

The Future of Drought in the U.S.

Information Gathering Session: Intermediary Data Providers

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SESSION OBJECTIVES AND KEY QUESTIONS

The purpose of this meeting is to gather information from intermediary drought data providers, those who use, develop, and provide key drought data used by decision makers for actions and responses to current and future droughts, with particular attention to considerations and implications of drought non-stationarity on their work.

Questions for all speakers

General

- What are your core sources and inputs for the drought data, metrics, and indicators you produce? What base data are you using (intervals, baselines, benchmarks)?
- Who are primary users of the information and resources you produce?

Non-stationarity

- How do you understand and conceptualize non-stationarity? What is your view of non-stationarity as an issue for drought?
- Do you account for non-stationarity in your work? If so, how? If not, why not?

What guidance would you like from this committee (within the context of our charge)?

TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025

1:30–2:50p

Development and Use of the US Drought Monitor

US Drought Monitor (USDM)—15 min presentation, 20 min Q&A

- Brian Fuchs (USDM)
- Specific questions
 - The USDM is a composite drought index product. How are the data inputs integrated into the USDM (what is the USDM process)?
 - What are the baseline data inputs into the US Drought Monitor?
 - What data sources, precisely, are used? What are their periods of record (grain and extent), how does this vary from state to state or by climate region, and what is the weight allocated to each data source in the classification process?
 - How are margin calls among drought classes made?
 - How are seasonal forecasts used in the USDM? How does the previous week's map shape the current week's map? What happens if you have hydrologic anomalies that suggest drought but no on-the-ground reporting of drought impacts?
 - How is non-stationarity affecting the production and use of the USDM?

State Climatologists (45 min)

How do State Climatologists inform the USDM and use USDM and other drought products?

- Short presentations from different geographic regions—5-7 min each
 - South: John Nielsen-Gammon (TX)
 - Midwest: Laura Edwards (SD)
 - West: Russ Schumacher (CO)

- Specific questions
 - What information do you provide on a weekly basis to the NDMC? How might that vary from week to week? Do you provide suggestions of drought classifications? What information do you provide that the USDM authors might not otherwise have access to?
 - What are key drought issues and questions in your state/region?
 - What concerns do your users and stakeholders have with the USDM? Do they feel that the USDM and other drought products adequately reflect drought conditions in their sector/locality?

2:50-3:00p

BREAK

3:00–4:00p

Regional Climate Centers and Climate Adaptation Partnerships

Panel of regional centers (Regional Climate Centers, Climate Adaptation Partnerships)

- Short regional overview presentations: 5-7 min each
 - Beth Hall, Midwestern RCC
 - Tim Brown, Western RCC
 - Michael Crimmins, Southwest CLIMAS CAP
 - Rick Thoman, Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy
- Discussion questions
 - Do your users and stakeholders feel that the drought products you provide to them adequately reflect drought conditions in their sector/locality?
 - How is non-stationarity affecting the production and use of the drought products that you generate and/or provide?
 - Are you doing any research to address non-stationarity in the products that you use or generate?

Q&A (30 min)