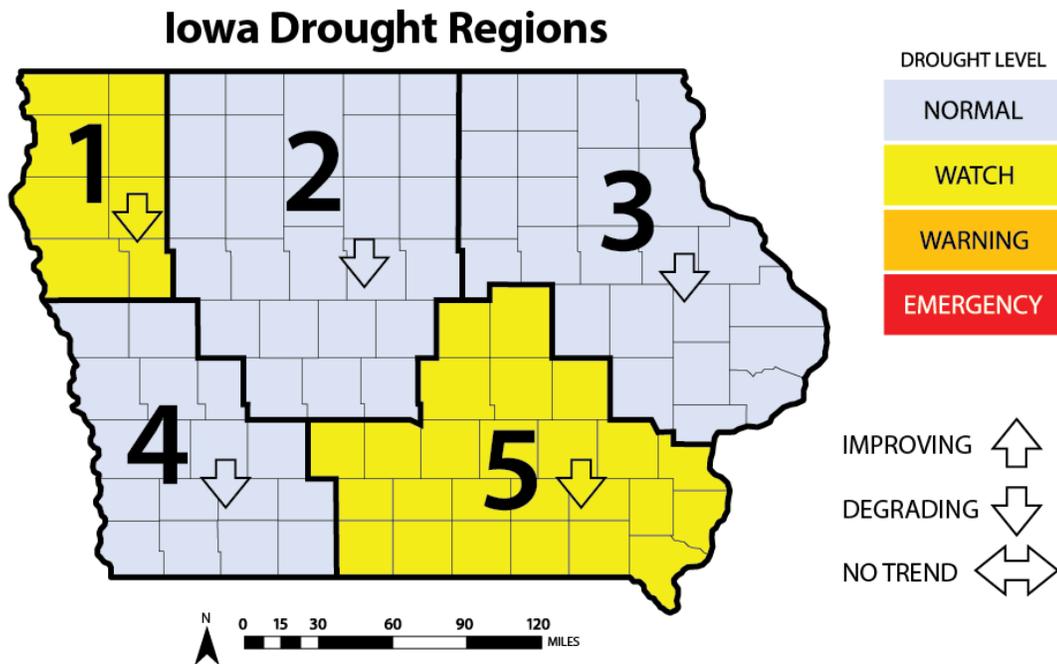


WATER SUMMARY UPDATE

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A snapshot of water resource trends for February 2026

IOWA DROUGHT CONDITIONS



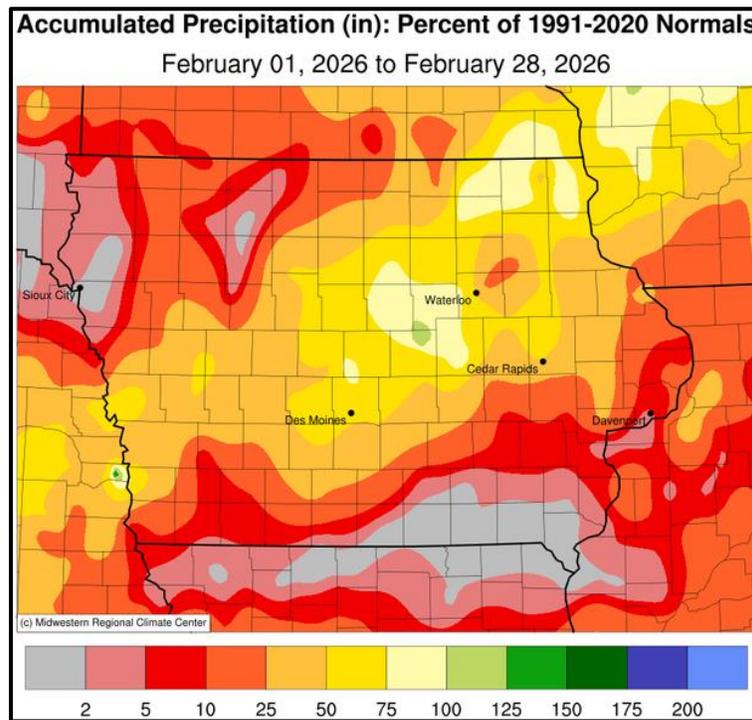
CONDITION SUMMARY - DRY CONDITIONS IN FEBRUARY

Persistent dry conditions throughout the winter have led to the issuance of drought watches for Drought Regions 1 and 5. The absence of winter precipitation and a protective snowpack has led to substantial soil drying throughout the season. In February, Iowa saw well below normal precipitation, leading to significant expansion of dryness and drought. Roughly three-quarters of the state is now classified as D0 - Abnormally Dry classification or worse, mainly in eastern, southern, and northwestern Iowa. Conditions in eastern and northwestern Iowa have deteriorated as D1 - Moderate Drought areas returned or expanded. Significant intensification has occurred in southeastern Iowa, where a pocket of D2 - Severe Drought has developed. The Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) Seasonal Drought Outlook suggests that the current area of drought in northwest Iowa will likely persist through May. However, the southeastern region is expected to see improvement, while the remainder of the state shows no signs of new drought development during this period. For March, the forecast points toward a wetter and milder month, with above-normal precipitation expected across Iowa and warmer-than-normal temperatures predicted statewide.

February Precipitation and Temperature

Iowa's statewide preliminary precipitation totaled 0.38 inches, or 0.79 inches below normal. A swath of southeastern Iowa experienced driest conditions with precipitation from 0.75 to 1.75 inches. Statewide, widespread departures were over 0.50 inch. Monthly precipitation totals ranged from no accumulation at several southern and northwestern stations to 1.26 inches at New Hampton.

The preliminary statewide average temperature was 31.3 degrees, 7.2 degrees above normal. Sioux City Airport reported the month's high temperature of 75 degrees on the 9th, 43 degrees above normal. Mapleton recorded the month's low temperature of -11 degrees on the 1st, 20 degrees below normal.



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 February (comparing December, January, and February precipitation) range from -1.2 to -0.5, with all values above zero. Drought Region 3 180-day SPI value had the largest decrease, and all values remain below zero.

Drought Region	3-month SPI	6-month SPI	IDP Classification ↑ = improving ↓ = degrading ↔ = no trend
1	-1.2	-1.3	Watch ↓
2	-0.6	-0.7	Normal ↓
3	-0.5	-1.0	Normal ↓
4	-0.8	-0.8	Normal ↓
5	-0.8	-1.1	Watch ↓

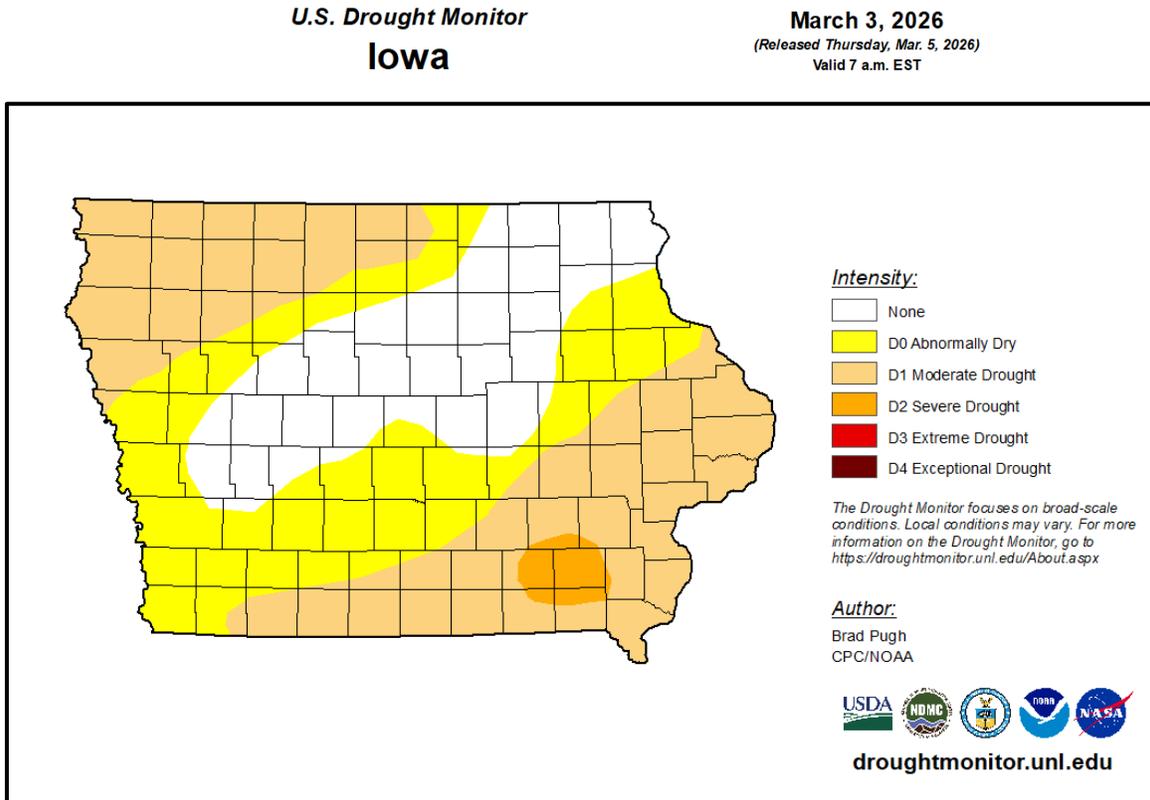
Standardized Streamflow Index (SSI) and Streamflow

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. SSI values in three of the five drought regions have increased, with Drought Region 3 having the largest 30-day SSI increase in February compared to January. Drought Region 4 saw the largest decrease in 30-day SSI values relative to the previous month.

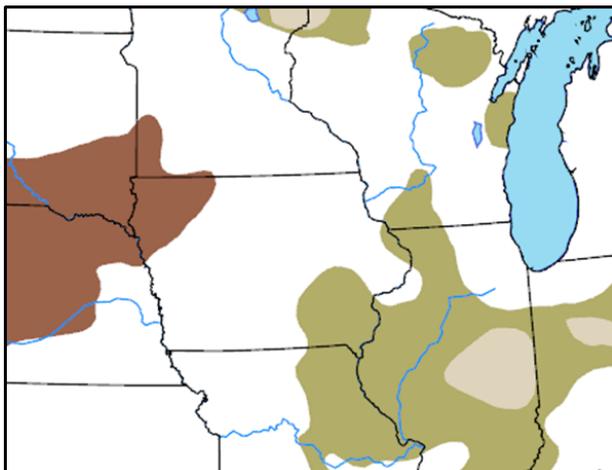
The US Geological Survey's February streamflow levels information is not available.

US DROUGHT MONITOR AND DROUGHT CONDITIONS

The latest US Drought Monitor (USDM), released on March 5, shows declining conditions across Iowa. Following the expansion of D0 - Abnormally Dry and D1 - Moderate Drought in eastern, southern, and northwestern Iowa in late February, the trend has worsened into early March. Currently, nearly 75 percent of the state is experiencing some level of dryness. Most notably, the map now indicates further degradation with the introduction of D2 - Severe Drought in the southeastern region.

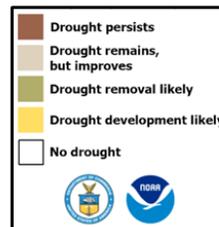


The Seasonal Drought Outlook, released by the CPC on February 28, 2026, is valid through May 31, 2026, and indicates a drought-free or drought removal likelihood forecast for most of the state. The only exception is far northwestern Iowa, where existing drought conditions are expected to persist. While the Seasonal Precipitation and Temperature Outlook offers no clear signal for precipitation and temperatures across the state, the outlook for March indicates potential for above-normal precipitation and temperatures. The Seasonal Drought Outlook considers the impacts of recent precipitation as well as seasonal precipitation outlooks.



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for March 1 - May 31, 2026
Released February 28, 2026



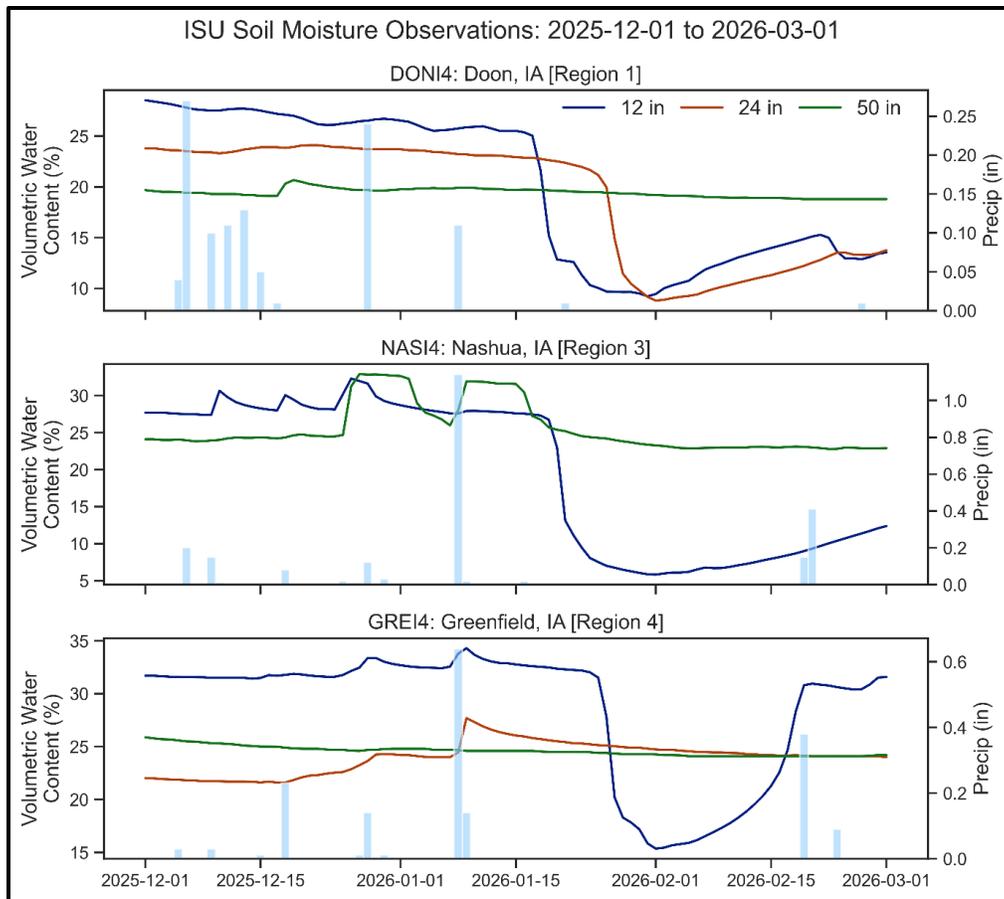
OTHER WATER RESOURCE INFORMATION

Border River Conditions

Current conditions on both the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers show generally normal flows. On March 3, 2026, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) reported that the 2026 calendar year runoff forecast for the Missouri River Basin above Sioux City continues to be below average at 20.6 Million Acre-Feet (MAF), or just 80% of average. The Corps indicated that the volume of water stored in the system of reservoirs is 49.3 MAF, below average for this time of year.

February Soil Moisture

Upper-level soil saturation across most of Iowa ranges between 50-60 percent, though levels dip to 40-50 percent in the Northwest and Southeast. Deeper soil layers show more widespread moisture deficits, with low saturation extending across all of Western Iowa and parts of the northcentral and northeastern regions.



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](#).

For additional information on the information in this Water Summary Update please contact any of the following:

- General Information, Jessica Reese McIntyre, Iowa DNR.....Jessica.ReeseMcIntyre@dnr.iowa.gov, 515-725-9547
- State Climatologist & Drought Coordinator, Justin Glisan, IDALS.....Justin.Glisan@iowaagriculture.gov, 515-281-8981
- Standardized Streamflow Index (SSI), Elliot Anderson, IGS elliott-anderson@uiowa.edu, 319-335-1575
- Stream Flow, Padraic O’Shea, USGS poshea@usgs.gov, 319-358-3653
- Stream Flow, Mike Anderson, Iowa DNR..... Michael.Anderson@dnr.iowa.gov, 515-725-0336
- Soil Moisture, Felipe Quintero Duque, Iowa Flood Centerfelipe-quintero@uiowa.edu, 319-384-1727