

PLAN SUMMARY

State of Nevada Drought Plan

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Plan Title: State of Nevada Drought Plan

Type: The Drought Plan is a strategic operations plan that describes the procedural framework for initiating and maintaining State-level actions under three different stages of drought. Natural resources identified in the Drought Plan include water resources (e.g., stream flow, reservoir storage), fish and wildlife, soil.

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Plan Description: (Purpose, Goals and Guiding Principles)

The Drought Plan establish an administrative coordinating and reporting system between agencies that should be involved in providing assistance to help mitigate drought impacts. Goals of the plan include:

- To establish a formal framework for state agency response to drought impacts.
- To establish a system for determining drought severity.
- To establish a process for allocating state and for obtaining federal assistance, as determined to be necessary by the Governor.
- To help provide an orderly system for activating the state response to drought.
- To define state policies, procedures, intergovernmental assessment and response responsibilities for different drought scenarios and different impact mitigation. needs.
- To notify farmers and ranchers of potential drought conditions, assess and project likely impacts, identify alternative responses and sources of assistance and report data and recommendations to the Drought Review and Reporting Committee or Drought Response Center.
- To address drought-related impacts to wildlife due to the threat of water reduction and wildfire.
- To establish procedures and an organization to assess drought-related economic impacts and recommend and undertake specific responses.

Planning/Guiding Principles. The following principles are inferred from the Plan.

The primary responsibility for drought response must remain with the individual, followed by local cooperative actions and the then state and federal assistance.

State resources will be used to supplement private and local resources. Federal resources will be necessary to supplement private, local and state resources under certain qualifying conditions.

The plan does not establish specific conservation measures for local entities.

The plan does not affect existing water rights.

Develop State response scenarios based on three stages of drought - Drought Warning Stage; Severe Drought Stage, and Emergency Drought Stage.

The Governor provides policy and resource allocation direction. However, the Drought Response Center makes policy recommendations and resource allocation requests to the Governor.

Three Drought Impact Task Forces will be set up as needed to make recommendations to the Governor.

Geographic Scope: -- Statewide (However, drought conditions often exist in a limited area, so the geographic scope of drought mitigation actions can be region specific)

Legislative Authority and/or Administrative Policies: Information in the Drought Plan indicates that the Governor of Nevada called for the establishment of a Drought Review and Reporting Committee in the late 1980's. Apparently the Division of Water Planning with the Division of Emergency Management were directed to coordinate the development of a State Drought Plan.

Cooperating Agencies: Involvement of agencies depends on the drought stage and impacted resources. State Climatologist is the lead responsible agency. Other directly involved agencies include the Department of Emergency Management, divisions in the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, agencies within the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and of the Interior, agricultural trade organizations, tribes, Natural Resources Conservation Service, irrigation and water (sub)conservancy districts, and the largest utility companies.

Participating Stakeholders: (See Cooperating Agencies above)

Public Communication and/or Participation Process: Task Force is only convened at the recommendation of the DRRC and under the direction of the Governor when severe or emergency drought stages exist. Each Task Force is to be made up of representatives of industry trade organizations, state agencies, federal agencies, tribal agencies, and local agencies.

Date Completed: Completed January 1991. Next update - not determined

Planning Process & Data Collection: The Drought Plan is a static process document. The actions laid out in the plan become implemented in reaction to the occurrence of a drought and subsequent impacts. Implementation of the Drought Plan begins once the Governor receives and concurs with a recommendation from the State Climatologist that conditions are sufficiently dry to declare that a drought warning stage exists.

Date Types Required and Used: Reservoir storage, precipitation, snowpack, stream flow, ground water levels, soil moisture, temperatures, and long term weather predictions. Data on the impact to crop production, livestock production, and fish and wildlife (game and nongame and endangered species) would be collected by the respective Task Forces. During the drought, Task Force agencies would also estimate potential impacts (losses) to fish and wildlife, especially on state controlled land and waters, and

then recommend mitigation measures involving reservoir conservation pools, instream flows, construction of water ponds, etc. Funding and logistic resources needed would also be estimated, including an assessment of state held water rights and the need for additional resources.

Data Sources: It is the responsibility of the Division of Water Planning to insure that the required hydrologic data are being collected to effectively evaluate potential droughts and drought severity. Determination of drought stages are made by the State Climatologist after evaluating the hydrologic and climatic data.

Natural Resource or Environmental Indicators: Palmer Drought Severity Index (a measure of soil moisture deficiency or excess) is used to determine whether a drought exists and the stage, or degree of severity, of the drought conditions. Stages of drought are: a drought warning (Palmer Index between -1.0 to -2.0), severe drought (Palmer Index between -2.0 and -3.0) and emergency drought (Palmer index below -3.0) stage.

Funding Sources: Funding needs are considered special, and will be addressed at the time funds are requested. The Nevada Division of Emergency Management is the agency designated in NRS 414 that coordinates all state and federal assistance to jurisdictions in federally declared and non-declared emergency situations.

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