

NIDIS: NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM

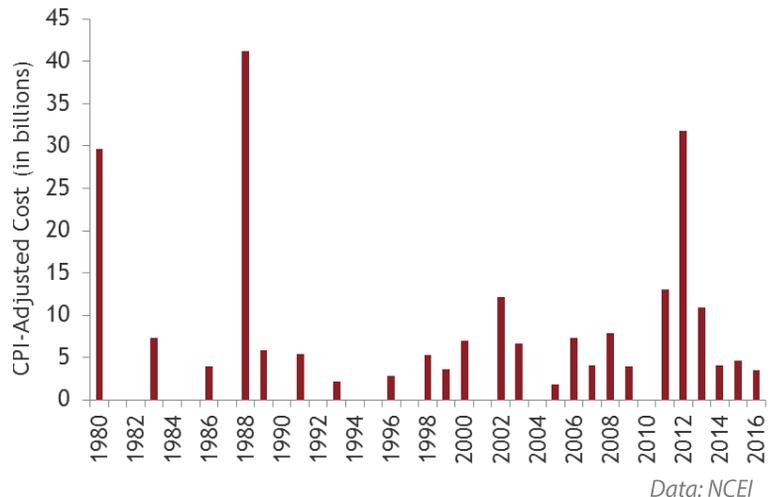
Providing the best available tools for Americans to manage and mitigate short- and long-term drought impacts

Droughts are affecting water resources across the United States in many ways that haven't been seen before in the modern era of water management. The 2012 drought had an adverse effect on over two thirds of the contiguous United States and cost an estimated \$30 billion to the agricultural sector. In 2015, California's historic drought cost the state almost \$3 billion and resulted in the loss of over 21,000 jobs. Other drought events have changed water storage in reservoirs along the Columbia River, decreased hydropower capacity at Lake Mead, and created a large gap between snowmelt runoff and peak demand in California.



Photo Courtesy: USGS

Billion-dollar drought disasters in the U.S., 1980-2016



Americans are increasingly demanding data and tools to better manage and minimize drought-related risks.

In 2006, the U.S. Congress authorized the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) to address the impacts of drought through reliable, relevant, and innovative data, information, and tools through Public Law 109-430 and its reauthorization in 2014 (Public Law 113-86). The original Public Law directs NIDIS to “develop and provide a national drought early warning information system.”

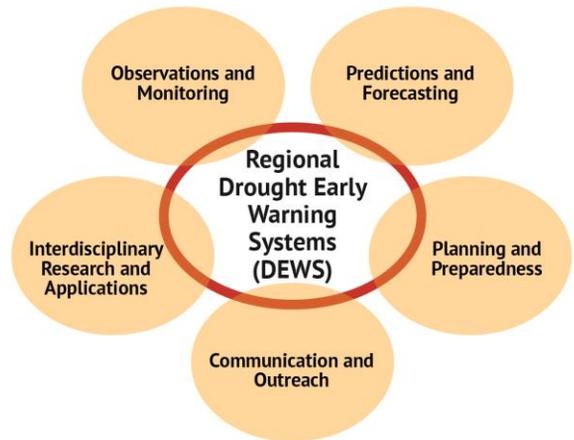
NIDIS is a multi-agency partnership that coordinates drought monitoring, forecasting, and planning and information at national, state, and local levels across the country. Its mission is to help the nation move to an increasing proactive approach to manage drought risks and impacts, and to improve long-term drought resilience. Within The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NIDIS is part of the Climate Program Office.

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Learn more: Drought.gov

HOW IS NIDIS HELPING AMERICANS?

Since 2006, NIDIS has been working with various Federal agencies as well as state and local networks of researchers, academics, resource managers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. This work is the basis for regional Drought Early Warning Systems (DEWS). These systems are not simply the dissemination of a forecast. DEWS encourage innovation by integrating new, locally relevant drought information, and supporting the introduction of new technologies that detect and communicate drought risks and warnings. With eight regional DEWS already established across the country, NIDIS is laying the groundwork for DEWS in additional regions. The Northeast DEWS, for example, is expected to launch in late 2017.



DROUGHT EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS ACROSS THE U.S.

NIDIS coordinates Drought Early Warning Systems (DEWS) in many regions of the US. Through DEWS, stakeholders explore and demonstrate a range of early warning and drought risk reduction strategies. For instance, NIDIS convened drought coordinators, planners, and climatologists from across the Pacific Northeast at a September 2016 workshop to discuss how drought indicators, indices, and triggers could be more effectively integrated into state drought plans.

In the Missouri River Basin region, NIDIS has worked with the State of Montana, the National Drought Mitigation Center, and the Big Sky Watershed Corps to conduct a drought planning course for the Missouri River Basin Headwaters. NIDIS also works closely with the Wind River Indian Reservation and the Great Plains Tribal Water Alliance to support drought vulnerability assessments and periodic drought and climate summaries. In the Coastal Carolinas, NIDIS has supported a Coastal Salinity Index, working with U.S. Geological Survey river gauges to monitor drought conditions in coastal areas. There, drought can contribute impacts to water quality, particularly increasing salinity levels and decreasing availability of freshwater to support animals, plants, and ecosystems.

