

Issued jointly from
Department of Water, Energy, and Environment
Platte Basin Coalition
Lower Platte River Drought Consortium
Republican River Natural Resources Districts

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Resources.

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2026

Drought planning groups across state urge public to conserve water

LINCOLN, Neb. – The Platte Basin Coalition, the Lower Platte River Drought Consortium, the Republican River Basin NRDs, and the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) are urging the public to utilize water conservation best practices due to the ongoing presence of drought conditions throughout Nebraska. As of April 30th, the National Drought Mitigation Center finds that 2% of the state is experiencing exceptional drought (D4), 55% of the state is experiencing extreme drought (D3), 21% of the State is experiencing severe drought (D2), and 9% of the state is experiencing moderate drought (D1). While recent rains have been helpful, they have not been sufficient to substantially alter the drought conditions for many areas of the state.

Nebraska's population relies on surface water and many groundwater wells replenished by surface water for agricultural, municipal, domestic, industrial, and many other uses.

Nebraska's precipitation is highly seasonal, with roughly two-thirds of annual moisture falling between April and August and less than 10% occurring in winter for the typical year. The late spring and early summer period is normally critical for replenishing soil moisture, streamflow, and groundwater supplies. Ongoing drought conditions mean that even near-normal seasonal rainfall may not be sufficient to fully offset existing deficits and water supplies, and hydrologic conditions may remain stressed as a result. According to [NOAA's Climate Prediction Center's Seasonal Drought Outlook](#), on average, drought conditions are expected to persist or likely worsen across the state this spring and summer despite occasional short-lived relief.

To improve drought monitoring across the state, the public is encouraged to submit drought-related conditions using the Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) system maintained by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska:

<https://droughtimpacts.unl.edu/Tools/ConditionMonitoringObservations.aspx>. Consistent public reports help inform authors of the US Drought Monitor in the development of the weekly Drought Monitor map.

For current information on drought conditions, the public is encouraged to monitor the following resources:

- The US Drought Monitor for weekly updates on drought conditions:
<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

- U.S. Department of Agriculture resources including drought program assistance through Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service at: <https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/drought>.
- For additional USDA program information, contact your nearest USDA Service Center. Find a service center at: <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>
- The Nebraska Department of Agriculture Drought Central Page: <https://nda.nebraska.gov/drought>

The Drought Planning groups will continue to monitor conditions and update the public on the basin’s drought status and ongoing effects of drought. You are encouraged to contact your local water agency listed below for conservation best management practices.

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Supplemental Information Specific to each Drought Planning Group

Questions should be addressed to your local water management agency.

To locate the appropriate resource, please follow this link: <https://www.nrdnet.org/nrds/find-your-nrd>

Platte Basin Coalition

The Coalition was formed in 2012 by the five Upper Platte River Basin NRDs and the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment to jointly implement water management projects in the Platte River Basin. The Coalition developed a basin-wide Drought Contingency Plan to address water supply challenges during drought. These agencies include:

- Central Platte NRD
- North Platte NRD
- South Platte NRD
- Tri-Basin NRD
- Twin Platte NRD
- Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment

Upper Platte River Drought Contingency Plan - Current Trigger Status

- Basin-Wide Area: Drought Alert
- North Platte River Above Lake McConaughy Subarea: Drought Alert & Water Supply Advisory
- South Platte River Subarea: Drought Alert & Water Supply Alert
- Platte River Subarea: Drought Alert

As of April 30th, about 10% of the Upper Platte Basin is experiencing exceptional drought (D4), 75% is experiencing extreme drought (D3), 12% is experiencing severe drought (D2), and 3% is experiencing moderate drought (D1).

Visit the Upper Platte River Drought Contingency Plan website to read the plan and learn more about the Coalition drought triggers and mitigation and response activities:

<https://dnr.nebraska.gov/water-planning/upper-platte-river-drought-contingency-plan>.

Lower Platte River Drought Consortium

Formed in 2016, the Consortium consists of six different entities (agencies) that monitor or rely on the Lower Platte River for their water supply. These agencies include:

- Lower Platte South NRD
- City of Lincoln Water System
- Lower Platte North NRD
- Papio-Missouri River NRD
- Metropolitan Utilities District
- Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment

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As of April 30th, about 55% of the Lower Platte Basin is experiencing extreme drought (D3), 19% is experiencing severe drought (D2), 16% is experiencing moderate drought (D1), and 9% is abnormally dry (D0).

Visit the Lower Platte River Drought Consortium Plan website for updates on Consortium drought triggers and mitigation and response activities:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d45e9cf040d44a95ac46d5205c4d1bc6>

Republican River Basin NRDs and DWEE

The Republican Basin-Wide Plan, adopted in 2019, involved the collaboration of various public and private stakeholders across the Republican River Basin towards the goal of sound water management. The Republican Basin NRDs and DWEE are finalizing a drought dashboard and drought plan, which will be released to the public in the coming weeks. These agencies include:

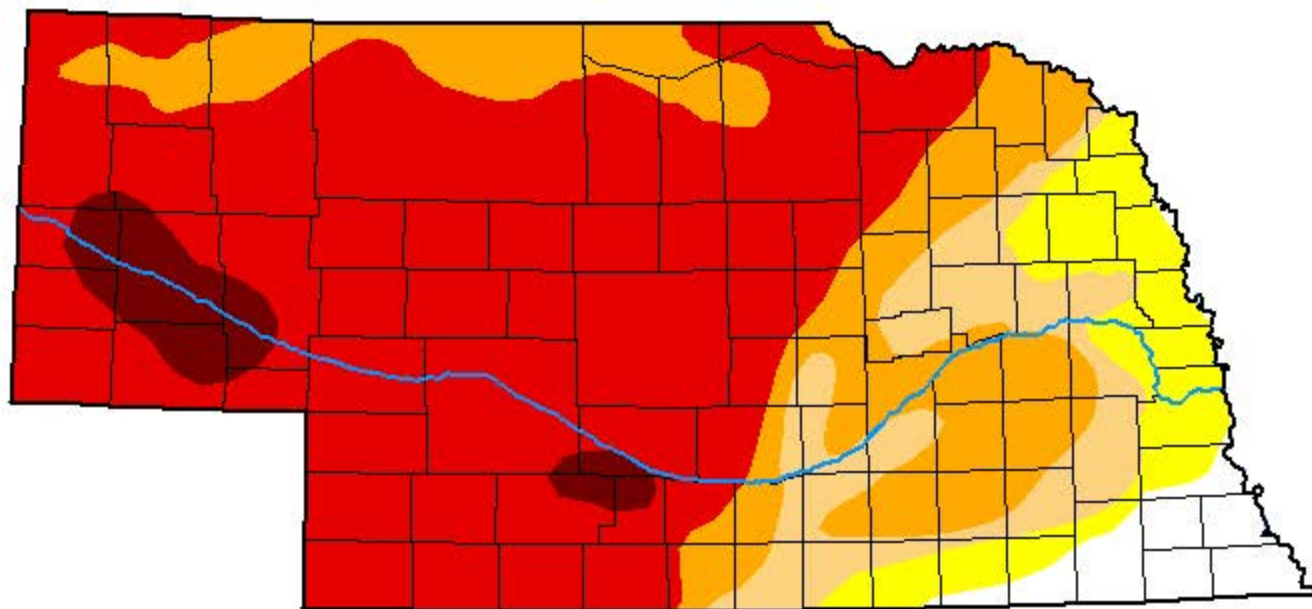
- Upper Republican NRD
- Middle Republican NRD
- Lower Republican NRD
- Tri-Basin NRD
- Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment

As of April 30th, about 81% of the Republican River Basin is experiencing extreme drought (D3), about 8% is experiencing severe drought (D2), and 7% is experiencing moderate drought (D1).







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U.S. Drought Monitor
Nebraska

May 5, 2026
(Released Thursday, May. 7, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



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>

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droughtmonitor.unl.edu