

Update on the NIDIS Mid-Atlantic Drought Early Warning System (DEWS)

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**| Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments |
| September 14, 2026 |**

National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)



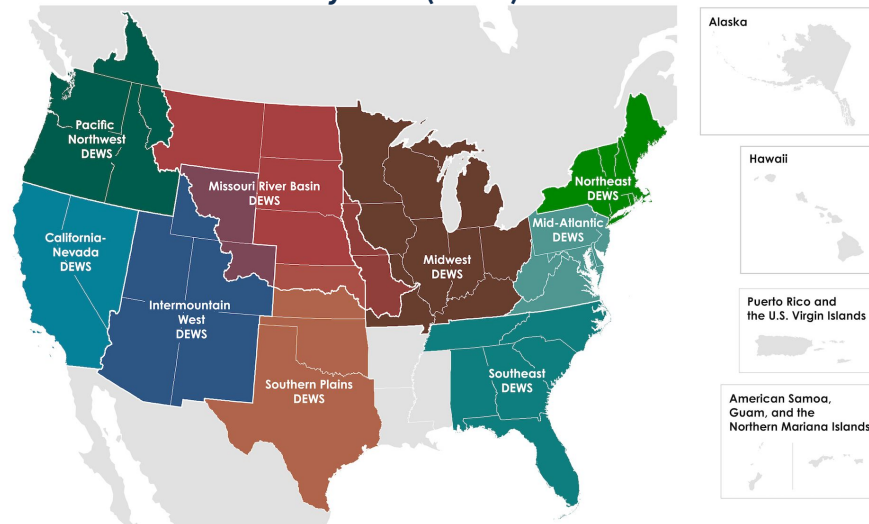
NIDIS is a **multi-agency partnership** that coordinates drought monitoring, forecasting, planning, and information at federal, tribal, state, and local levels across the country.

How do we do this work?

- Advancing Regional Drought Early Warning Systems
- Improving drought prediction and forecasting
- Supporting drought planning and preparedness
- Supporting drought impact assessments
- Strengthening collaboration
- Leading the U.S. Drought Portal: www.drought.gov

Enable the Nation to move **from a reactive to a more proactive** approach to managing drought risks and impacts

NIDIS Drought Early Warning Systems (DEWS)



Unique Role of NIDIS in the Federal Drought Landscape



Developing and Delivering Information

U.S. Drought Portal
(Drought.gov)



Convening, Coordinating, Capacity Building

National
Coordinated Soil
Moisture Monitoring
Network



Advancing and Integrating Science into Services

Assessing Drought in
a Changing Climate

NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM (NIDIS)

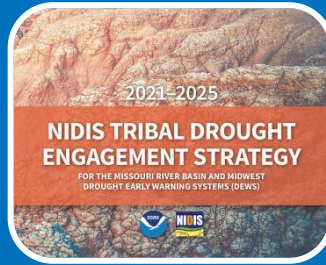
NIDIS in Action Across the U.S.



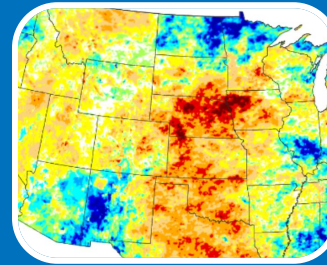
Drought
and Public
Health



Rapid
Onset
'Flash'
Drought



Drought and
Tribal
Resilience



Drought
Indicators
and
Triggers

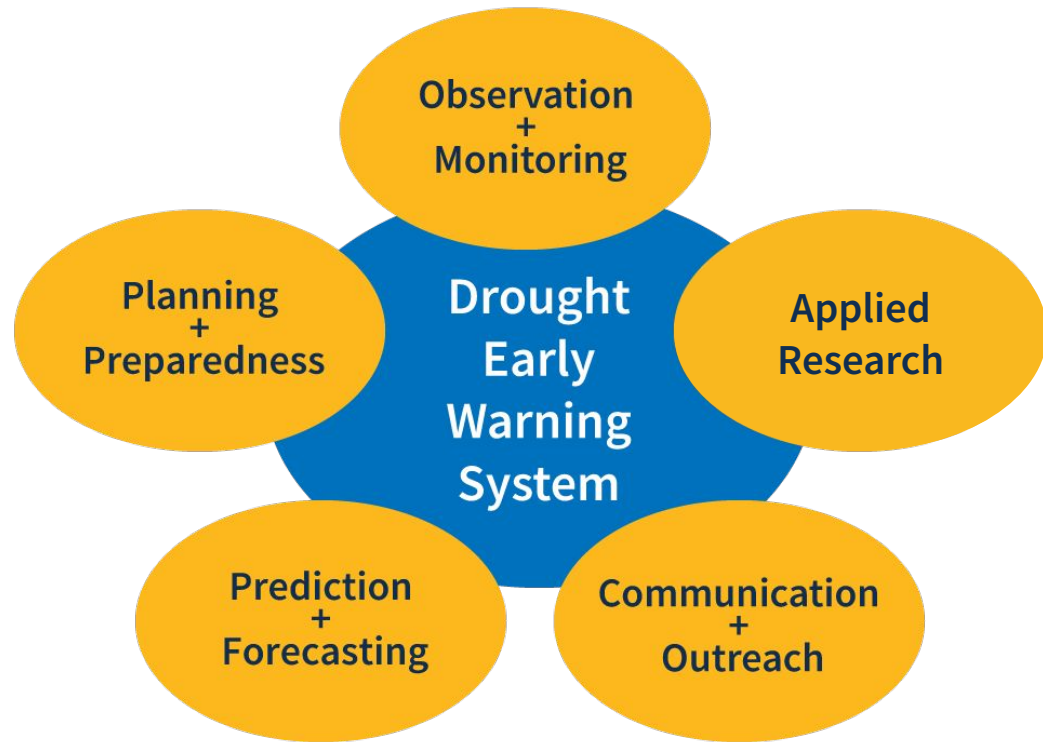


National
Coordinated
Soil Moisture
Monitoring
Network

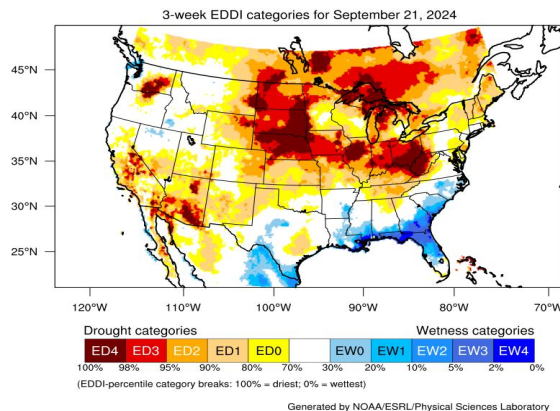
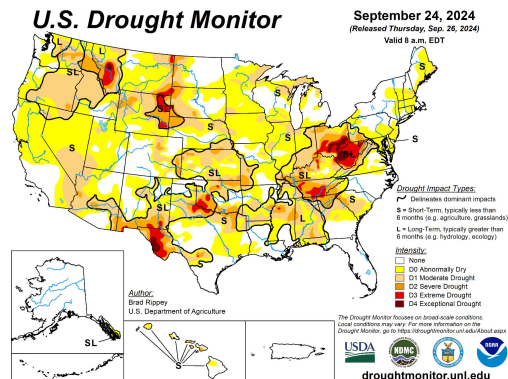
What is a Drought Early Warning System (DEWS)?

Improve the capacity of farmers, ranchers, water suppliers, wildfire managers, and other decision makers to **plan for, forecast, monitor, and cope with the impacts of drought.**

This is accomplished through a **network of partners** that work together to prepare a region for drought.

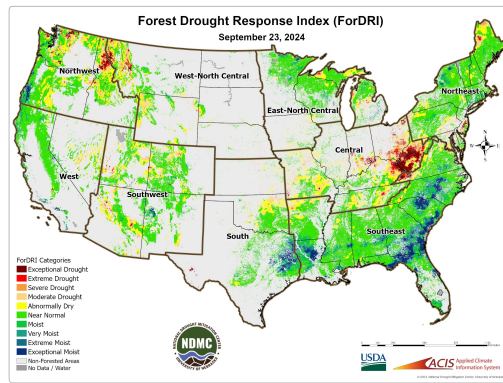
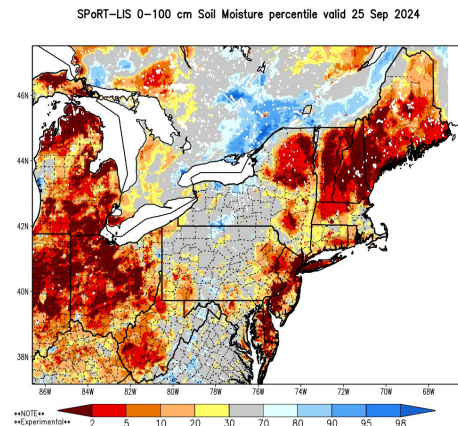


2024-2025 Drought in the Mid-Atlantic



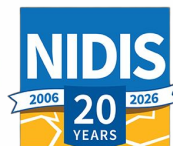
Impacts

- Crop yield loss reports
- Some soils so dry that cover crops and small grains cannot germinate
- Dry wells and well collapses
- Mandatory and voluntary water restrictions
- Low levels in irrigation wells/ponds resulted in hauling of water for livestock
- Unprecedented early livestock sold due to lack of feed/water
- Increase in brush fires and fire risk impacted urban and rural landscapes
- Public health impacts related to drought from wildfire smoke, aggressive wasp behavior
- Delayed timelines for infrastructure projects

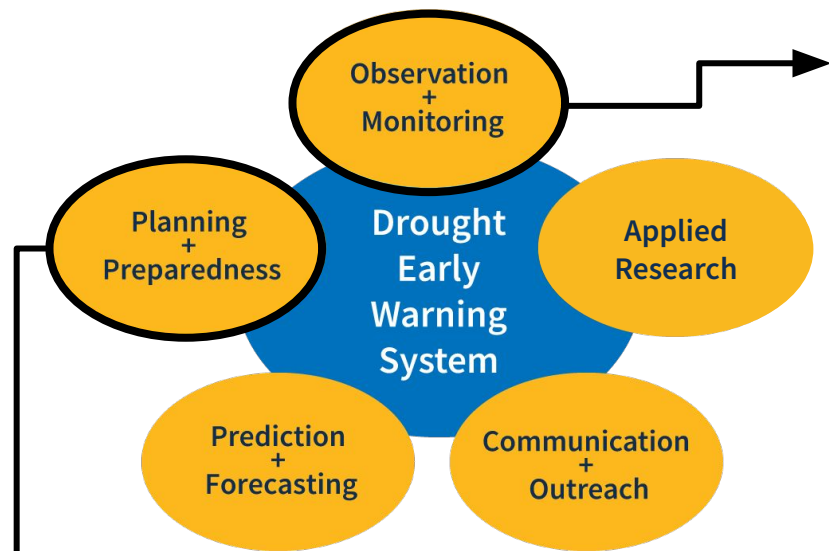
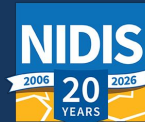


2024-2025 Mid-Atlantic Drought Assessment Meetings

- **Looked back** at the 2024-2025 Mid-Atlantic drought's evolution and response actions taken
- **Assessed** the impacts, hurdles, successes, and needs experienced across sectors during the drought
- **Identified potential next steps** toward improved drought early warning capacity in the region



Mid-Atlantic Drought Early Warning System

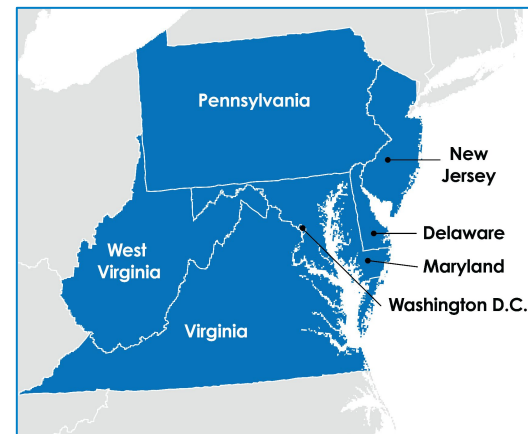


Observations and Monitoring

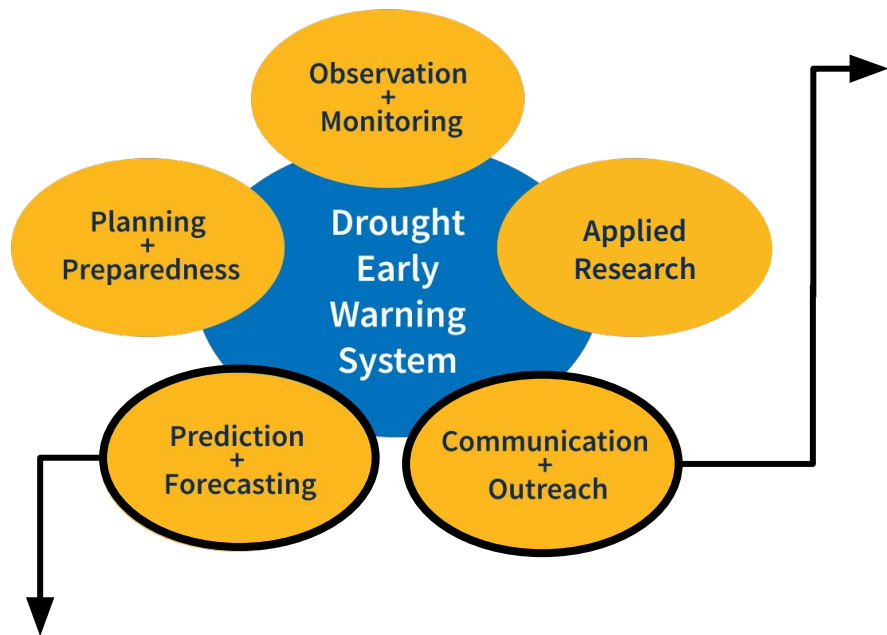
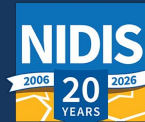
- Challenges Reflecting Conditions in Drought Data
- Expanded In-Situ Soil Moisture Monitoring in the Region
- Incorporating Drought Amelioration tools into decision-making

Planning and Preparedness

- Training on data products, forecasting products, and available drought indices
- Better regional coordination
- Flash drought planning resources
- Drought and Wildfire preparedness



Mid-Atlantic Drought Early Warning System

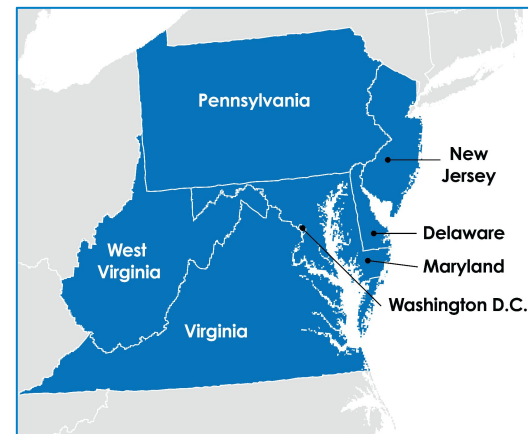


Communications and Outreach

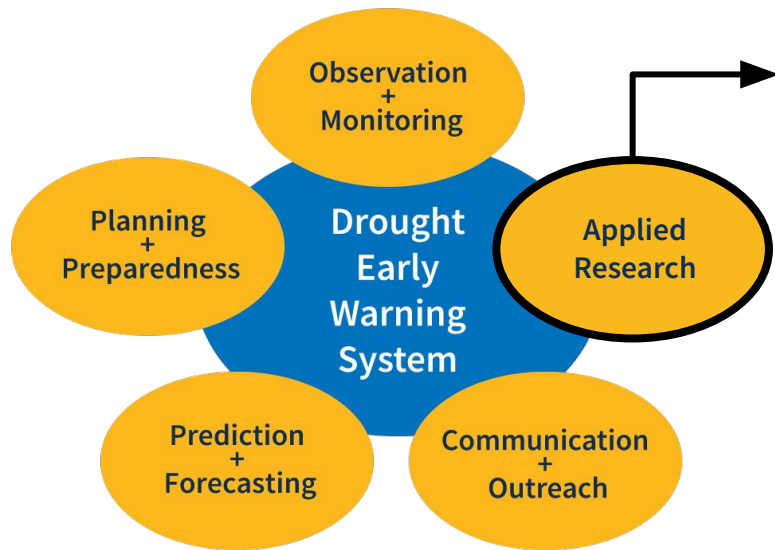
- Shareable Regional Communication
- Effective communications pathways and partnerships for rural communities
- Communicating drought recovery
- Targeted sectoral outreach

Prediction and Forecasting

- Sector-specific, short-term drought outlooks
- Predictions for Headwater ecosystems to focus restoration efforts more efficiently

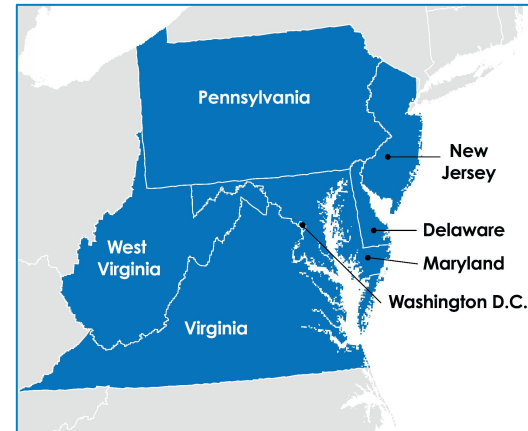


Mid-Atlantic Drought Early Warning System



Applied Research

- Post-Flash Drought Assessments
- Evaluate current infrastructure for precip effectiveness monitoring capacity
- Weather Whiplash
- Wildfire and Flash Drought
- Tree Mortality and Drought
- Drought Amelioration



Mid-Atlantic Drought Early Warning System



Mid-Atlantic DEWS Strategic Planning Meeting April 9, 2026 | Catonsville, Maryland

Key Collaboration and Input

- Stakeholder listening sessions held in Feb/March 2025
- Insights from the 2024-2025 Mid-Atlantic Drought Assessment
- Proactive risk management and early warnings as top priorities



Strategic Plan

- Currently being developed.
- Internal Review



Sign Up for Mid-Atlantic DEWS Updates



July 16, 2026

Amid Record Heat, Severe Storms Bring Some Drought Relief to the Mid-Atlantic

U.S. Drought Monitor 4-Week Change Map



Drought Degradation



Drought Improvement



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA

Data Valid: 07/14/26

Drought.gov

Thank You

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Sign Up for
Mid-Atlantic
DEWS Updates



www.drought.gov



@NOAADrought

