

# 2024 Exceptional Events Workshop Summary

Mary Uhl, WESTAR/WRAP

AAPCA

April 2024

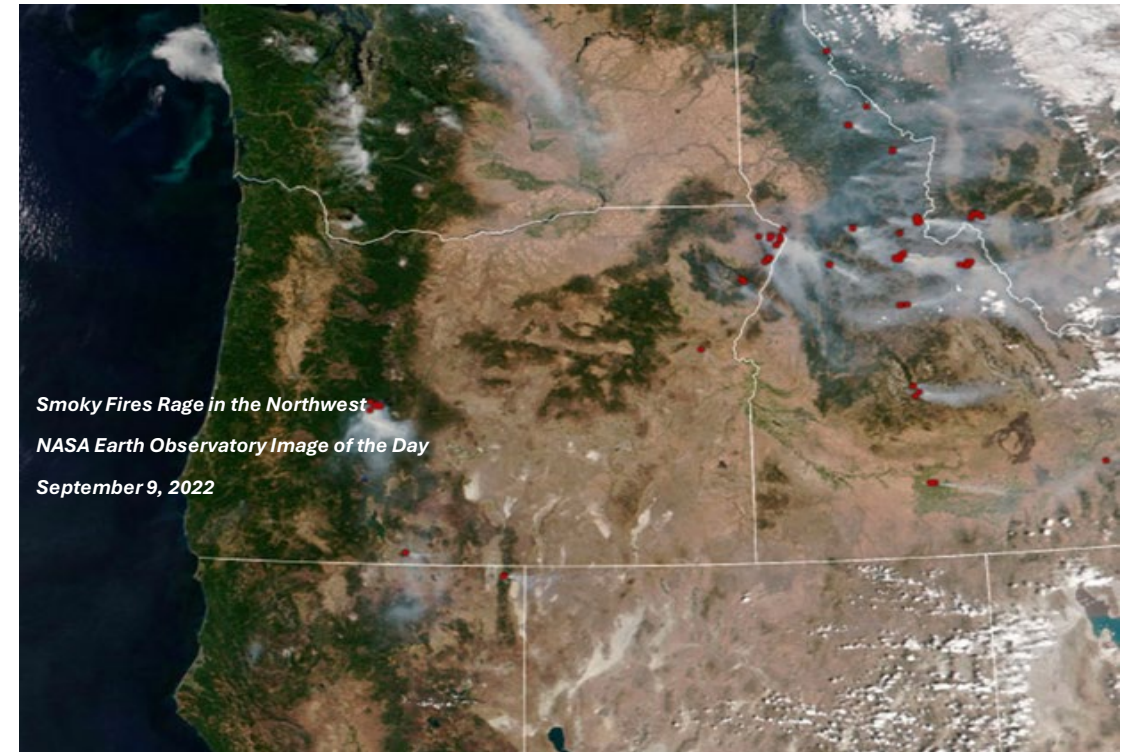


# What is an Exceptional Event?

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“Exceptional event means an event(s) and its resulting emissions that affect air quality in such a way that there exists a clear causal relationship between the specific event(s) and the monitored exceedance(s) or violation(s), is not reasonably controllable or preventable, is an event(s) caused by human activity that is unlikely to recur at a particular location or a natural event(s), and is determined by the Administrator in accordance with 40 CFR 50.14 to be an exceptional event. It does not include air pollution relating to source noncompliance.”

40 CFR 50.1

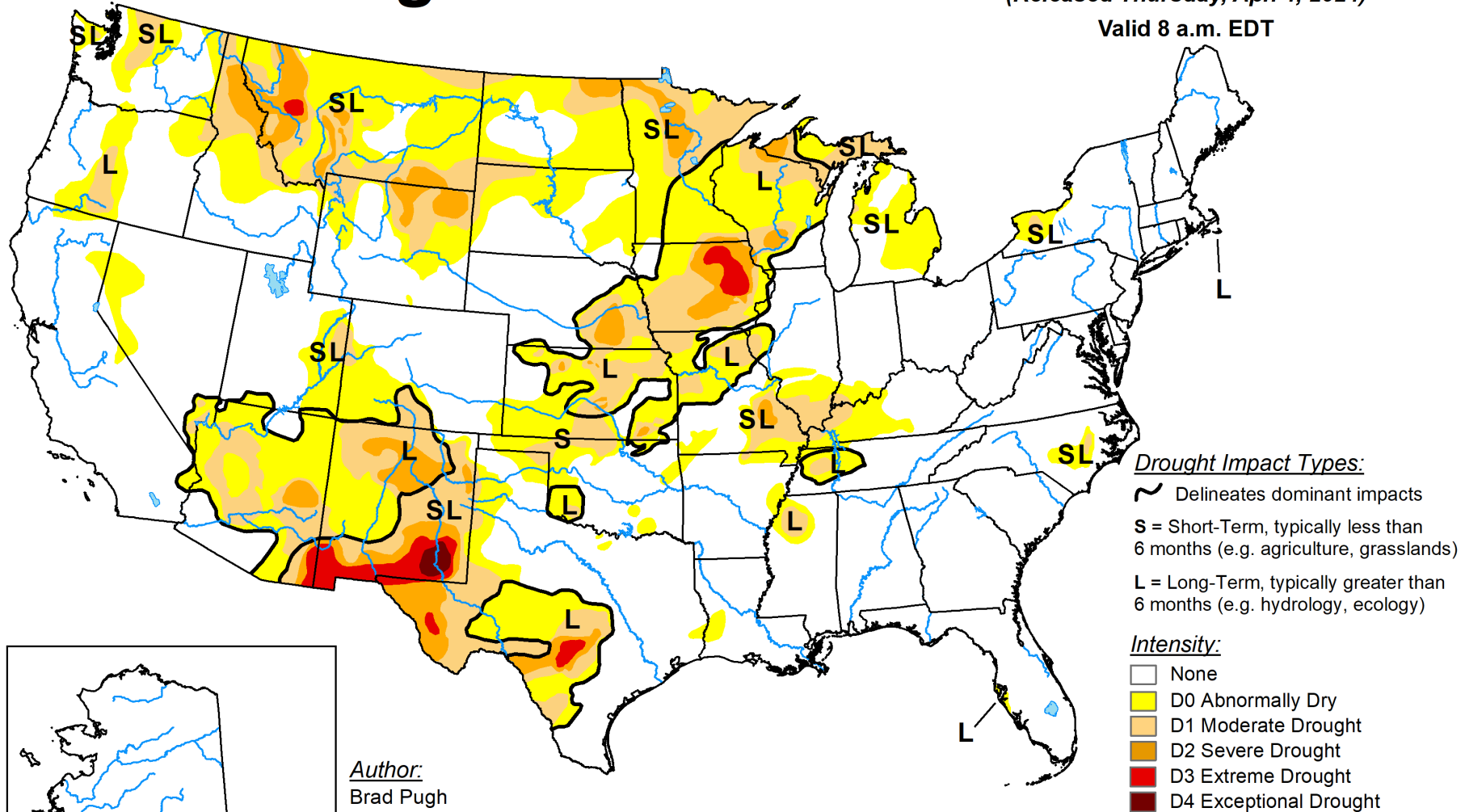


# U.S. Drought Monitor

April 2, 2024

(Released Thursday, Apr. 4, 2024)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

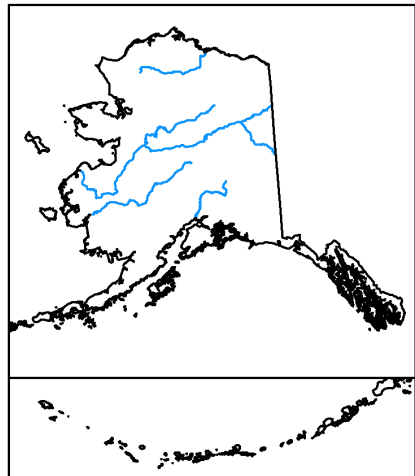


**Drought Impact Types:**

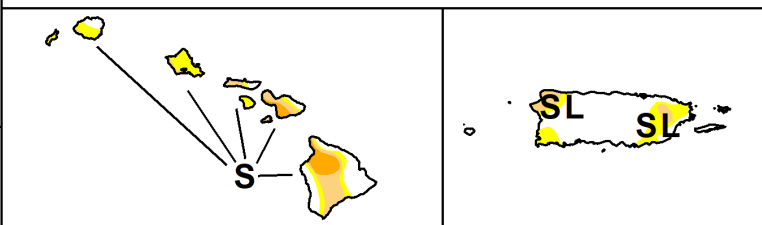
- ~ Delineates dominant impacts
- S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
- L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

**Intensity:**

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought



**Author:**  
Brad Pugh  
CPC/NOAA



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>



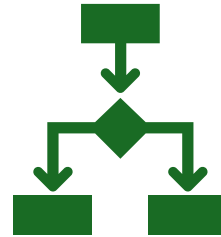
[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)



# New Draft EPA Exceptional Events Implementation Tools



1. Exceptional Events Analysis and Data Visualization Tool



2. PM2.5 Wildland Fire Exceptional Events Tiering Document



3. Wildland Prescribed Fire Exceptional Event Demonstration Document

# EPA Guidance/Tools/Training Needed

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- National and regional CMAQ runs with source apportionment for EE
- Archival of fire and smoke maps
- Flagging of data-consistency, guidance and automation
- Collaborative approach to demonstration development
- Connect EE Demo Tool to EE Demo submission
- Regional and national smoke forecasting
- Streamline the EPA review process
- Automate Tier 1 and Tier 2 demonstrations

The more EPA automates the process, the more time for state/local/Tribal work on air quality issues

# MJOs, AAPCA and NACAA can help

Coordinate satellite data analysis

Multi-state collaborations

Share State/Local/Tribal EE demo drafts

Develop conceptual models for regional and national events

Provide forums to share EE tools and initiatives

# Communications Principles



## Standardize

Standardize the message nationally



## Partner

Partner with other agencies on messaging and move towards smoke-ready communities



## Platforms

Get the message out across many platforms



## Fire AirNow

Use the AQI and Fire AirNow



## Reduce Exposure

Message the public on ways to reduce exposure

# Tasks for EPA on Communications

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1. Language translations for advisories
2. Template for press release for smoke events for cities and schools
3. Protocols and training for gathering EE data and visuals for public communications
4. Create infographic templates and evaluate success of communications strategies
5. Create template to standardize issuance of health advisories and air quality alerts and threshold for issuance. A national public health message about wildfire smoke should be developed
6. Work with OSHA on outdoor worker safety during smoke events
7. EPA should fund an academic study to determine the best ways to present and communicate air quality information during wildfire smoke events to different groups



# Final thoughts

Public perception of data is important.

If a large number of days are excluded through exceptional events, does this make design values less meaningful?

The workshop demonstrated the capacity of the MJOs to come together to address air quality issues nationally



WESTAR  
Mary Uhl  
maryuhl@westar.org

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