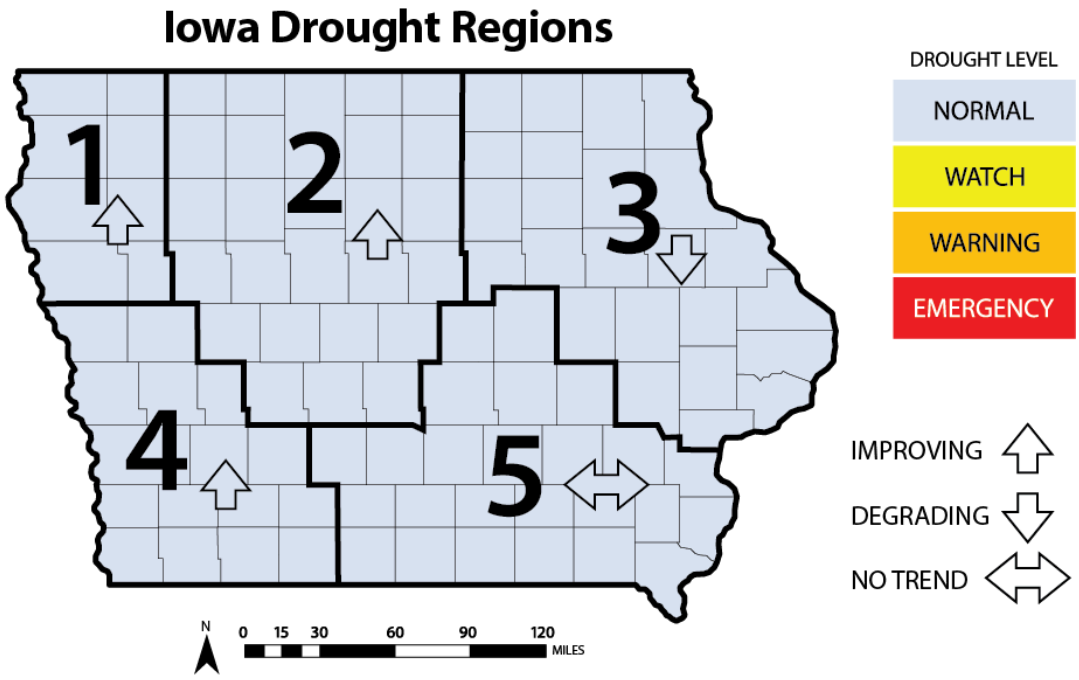
IOWA DNR
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WATER SUMMARY UPDATE

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A snapshot of water resource trends for October 2026

Iowa Drought Conditions



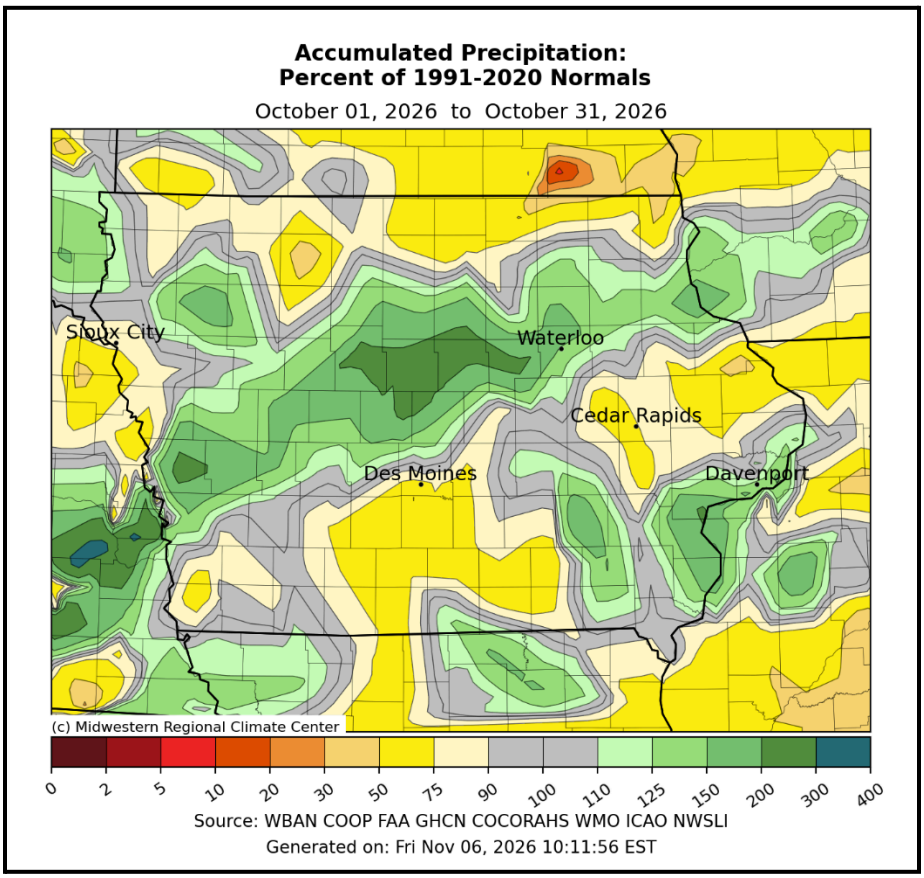
Condition Summary – Drought-Free October

Iowa experienced a wetter-than-average October that drove continued recovery across the state. At the start of the month, 0.04% of Iowa was designated as D1 – Moderate Drought and nearly 9% as D0 – Abnormally Dry, improving to just over 1% of D0 by month's end. By the second week of November, conditions were completely normal; this marks the first time since August 26, 2025, that the entire state has been free of any dryness or drought designation. Looking ahead, the Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) Seasonal Drought Outlook projects these drought-free conditions will persist through January, while the monthly outlook for November favors an increased chance of both above-normal temperatures and precipitation across Iowa.

October Precipitation and Temperature

Iowa's statewide precipitation totaled 2.88 inches, or 0.19 inch above normal, ranking as the 59th wettest on record. Looking at a map of rainfall across the state, a broad "X" of above normal totals stretched towards the four corner with the axis over central Iowa; totals here were 200-300% of normal. Only small pockets of Iowa reported deficits in the 1.00-2.00-inch-range.

October's temperatures were well above average across the state, with an overall statewide average was 59.2 degrees, or 8.2 degrees above normal. October 2026 ties 1900 as the 4th warmest in 154 years of statewide records. A warmer October last occurred in 1963, which is the warmest on record.



Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

The SPI is an index based on accumulated precipitation for various time scales. SPI is the most commonly used indicator worldwide for detecting and characterizing meteorological droughts. The SPI indicator measures precipitation differences based on a comparison of observed total precipitation amounts over the period of interest with the long-term historical precipitation record for that period. Droughts are characterized by negative SPI values, while positive SPI values indicate wet periods. The range of SPI values is between -3 and +3, denoting “extremely dry” to “extremely wet”.

Ninety-day SPI values for all drought regions in October (comparing August, September, and October precipitation) range from 1.7 to 2.9, with all of the five values above zero. For the 180-day SPI values, all Drought Regions remained above zero, with Drought Region 1 recording the greatest increase and Drought Region 3 experiencing the largest decline.

Drought Region	3-month SPI	6-month SPI	IDP Classification ↑ = improving ↓ = degrading ↔ = no trend
1	2.1	1.2	Normal ↑
2	2.3	1.8	Normal ↑
3	1.7	2.1	Normal ↓
4	2.9	2.1	Normal ↑
5	2.1	2.0	Normal ↔

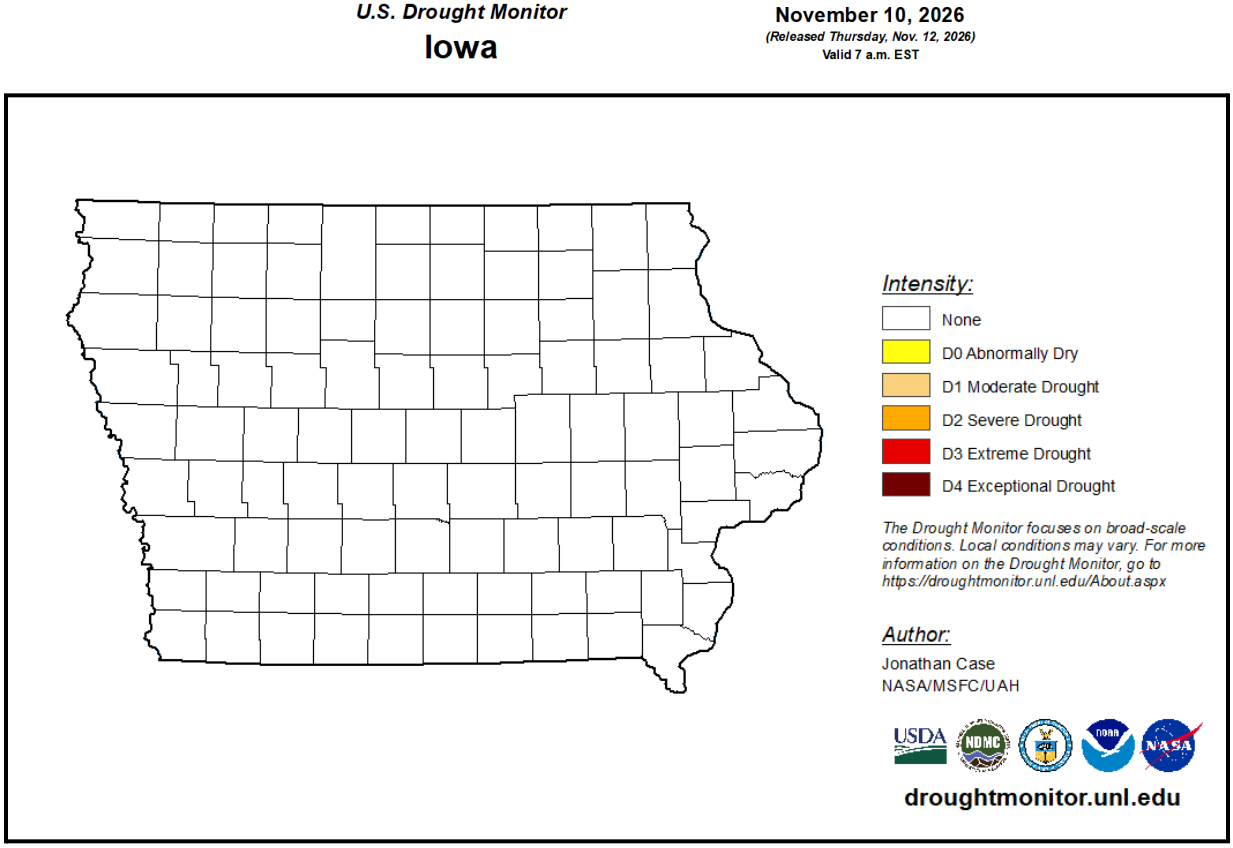
Standardized Streamflow Index (SSI) and Streamflow

SSI is a metric that compares current streamflow against the historical record to determine how far away the current streamflow value is from the river's historical mean observed on the same date. The 30-day SSI values in two of the five drought regions have increased, two drought regions have decreased, and one drought region has no trend. Comparing October to September data, Drought Region 1 demonstrated the greatest 30-day SSI improvement, while Drought Region 5 showed the largest decrease.

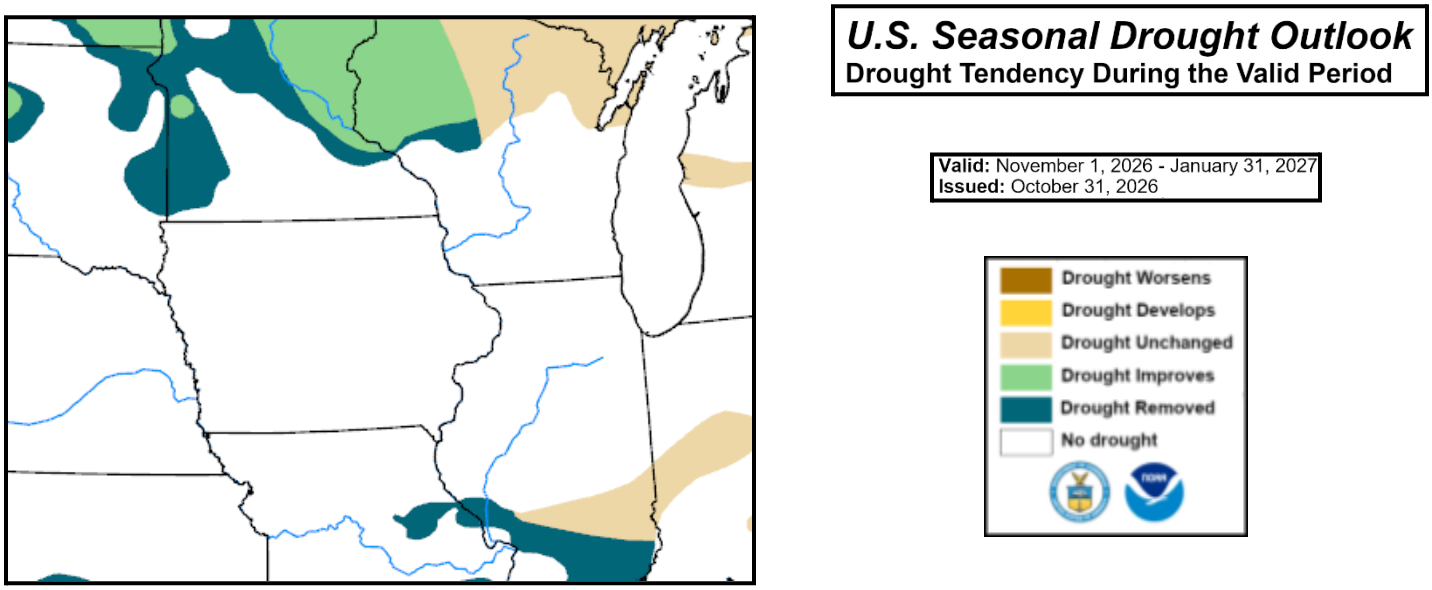
According to the U.S. Geological Survey, October streamflow levels were predominantly above normal across much of Iowa, with the vast majority of monitoring stations reporting normal to well-above-normal conditions. Currently, 57 stream gages reflect extremely above-normal flows and only one indicates below-normal levels, with no stations statewide classified as much below or extremely below normal.

US Drought Monitor and Drought Conditions

The latest US Drought Monitor (USDM), released on November 12, indicates a continued normal trend across Iowa. In October, two small areas of D0 improved in northwestern Iowa. Additionally, an area of D0 has persisted. Currently, the state is free from any level of dryness or drought, which is the first time since August 26, 2025.



The Seasonal Drought Outlook, released by the CPC on October 31, 2026, valid through January 31, 2027, projects Iowa will remain entirely drought-free through January. The Seasonal Precipitation and Temperature Outlook offers no clear signal for precipitation; warmer-than-average temperatures are favored statewide, with the highest probabilities focused in northeast Iowa. The Monthly Outlook for November indicates chances for above-normal precipitation and temperature. The Seasonal Drought Outlook considers the impacts of recent precipitation as well as seasonal precipitation outlooks.



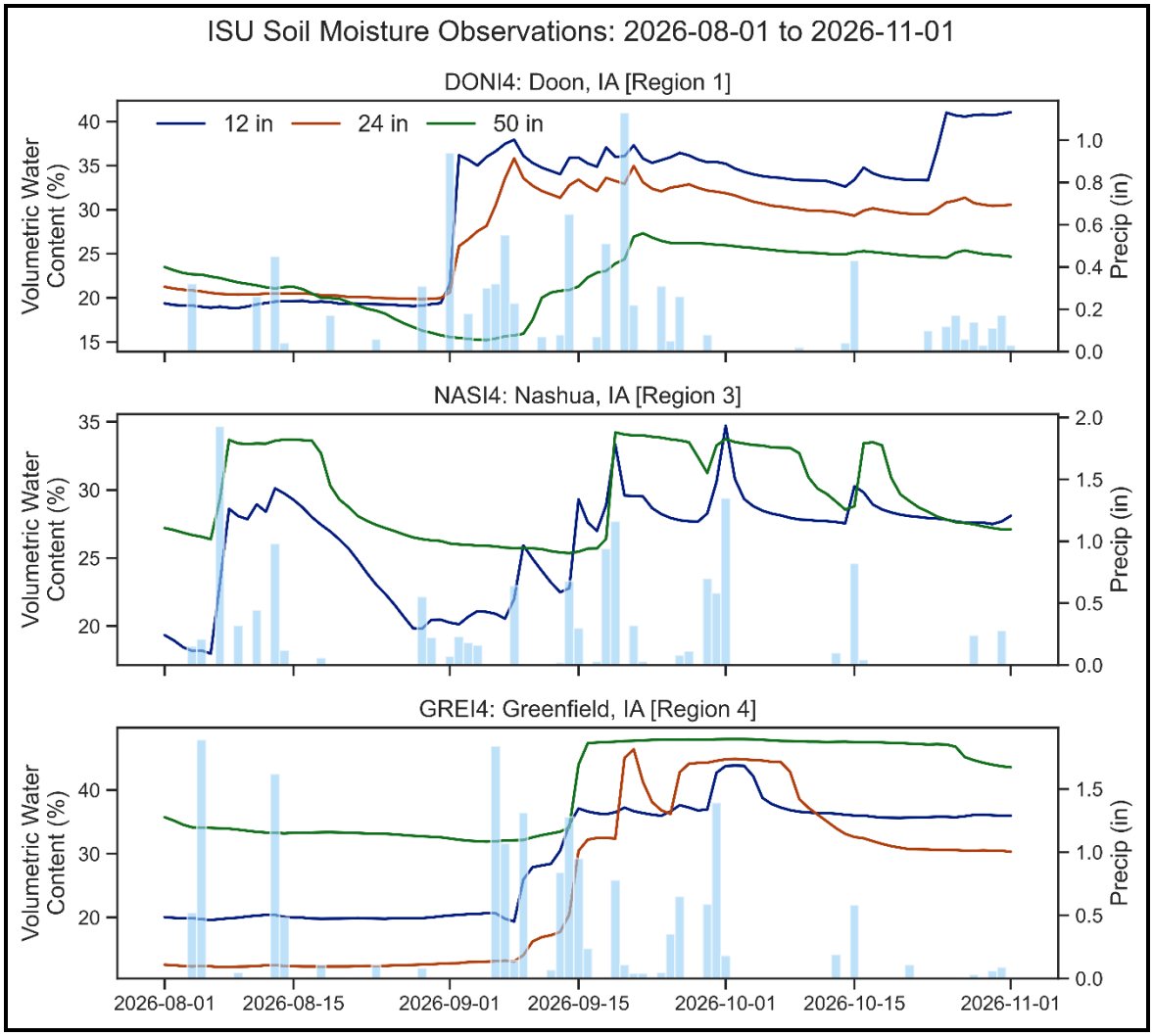
Other Water Resource Information

Border River Conditions

In its monthly update of Missouri River conditions dated November 9, 2026, the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) indicates that the volume of water stored in the system of reservoirs is 44.8 Million Acre-Feet (MAF), which is up 1.3 MAF during October. The updated annual runoff forecast for the upper Missouri River Basin above Sioux City is 16.2 MAF or 63% of the average annual runoff. The Fort Peck, Garrison, and Oahe reservoirs are expected to be approximately 14 to 16 feet below the base of their respective flood control zones on March 1, 2027. “We will continue to make releases from Gavins Point Dam to provide flow support at minimum service through the end of the navigation flow support season. Due to the persisting drought in the upper Basin, the season is being shortened and will be ending on Nov. 15 at the mouth of the Missouri River,” said John Remus, chief of the USACE, Missouri River Water Management Division. The normal season ending date is Dec. 1. “Based on the Sept. 1 Mainstem Reservoir System storage check, releases from Gavins Point Dam for the 2026-2027 winter will be at the minimum rate of 12,000 cfs,” said Remus. “Intake operators in the lower river should be taking measures to assure they can maintain access to the water. Releases may be temporarily increased to provide additional water when extremely cold temperatures cause ice formation and lower-than-expected stages on the Missouri River.”

October Soil Moisture

Soil moisture saturation during October shows similar pattern to the previous month of September. At upper layer of soil, soil saturation in central Iowa ranged from 50 to 70%. In Eastern Iowa values were lower than the rest of the state due to dry conditions during most of the month. At lower layers of soil, high saturation between 70 and 80% was observed in the southern part of the state. The rest of the state has saturation values ranging from 30 to 70%.



Additional Information

This edition of the Water Summary Update continues to reflect use of the 2023 Iowa Drought Plan (IDP), which was developed as a collaborative effort between the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The IDP can be seen in its entirety on the DNR's website: The Iowa Drought Plan.

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