

# DROUGHT BY THE NUMBERS: DATA AND RESOURCES FOR COUNTIES

When counties are hit by drought, the consequences can be disastrous. Diminished drinking supplies, reduced crop yields and economic downturn are among the threats counties may face. Though they can last for years, even short-term droughts can have significant impacts to local economies and environments. In addition, droughts put counties at increased risk for wildfires, exposing them to greater threats to public safety. Over the coming months, NACo's Resilient Counties initiative will focus on how counties across the country can prepare for and respond to drought and wildfires.

**40**  
percent

of the contiguous U.S. abnormally dry or in a moderate drought.

**4 YEARS**

that California counties have been suffering from drought.

**\$3 billion:**

Economic loss California is likely to see in 2015 due to lower crop-yields and related job loss.

The number of square miles wildfires burned in the U.S. in 2012.

**9.3 MILLION**

**80**  
percent

**61**  
percent

The average amount of the U.S.'s water that is used for agriculture and irrigation purposes.

**11 TRILLION GALLONS**

How much rain would be needed to end California's drought completely. This is equivalent to the amount of water that flows over Niagara Falls over 170 days.

**510**

The number of counties the U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated as drought disaster areas as of May 2015, making them eligible for certain emergency aid.

The chance of a 35-year or longer "megadrought" striking the Southwest and central Great Plains by 2100.

The average amount of daily per-capita water use in the U.S. is

**80-100 GALLONS**

**100**  
percent

The number of counties declared under drought in Washington.

The expected amount of crop loss in dollars that Washington will face in 2015 is

**\$1.2 BILLION**

**72,000:**

The average number of wildfires in the U.S. per year. As summers become longer and drier, this number is likely to increase.

For more information, visit [www.naco.org/resilientcounties](http://www.naco.org/resilientcounties)

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# Resources for Counties

## **U.S. Drought Portal:**

[www.drought.gov](http://www.drought.gov)

The U.S. Drought Portal is part of the National Integrated Drought Information System, and provides information about the risk and impact of droughts, compares current conditions to historic information, and provides resources for how to plan and manage drought impacts.

## **U.S. Drought Monitor:**

[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

Updated weekly, the Drought Monitor uses recent drought measurements and the judgements from 250 drought experts to produce a map of current drought conditions across the U.S.

## **Drought Calculator:**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/nd/technical/landuse/pasture/?cid=nrcs141p2\\_001670](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/nd/technical/landuse/pasture/?cid=nrcs141p2_001670)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture developed the drought calculator to assist ranchers and rangeland managers to assess the impacts of drought on healthy rangelands and make informed decisions for drought preparedness strategies.

## **Climate Wizard:**

<http://climatewizard.org/>

This tool from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Digital Coast program uses state-of-the-art climate models and statistical analysis to view, generate, and download climate change maps and tables

## **National Water and Climate Center:**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/home/?cid=nrcsdev11\\_000934](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/home/?cid=nrcsdev11_000934)

Part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Water and Climate Center's mission is to drive the development and exchange of water and climate information and technology to support natural resource conservation.

## **National Drought Mitigation Center:**

[drought.unl.edu/Home.aspx](http://drought.unl.edu/Home.aspx)

The National Drought Mitigation Center provides resources to develop and implement measures that reduce vulnerability to drought, focusing on preparedness and risk management rather than crisis management.

## **National Interagency Fire Center:**

[https://www.nifc.gov/prevEdu/prevEdu\\_main.html](https://www.nifc.gov/prevEdu/prevEdu_main.html)

The National Interagency Fire Center is the county's support center for wildfire fighting, and brings together eight different agencies and organizations to coordinate efforts and reduce the duplication of services.

## **U.S. Forest Service Prevention & Education:**

[http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/prev\\_ed/](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/prev_ed/)

The U.S. Forest Service offers tools like Firewise and the Community Wildfire Protection Plans to help communities work together to be prepared for the threat of wildfire and take action to minimize risk.

## **U.S. Small Business Administration Drought Disaster Assistance:**

[www.sba.gov/content/drought-disaster-assistance](http://www.sba.gov/content/drought-disaster-assistance)

The U.S. Small Business Administration provides Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million to small businesses to help them meet financial obligations that would have been met had a drought not occurred and cover operating expenses during times of drought.

## **USDA Drought Programs and Assistance:**

[www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=usda\\_drought\\_programs.html](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=usda_drought_programs.html)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides programs and resources on farm service, conservation and livestock assistance, crop insurance assistance and credit assistance to help farmers, ranchers and small businesses deal with persistent drought.

## **USDA Disaster Assistance Program:**

[www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index)

Following the Agricultural Act of 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency provides assistance for damage to farm land, crop loss and livestock loss due to natural disaster, including drought.