state around Thanksgiving. Cool conditions returned to the southern part of the state in December. Temperatures even dipped down to freezing at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas, with a nighttime low of 32°F on December 17. That was the first time that the airport recorded a December freeze since 2016.

Cold temperatures and snow around the holiday meant that many places around Nevada saw a white Christmas this year. Even if it wasn't snowy in the valleys, many



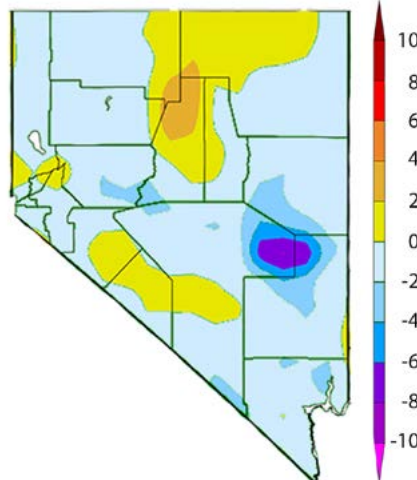
of the mountains were dusted (and then some -- Mt. Rose had 60" of snow on December 25th.)

Owing to relatively wet conditions last year, Nevada started the water-year with little drought. Much of that was in southern Nevada, and it resolved due to wet conditions in the fall. The full reservoirs have been a boon throughout the fall, buffering drying conditions in the north.

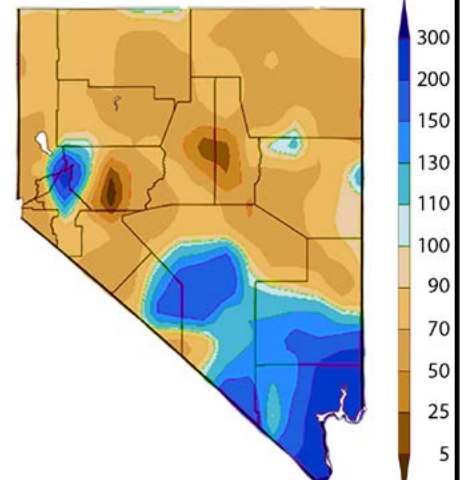


<http://scacis.rcc-acis.org/>

October - December
Departure from Normal Temperature

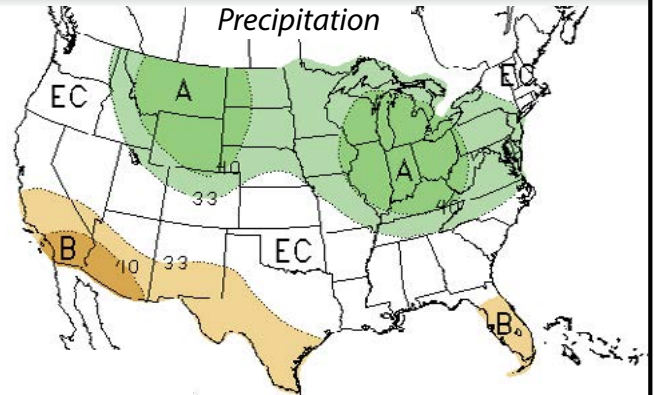
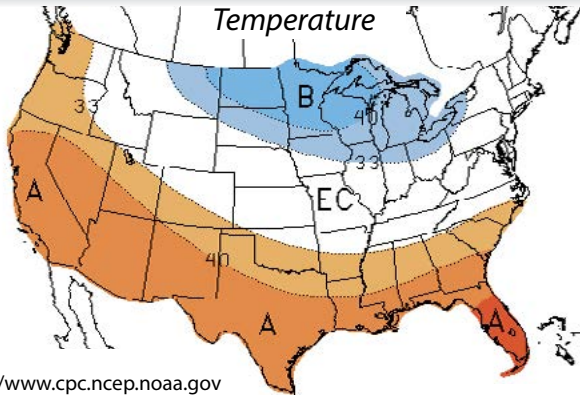


October - December
Percent of Normal Precipitation



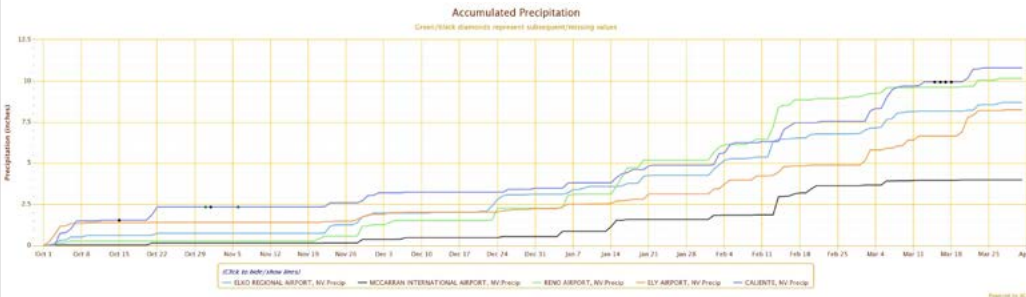
<http://www.hprcc.unl.edu/maps.php?map=ACISClimateMaps#>

Outlook for January - March



<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>

As of mid-December, the NOAA Climate Prediction Center outlook called for a slight chance of warmer than normal temperatures throughout the rest of the winter. The precipitation forecast suggested roughly equal chances of a wet, dry, or normal winter. Although somewhat unsatisfying, this is a common and understandable forecast for Nevada. Across much of the state, winter precipitation arrives in a relatively small number of storms. This can be seen in the graph from <http://sca-cis.rcc-acis.org/> below, showing total accumulated precipitation between October 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019 at five locations in Nevada. There are long flat stretches indicating days and sometimes weeks with no precipitation punctuated by steps showing the occurrence of storms. Missing just a couple of those storms could mean the difference between a dry winter and a reasonable one.

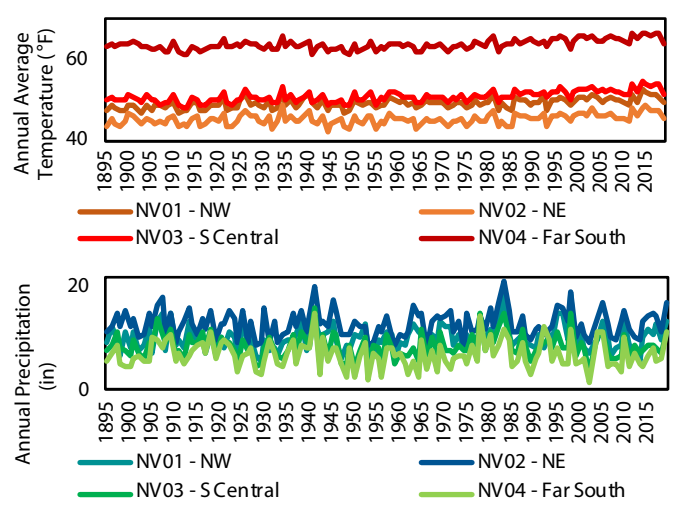


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In-depth: 2019

Across Nevada, 2019 probably felt like a cool year. It was the coolest year in quite some time. In fact, 2019 was the coolest year since 2011. In all parts of the state, 2019 was cooler than the 1981-2010 average or normal. That 30-year period is the current basis of comparison. However, 2019 was warmer than the 20th century average. So, perhaps it's better to consider 2019 not-so-hot, rather than cold.

The past calendar year was also quite wet. Across the southern and south-central Nevada climate divisions, the yearly precipitation came to 11.5", the most since 1998. The northeastern Nevada division received, on average, 17" of precipitation in 2019, again the most since 1998. The year was not as unusual in the northwestern Nevada division, which measured 13.3" of precipitation in 2019, slightly less than the 13.4" recorded in both 2010 and 2005.



Division data from Climate at a Glance, <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/>