

# Drought Response Actions 2023 Drought Management Plan

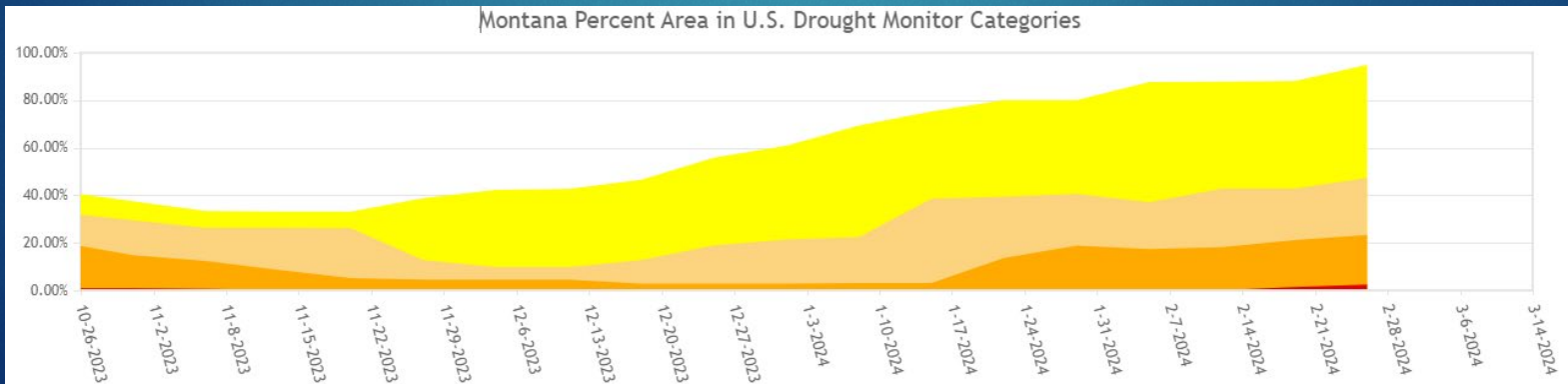
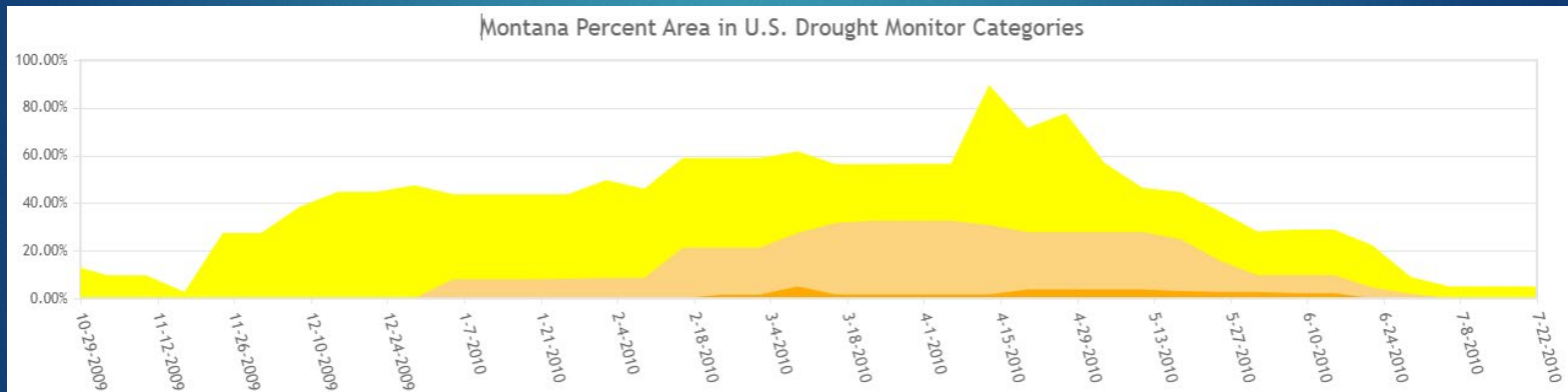
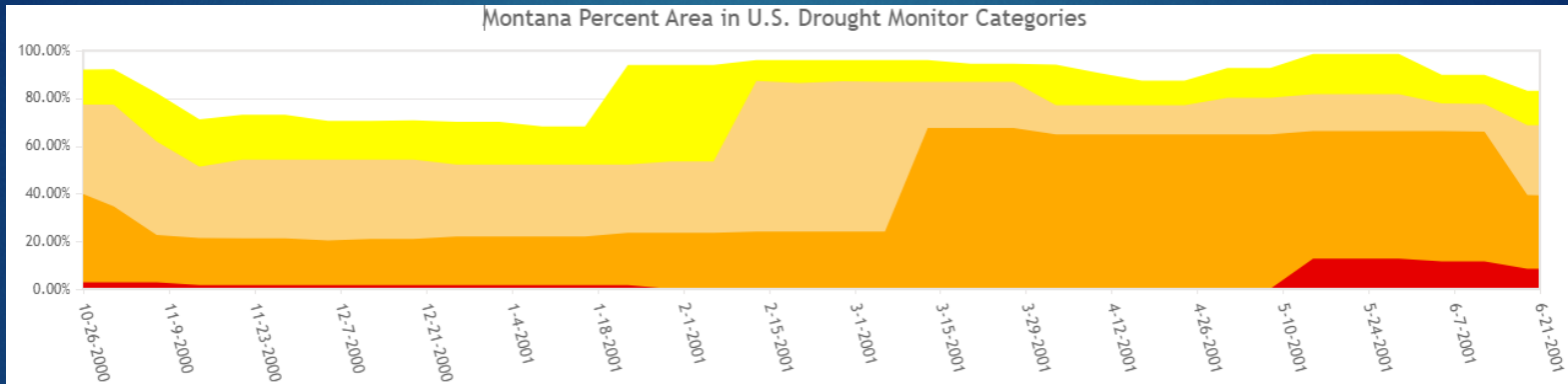
Drought & Water Supply Advisory Committee

March 7, 2024

Michael Downey – DNRC, Water Resources Division



# USDM Time Series – 2000 – 2001, 2009 – 2010, 2023 – 2024



Stage and Trigger	Response Actions	Responsible Party
<b>BASELINE</b> None to D0 (Abnormally Dry) in one or more counties	<b>Communications &amp; Coordination</b>	
	Weekly recommendations to U.S. Drought Monitor	Monitoring Subcommittee
	Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee Meetings (March - October, as warranted)	DWSAC
	April and July Water Supply and Drought Forecast Reports	DNRC, DWSAC
	Local water supply outreach and communications	Local watershed groups
	<b>Monitoring &amp; Assessment</b>	
	<b>Drought monitoring</b>	Monitoring Subcommittee
	– Calculate metrics and maintain drought indicators dashboard	MCO
	– Develop Montana Mesonet (meteorological and soil moisture monitoring network)	MCO
	– Maintain Montana Drought Impacts Reporter	MSL
	<b>Conditions monitoring</b>	DWSAC & Partners
	– Statewide streamflows and temperatures	USGS, DNRC, FWP
	– Reservoir levels and water supplies	USACE, USBR, DNRC
	– Forests and rangelands	DNRC
	– Chronically dewatered/ high priority streams for instream flow leasing	FWP
	– Fish populations, water body fishing use, and harvest	FWP
	– Aquatic invasive species (AIS)	FWP
	– Game populations and WMA conditions	FWP
	– Crop Progress and Condition Reports, monthly Dec-Mar, then weekly Apr-Nov	DOA, NRCS, USDA
	– Groundwater levels in aquifers	MBMG, DNRC
– Groundwater quality	MBMG, DEQ, DOA	
– Surface water quality based on designated beneficial use	DEQ	
– Public water supply systems	DEQ	
– Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)	DEQ, DPHHS, FWP	
<b>WATCH</b> D1 (Moderate Drought) in one or more counties	<b>Communications &amp; Coordination</b>	
	Communicate worsening conditions to affected stakeholders, including federal agencies, Montana Office of Tourism, Board of Outfitters, and citizens	DWSAC, local watershed groups
	Issue press release on fire conditions, prevention, mitigation, and education	DNRC
	Meet with local groups to discuss flow conditions and response	FWP, DNRC
	Communicate best practices to reduce fish loss (proper handling, irrigation diversions)	FWP, DNRC
	Issue drought newsletter for public water suppliers	DEQ
	<b>Conditions Assessment &amp; Reporting</b>	
	Identify streams subject to fishing regulation changes and/or instream flow water rights call if conditions worsen	FWP
	Assess potential for economic damage to agricultural sector if conditions continue or worsen	DOA, DOL

<b>WARNING</b> D2 (Severe Drought) in one or more counties + convergence of evidence	<b>Regulatory Restrictions or Relief</b>		
	Rule or Protocol	Evaluate game populations and implement hunting regulation changes and/or access restrictions (where warranted)	FWP
	<a href="#">Hunting Regulations</a>		
	<a href="#">Angling Restrictions</a>	Implement hoot owl restrictions (where warranted)	FWP
	<a href="#">FWP Water Right Call Protocol</a>	Implement instream flow call protocol (where warranted)	FWP
	<a href="#">Fire Restrictions</a>	Coordinate fire and travel restrictions on state lands; and state land closures (where warranted)	FWP, DNRC, counties
		Support and communicate any county level fire restrictions	DNRC
	<a href="#">Drinking Water Rules</a>	Issue health advisories, boil orders (if warranted)	DEQ
	<a href="#">HAB Guidance</a>	Beach closures for harmful algal blooms (if/where warranted)	DEQ, DPHHS, FWP
	<b>Funding or Resource Support</b>		
	Administer Emergency Grant/Loan Program	DNRC	
	Authorize environmental contingency funding (if warranted)	Governor's Office	
	Coordinate counseling services (USDA)	DOL, DOA	
<b>EMERGENCY</b> D2 + conditions, impacts, and/or DWSAC recommendation	<b>Initiate State Emergency Declaration Process</b>		
		Prepare declaration for Governor & Review	DES & DWSAC
		Issue MT Emergency Declaration	Governor's Office
		Communications & Coordination	DES & DWSAC
		Issue press release	Governor's Office
	<b>Regulatory Relief</b>		
		Ease motor vehicle restrictions	DOT
		Relaxation of cattle inspection requirements	DOL
		Consider emergency haying or grazing on selected WMAs, following associated environmental review and selection process and evaluate Trust Lands available for leasing for emergency grazing	FWP
	<b>DISASTER</b> D2 for 8 consecutive weeks or D3+ (Extreme or Exceptional Drought) in one or more counties	<b>Disaster Designation</b>	
		Seek USDA Secretarial disaster designation (Fast Track or Request)	USDA - FSA
<b>Communications &amp; Coordination</b>			
		Issue press release	Governor's Office
<b>Funding or Resource Support</b>			
		Conduct damage assessments, coordinate relief with federal agencies (USDA, SBA)	DOL, DOA
		Assess tourism impacts, coordinate relief with federal agencies (SBA small business loans)	Commerce

Next Steps:

Wait and See – April 15, Spring Drought & Water Supply Forecast

Questions/Comments?

Contact Information:  
Michael Downey  
mdowney2@mt.gov  
406-444-9748

UMRB Drought Indicators Website //[drought.climate.umt.edu](http://drought.climate.umt.edu)

Montana Drought Plan Web Portal //[mtdroughtinfo.org](http://mtdroughtinfo.org)