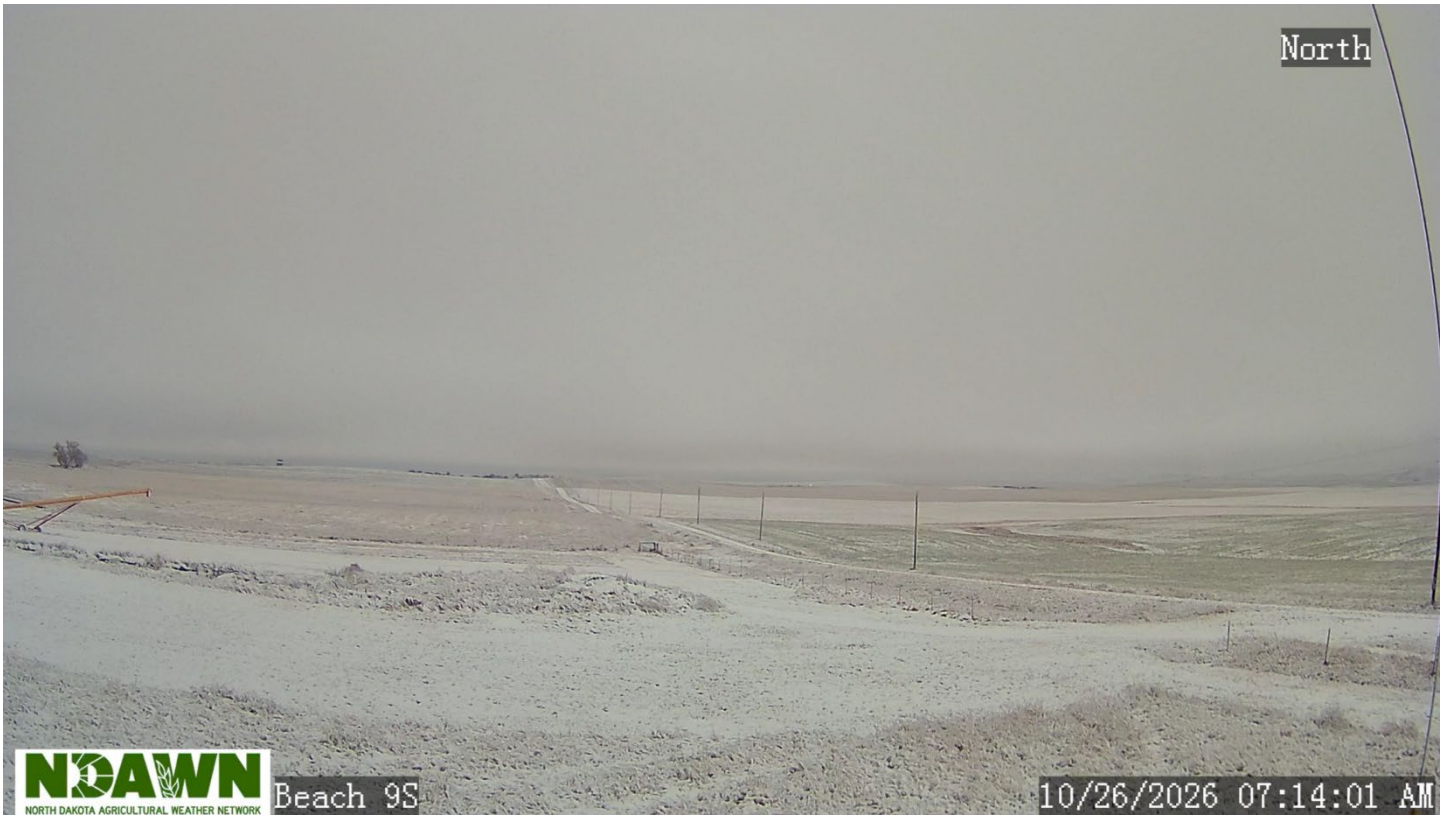
North Dakota State Climate Office

Monthly Climate Summary

Volume 20, No. 10

October

2026



The first widespread snow of the cold season fell in southwestern North Dakota this month.

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NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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October 2026

After a wet September, there were some concerns about conditions being too wet for the upcoming harvest. Those concerns ended quickly as October started and finished with warmer than average temperatures, and remained dry. Much of the state recorded well below average rain during the month, with the northwestern part of the state being a noticeable exception (FIGURE 1). The dry conditions brought along with it above average temperatures – all North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) stations recorded a warmer than average October – and a lot of sunshine. October will likely be remembered for the mild and sunny conditions across much of the region, meaning Harvest 2026 went about as smooth as you can expect on the Northern Plains.

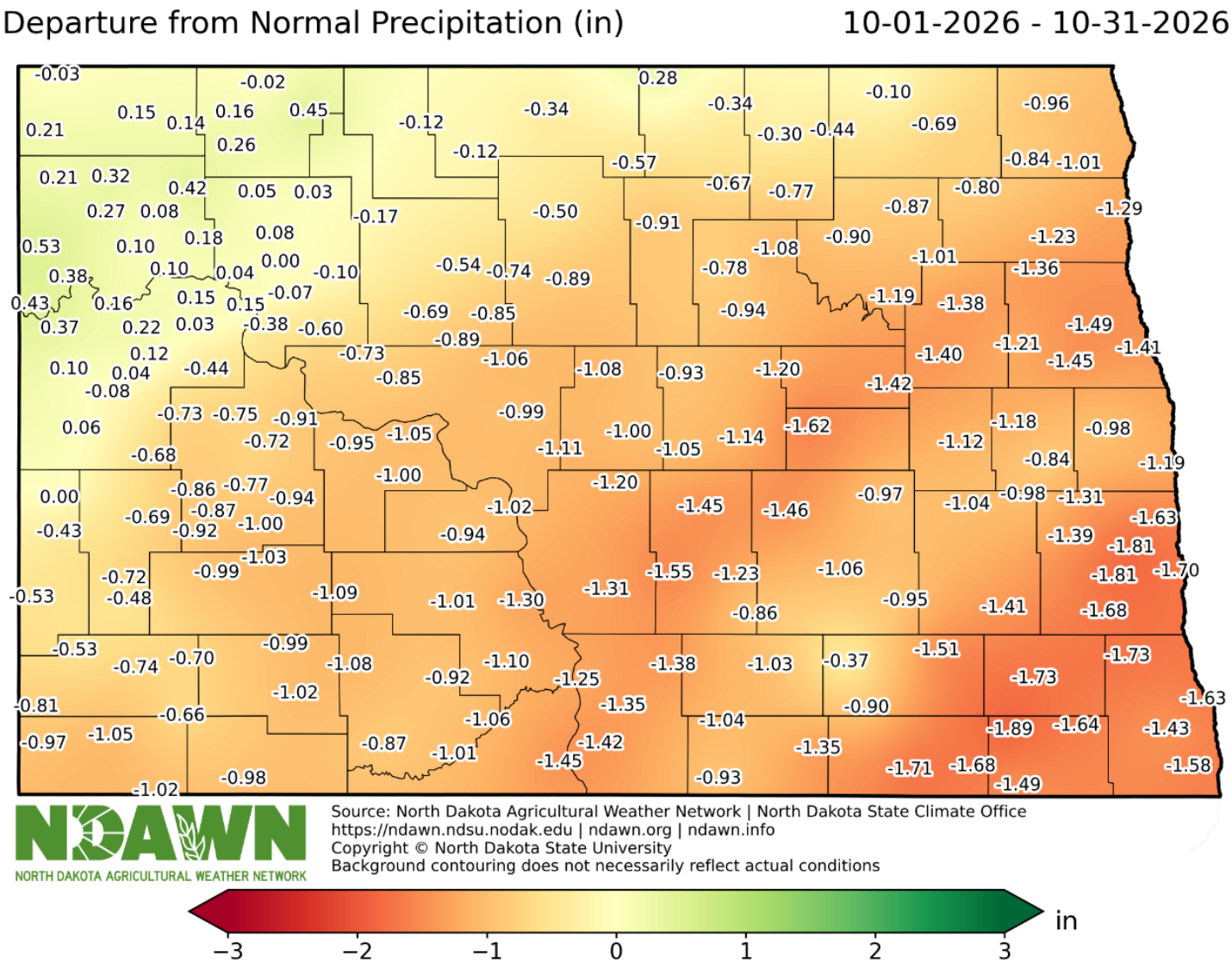


Figure 1: Departure from Normal Precipitation measured at NDAWN stations during October 2026

Precipitation Summary

October 2026 Statewide Average Precipitation: 0.65”

Percent of Normal Statewide Precipitation: 43%

After a wet September, conditions quickly turned dry again in October. The exception was in northwestern North Dakota, where rain was plentiful and added beneficial water to the soils. Yet, the rest of the state was quite dry, with central and eastern North Dakota recording less than one-third of normal precipitation (FIGURE 2).

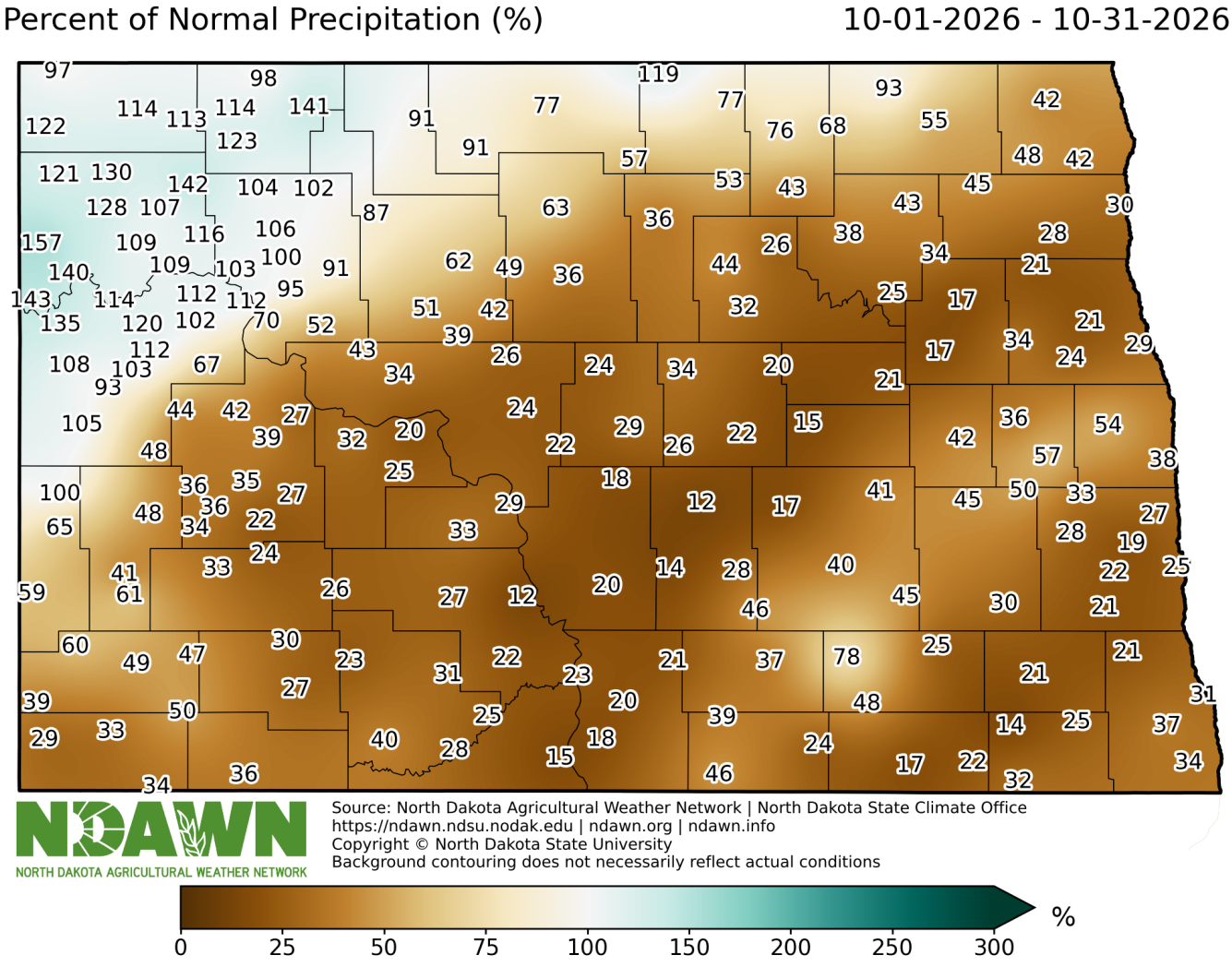


Figure 2: Percent of Normal Precipitation measured at NDAWN stations in October 2026

Precipitation

The maximum monthly precipitation recorded by NDAWN in North Dakota during the month of October was 1.78” at the Peace Garden station in northern Rolette County, 119% of normal (FIGURE 3). The minimum monthly precipitation was in Morton County at the Mandan 4S station with 0.17” of precipitation, 12% of normal.

October is the last month that averages over an inch of precipitation statewide until April.

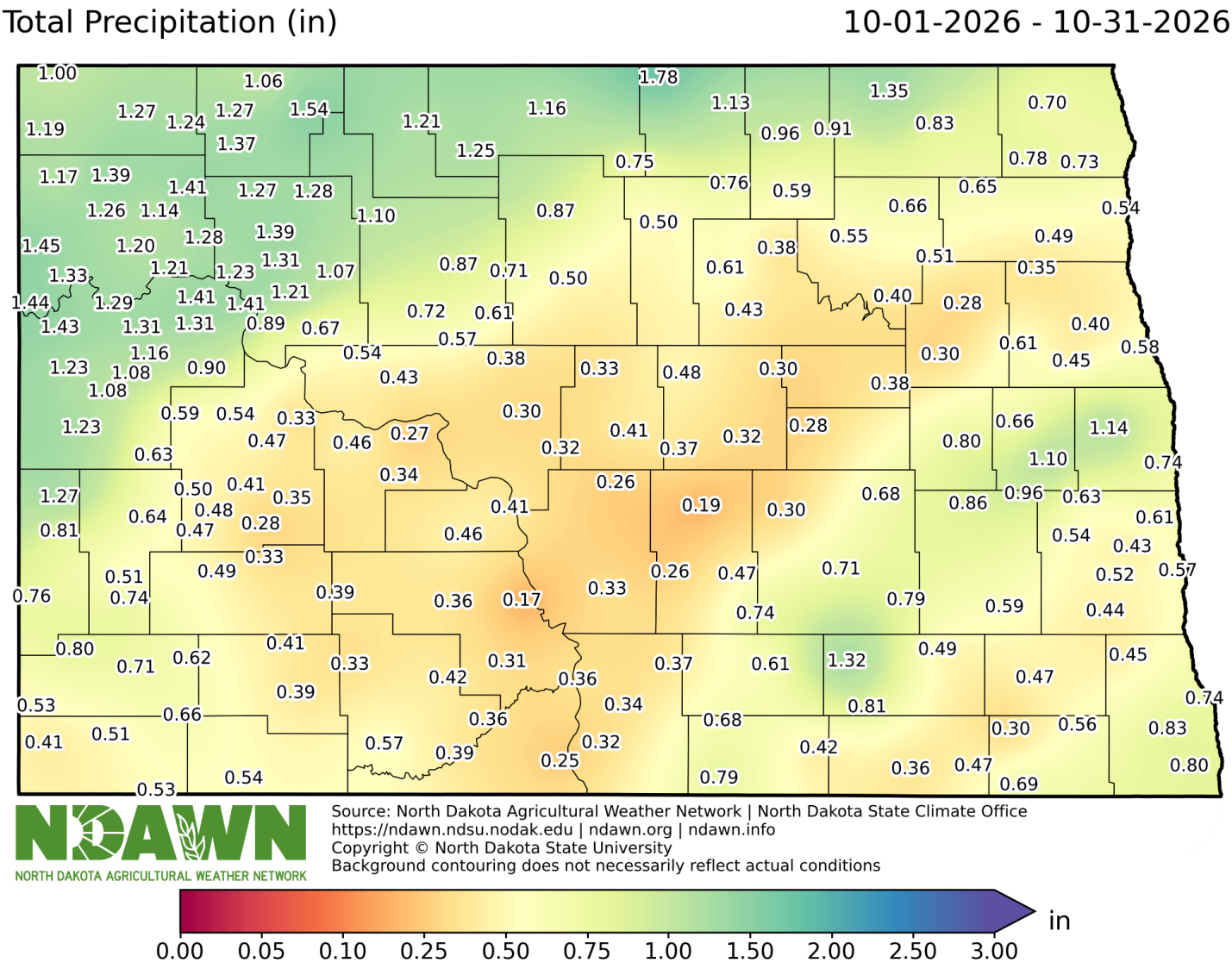


Figure 3: Total Precipitation measured at NDAWN stations in October 2026

Long-Term Precipitation Summary

Limited precipitation in the month of October kept improvements to the drought monitor small (FIGURE 4). A glimmer of hope for soils to moisten before freeze up lies in the first week of November, where a widespread soaking rain is forecasted to traverse the state.

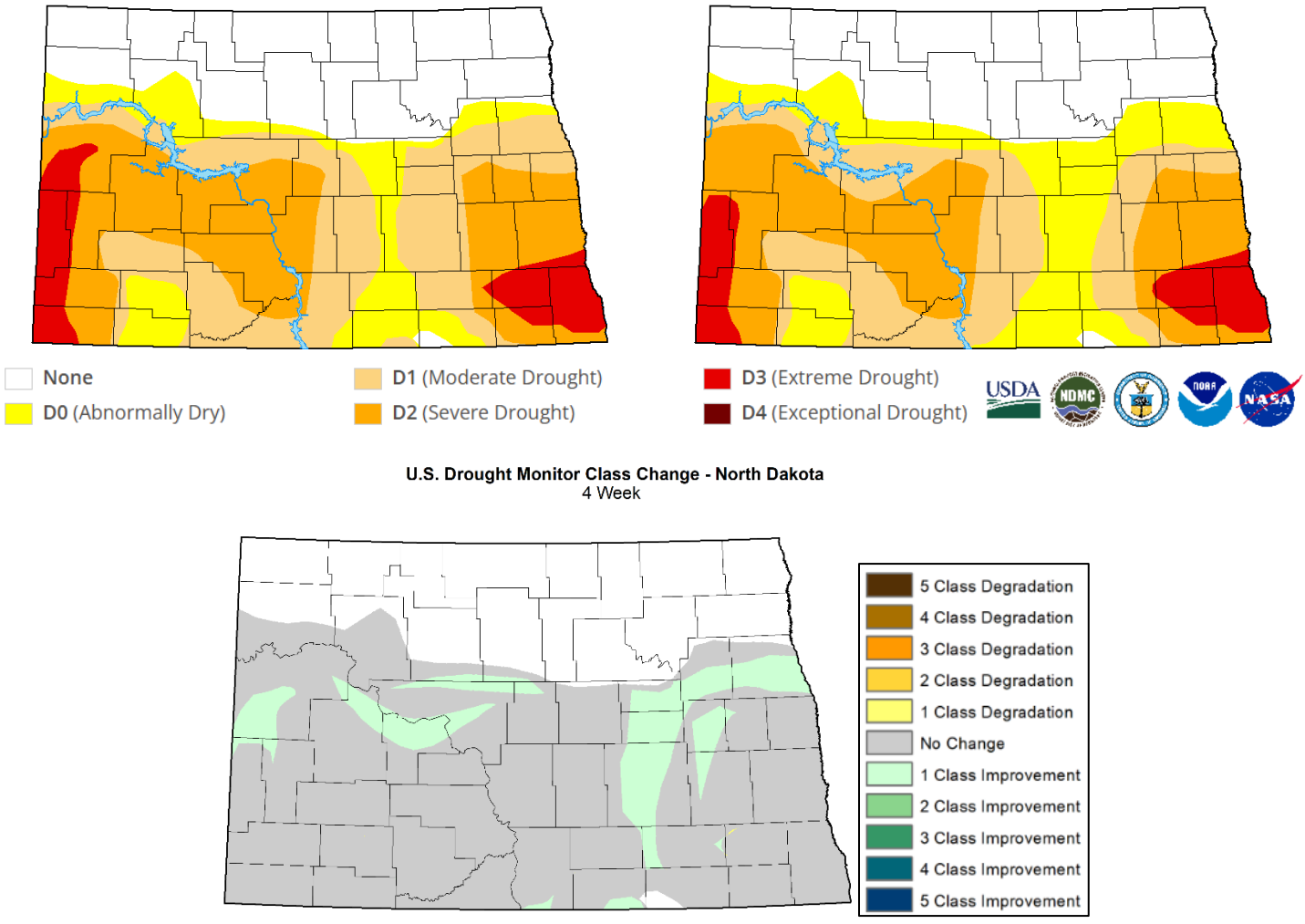


Figure 4: U.S. Drought Monitor conditions September 29 (top left), October 27 (top right), and Class Change (bottom)

Table 1: Categorical Percent Area and Overall Change in the U.S. Drought Monitor Throughout October

Week	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
2026-09-29	28.79	12.76	24.95	25.97	7.54	0.00
2026-10-27	28.79	18.73	21.47	24.62	6.40	0.00
Change	0.00	+5.97	-3.48	-1.35	-1.14	0.00

Source: U.S. Drought Monitor

Temperature Summary

October 2026 Statewide Average Temperature: 47.4°F

Departure from Normal Statewide Temperature: 4.1°F above normal

Although not as warm as the past two Octobers, this October was one of the warmest on record for North Dakota. All NDAWN stations were above average for the month (FIGURE 5), with a statewide average of 4.1°F above the current 30-year normal, which is the 19th largest anomaly on record.

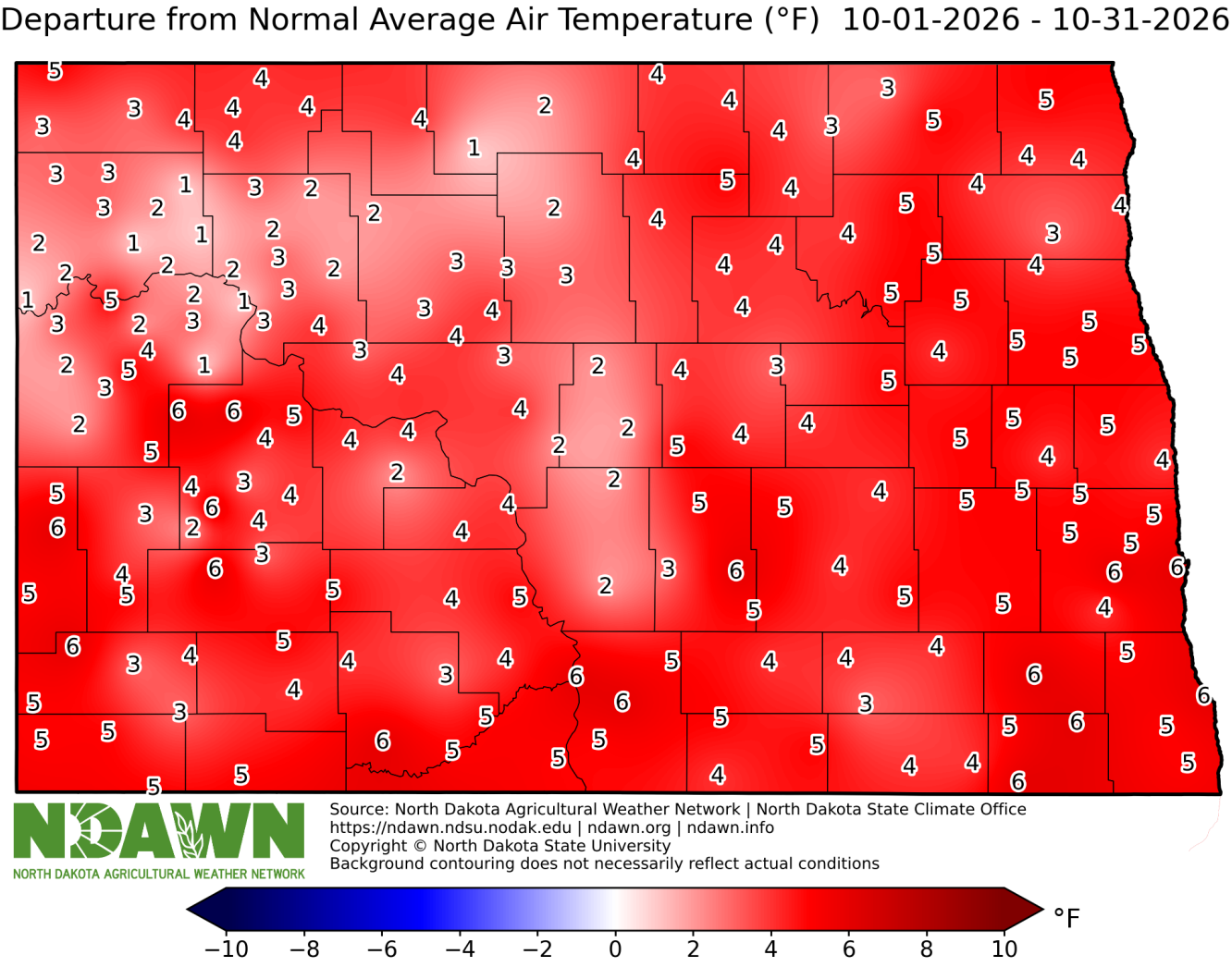


Figure 5: Departure from Normal Average Air Temperature measured at NDAWN stations during October 2026

Temperature

The highest temperature recorded during October at NDAWN stations in North Dakota was 92.7°F at Sonora 1E NDAWN in Richland County on October 10 (FIGURE 6). In contrast, Battleview 8NE NDAWN in Burke County recorded the lowest daily maximum temperature with 34.5°F on October 27.

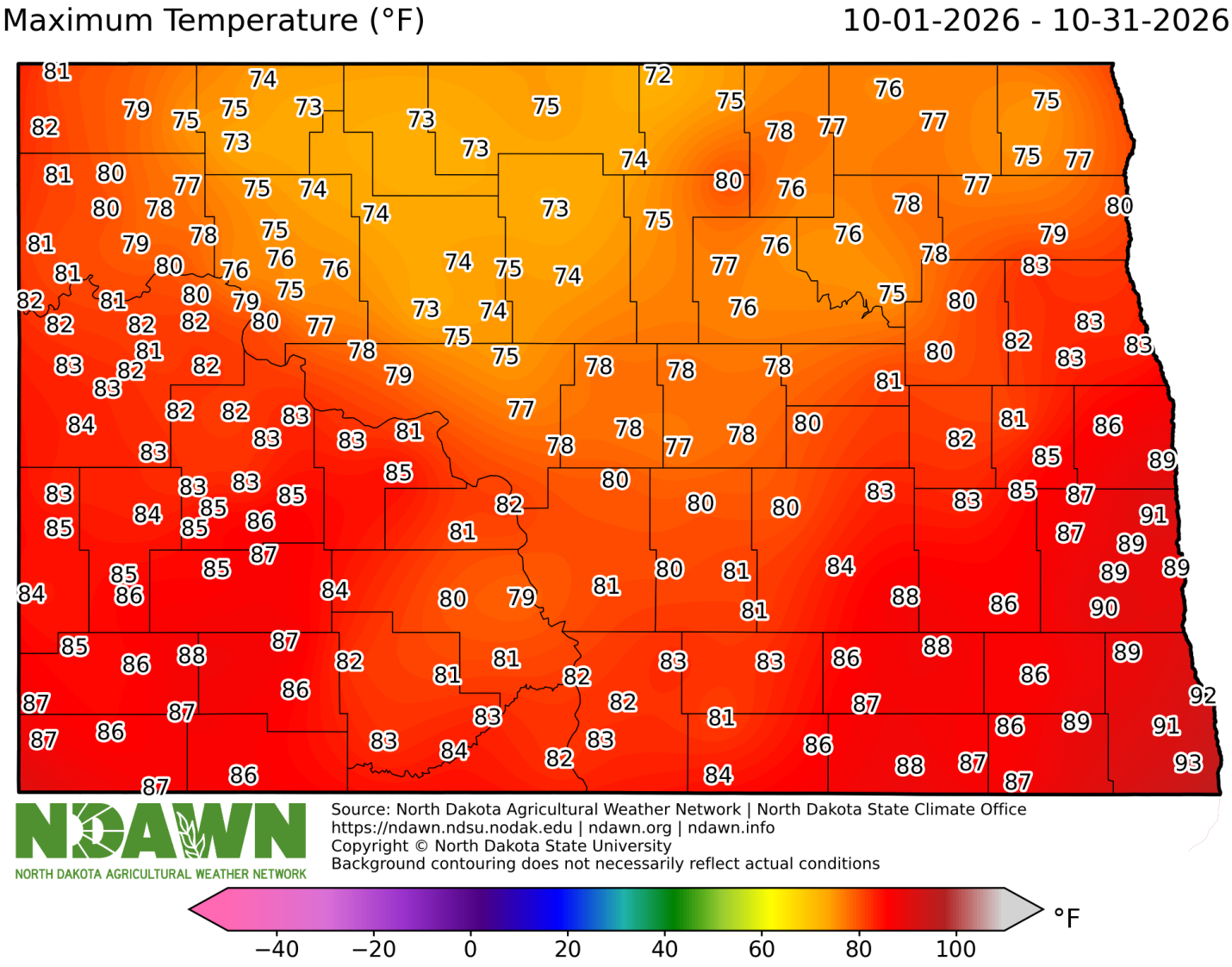


Figure 6: Maximum Air Temperature measured at NDAWN stations in October 2026

The average maximum air temperature for North Dakota for October was 59.6°F, which is 4.9°F above normal (FIGURE 10).

Temperature

The lowest temperature recorded during October at NDAWN stations in North Dakota was 14.2°F on October 26 at Clyde 4SW NDAWN in Cavalier County (FIGURE 7). All North Dakotan NDAWN stations recorded a freeze this month.

The highest daily minimum air temperature was recorded at Fargo NW NDAWN in Cass County on October 23 with a low of 60.5°F, setting a new daily record.

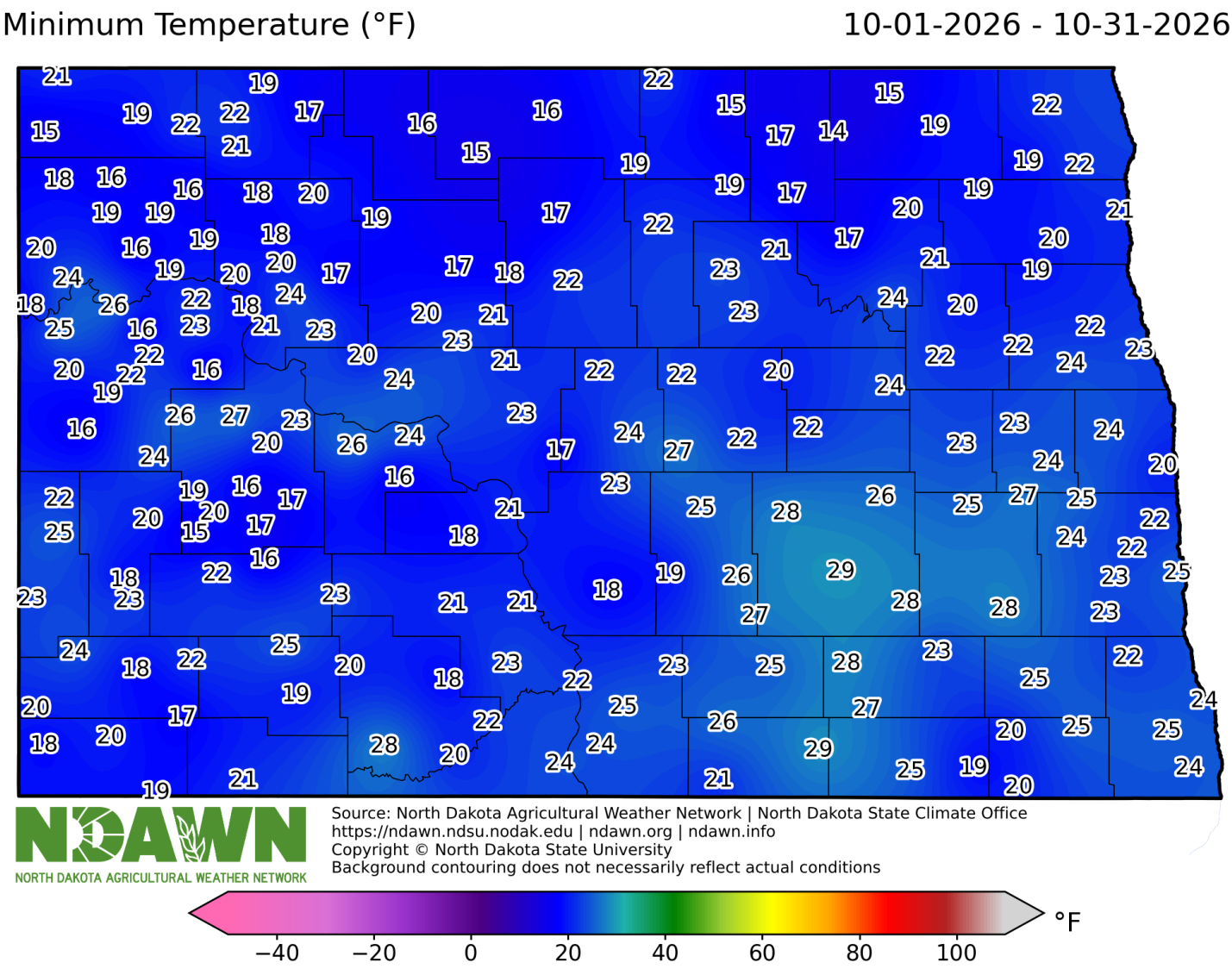


Figure 7: Minimum Air Temperature measured at NDAWN stations in October 2026

The statewide average minimum air temperature was 35.3°F, which is 3.3°F above normal (FIGURE 11).

North Dakota October 2026 Overview

Table 2: October Precipitation & Temperature Summary for North Dakota

	Total	Normal	Anomaly	Rank	Record
Precipitation	0.65”	1.50”	-0.85”	87th Wettest	4.61” (1982)
				46th Driest	0.09” (1952)

	Average T	Avg Max T	Avg Min T	Maximum	Minimum
Temperature	47.4°F	59.6°F	35.3°F	92.7°F	14.2°F
Anomaly	+4.1°F	+4.9°F	+3.3°F		
Rank					
Warmest	24th Warmest	T-29th Warmest	16th Warmest		
Coolest	109th Coolest	T-103rd Coolest	117th Coolest		
Record					
Warmest	54.8°F (1963)	69.4°F (1963)	40.2°F (1963)	98°F (Dunn Center, 2011)	-18°F (Zap, 1919)
Coolest	32.6°F (1925)	41.4°F (1925)	21.2°F (1919)		

Source: NDAWN (2024-2026), NWS Climate Data (1895-2026) (NOAA)

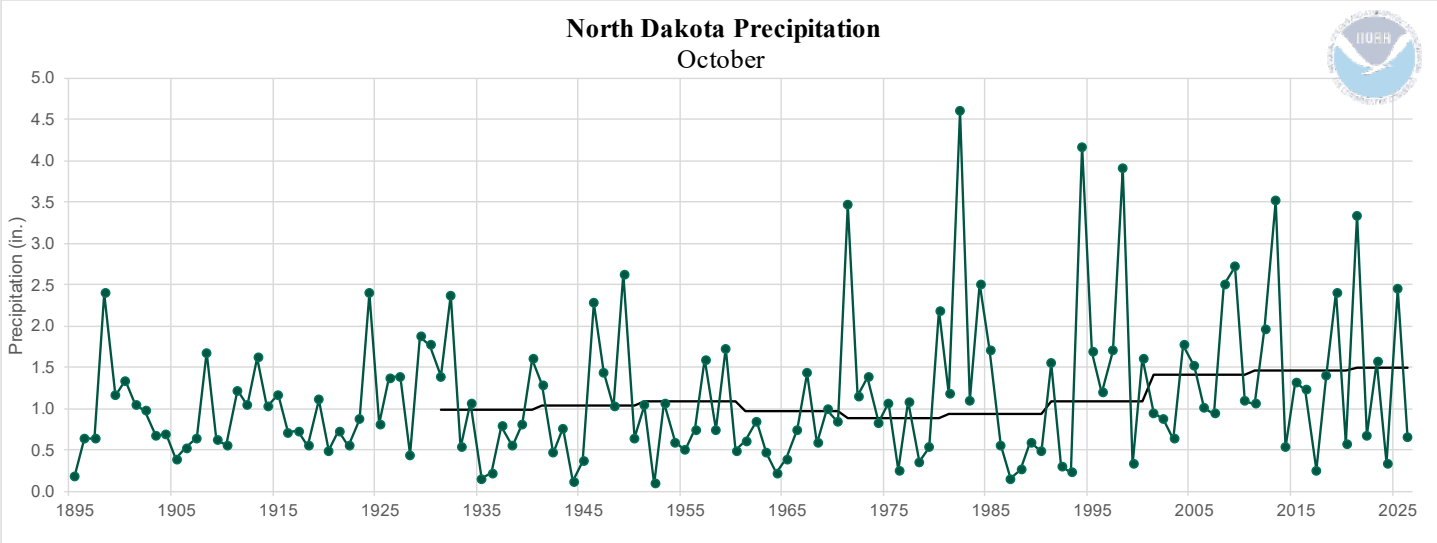
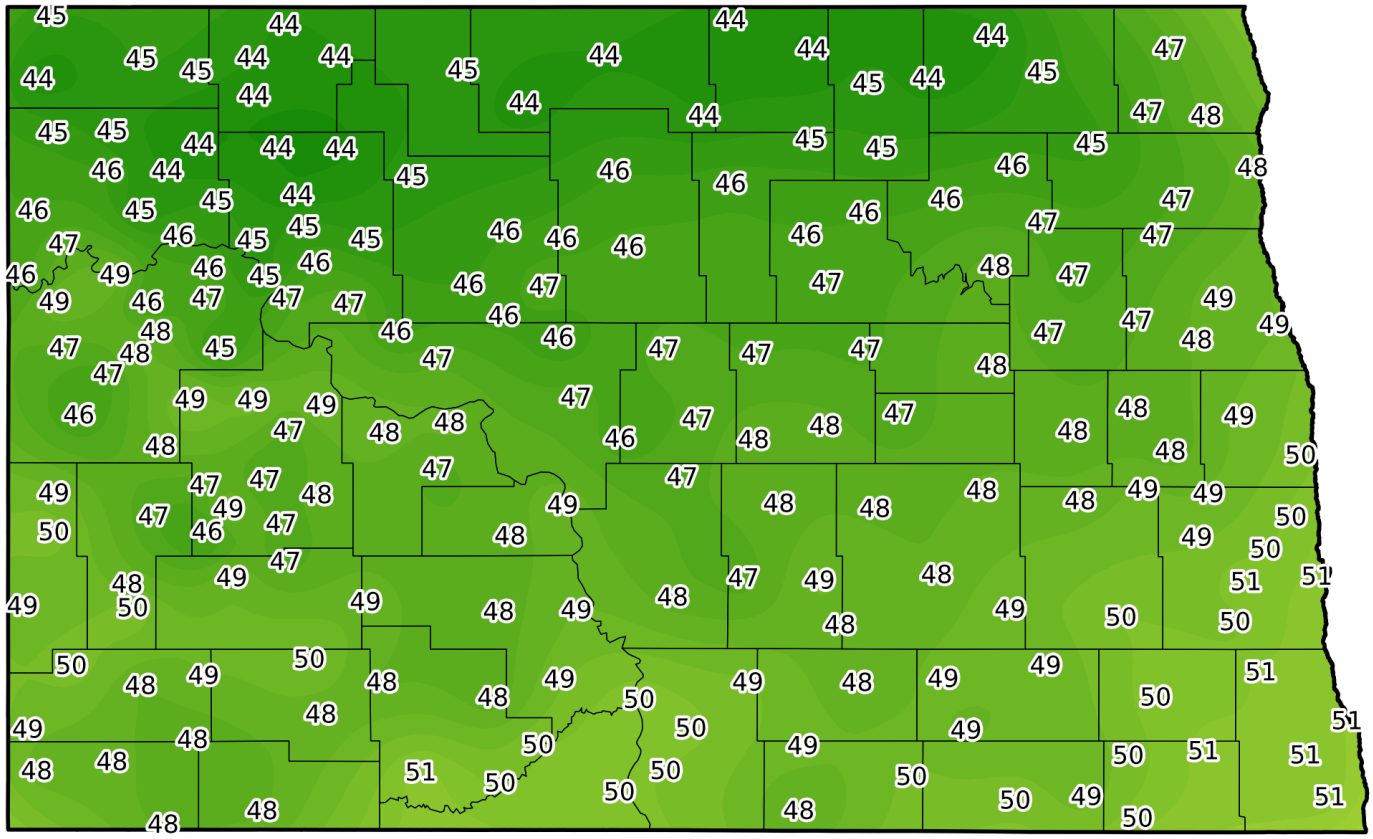


Figure 8: Statewide average precipitation for North Dakota for October by year (green line, 1895-2026) and the applicable 30-year normal (black line, 1931-2020) (NOAA)

Average Air Temperature (°F) 10-01-2026 - 10-31-2026



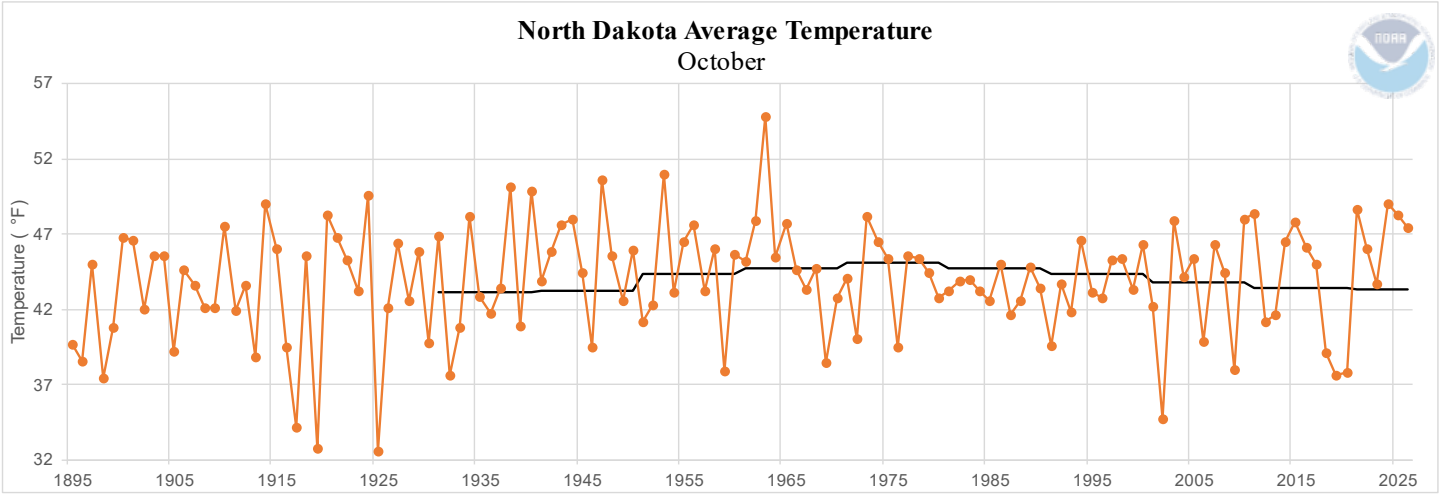
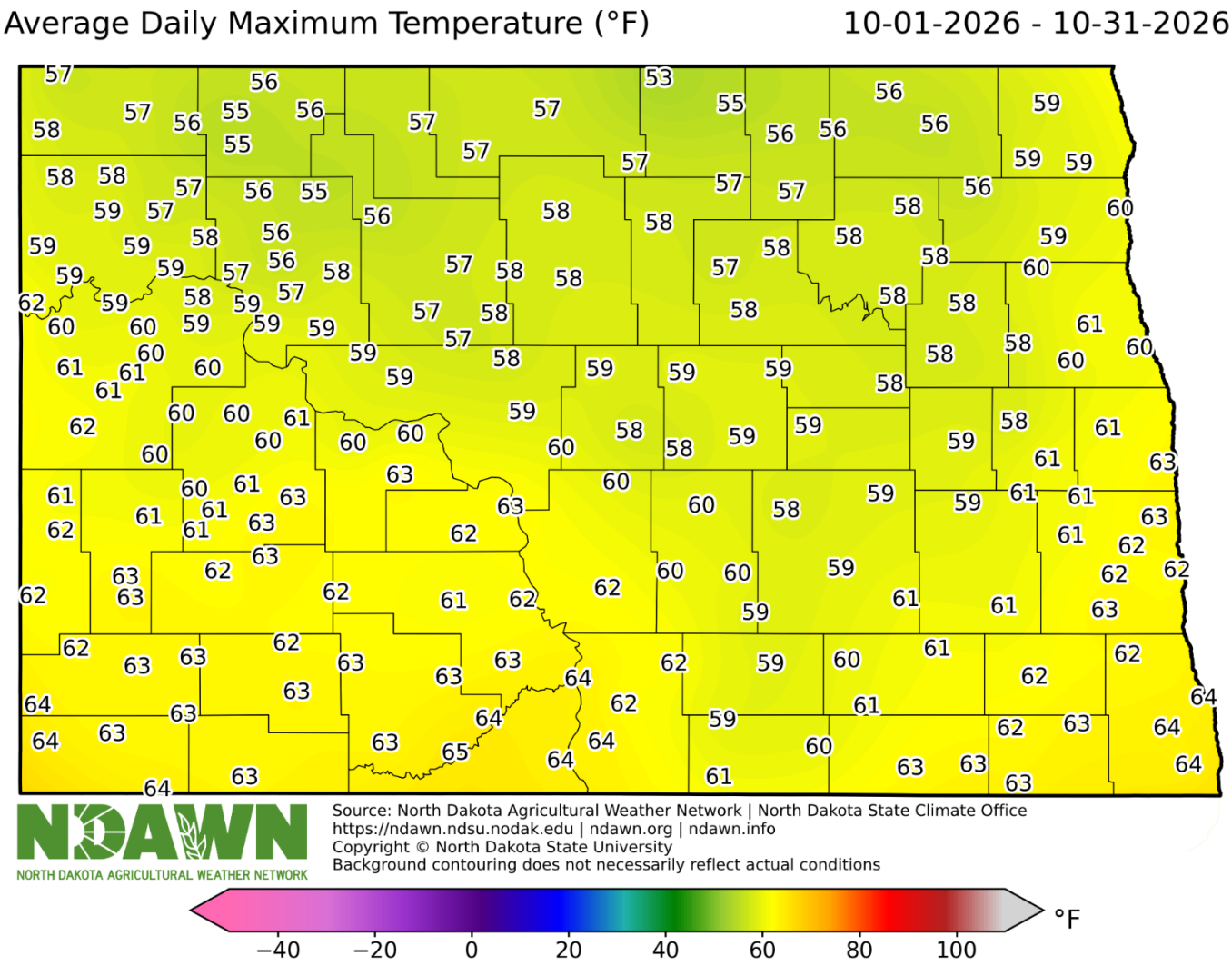


Figure 9: Average Air Temperature for October at NDAWN stations (top) and statewide average temperature for North Dakota for October by year (orange line, 1895-2026) and the applicable 30-year normal (black line, 1931-2020) (NOAA) (bottom)



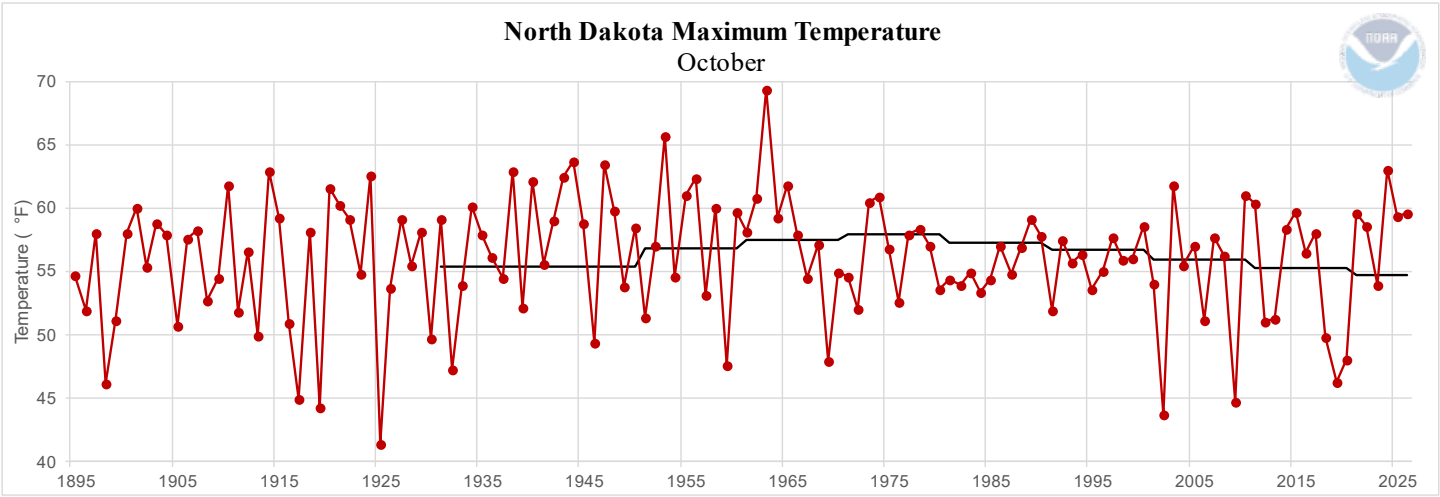
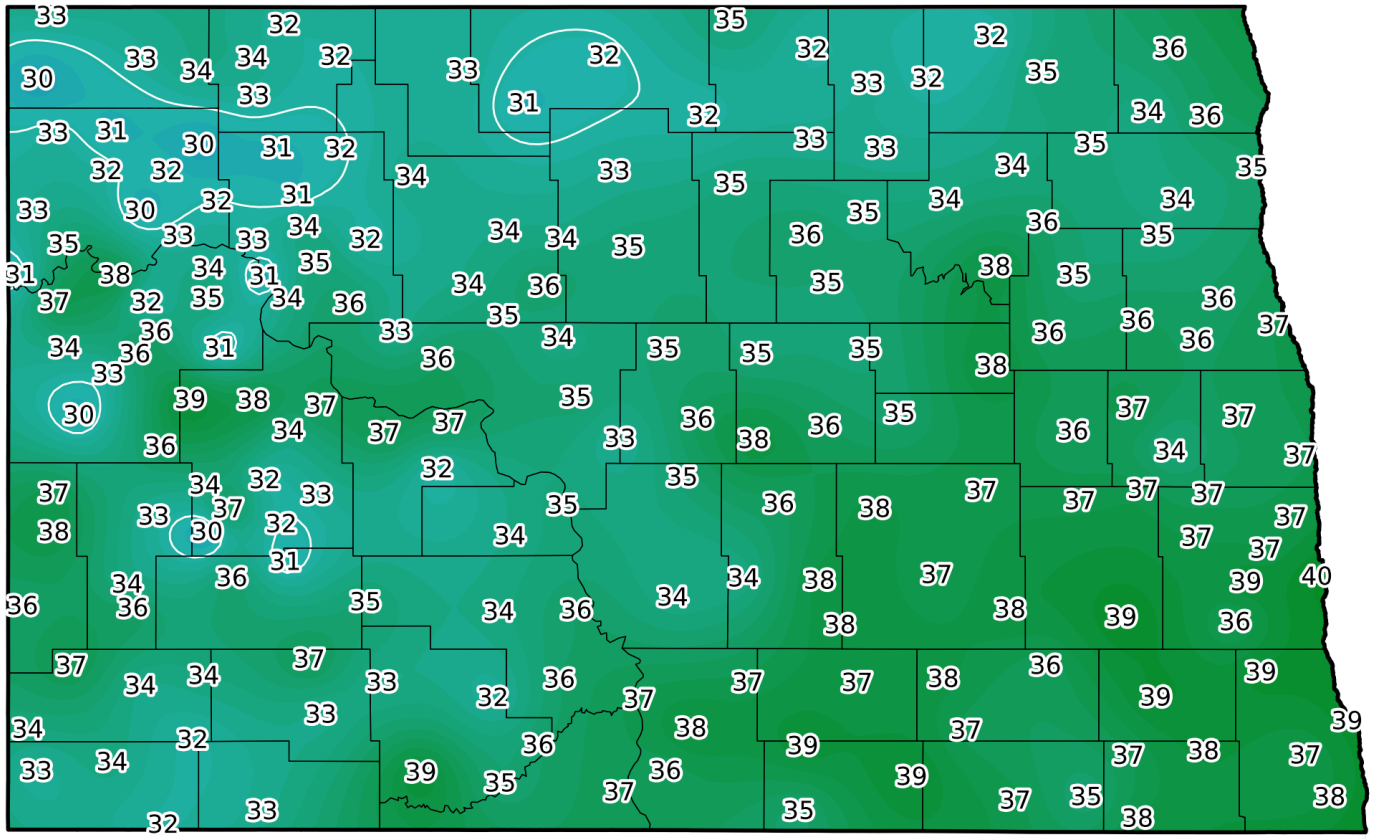


Figure 10: Average Maximum Air Temperature for October at NDAWN stations (top) and statewide average maximum temperature for North Dakota for October by year (red line, 1895-2026) and the applicable 30-year normal (black line, 1931-2020) (NOAA) (bottom)

Average Daily Minimum Temperature (°F) 10-01-2026 - 10-31-2026



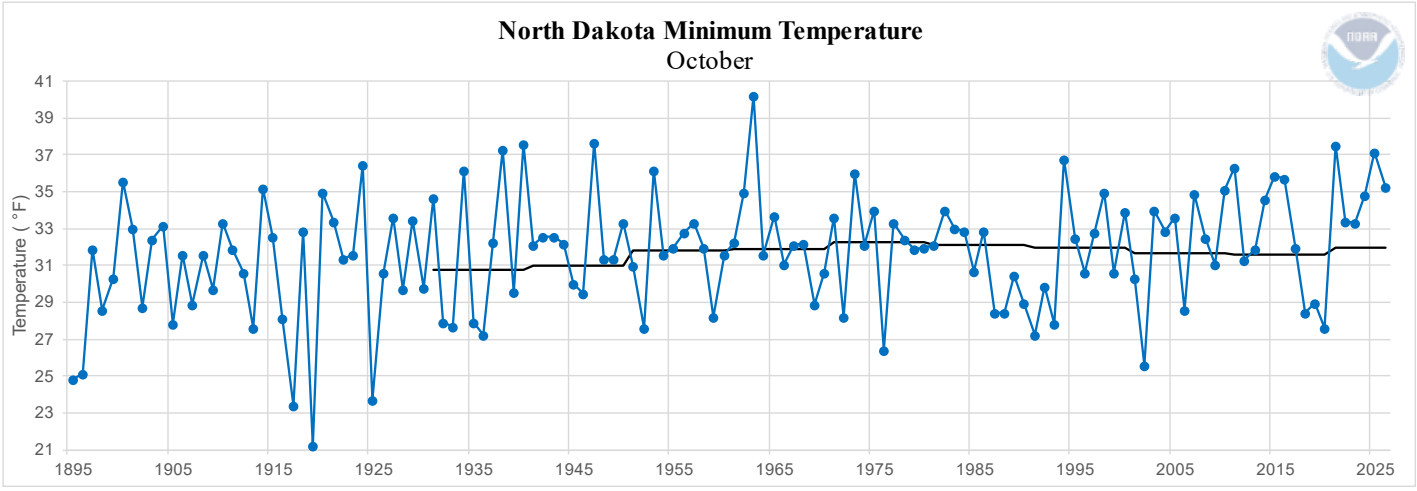


Figure 11: Average Minimum Air Temperature for October at NDAWN stations (top) and statewide average minimum temperature for North Dakota for October by year (blue line, 1895-2026) and the applicable 30-year normal (black line, 1931-2020) (NOAA) (bottom)

October 2026 City Overview

Table 3: October Precipitation & Temperature Summary for North Dakota Long-Term Climate Sites

	Total // Average	Normal	Anomaly	Rank	Record
Bismarck					
Precipitation	0.06”	1.42”	-1.36”	148th Wettest	4.73” (2013)
				5th Driest	0.01” (1889, 1935)
Temperature	49.4°F	44.9°F	+4.5°F	T-20th Warmest	54.9°F (1963)
				T-132nd Coolest	34.5°F (1925)
Fargo					
Precipitation	0.54”	2.16”	-1.62”	116th Wettest	7.03” (1982)
				31st Driest	0.05” (1986)
Temperature	51.4°F	45.7°F	+5.7°F	13th Warmest	57.2°F (1963)
				134th Coolest	34.6°F (1925)
Grand Forks					
Precipitation	0.54”	1.99”	-1.45”	101st Wettest	5.83” (1998)
				33rd Driest	0.03” (1992)
Temperature	49.5°F	44.2°F	+5.3°F	14th Warmest	67.2°F (2024)
				120th Coolest	32.8°F (1919)
Williston					
Precipitation	1.29”	0.95”	+0.34”	T-27th Wettest	3.56” (1971)
				T-93rd Driest	0.01” (1934, 1944, 1963, 1965)
Temperature	46.7°F	43.1°F	+3.6°F	T-34th Warmest	55.0°F (1963)
				T-83rd Coolest	32.1°F (1919)

Source: NWS Climate Data (Bismarck 1875-2026; Fargo 1881-2026; Grand Forks 1893-2026; Williston 1907-2026) (NOAA)

Monthly Outlook for November 2026

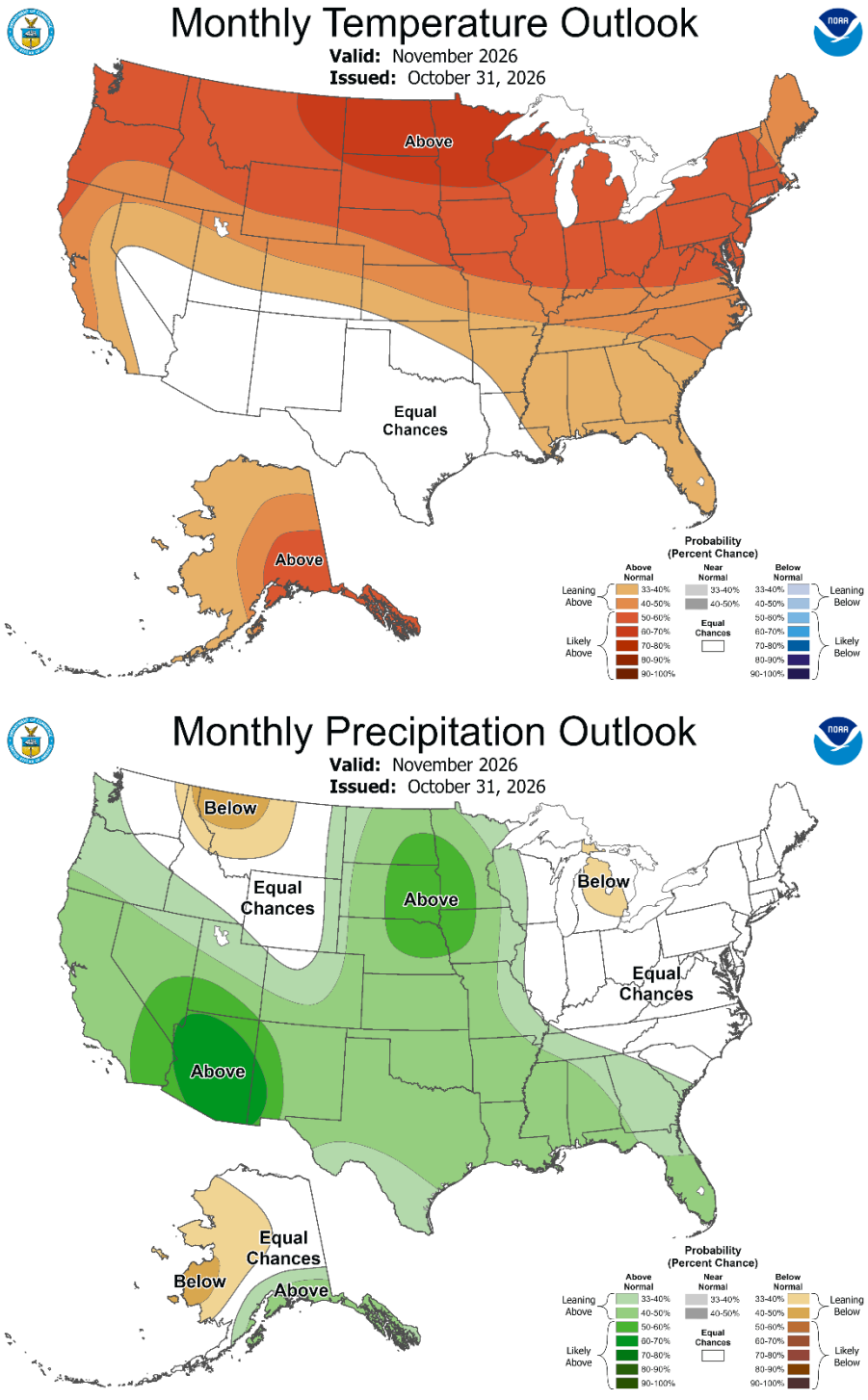


Figure 12: Temperature (top) and Precipitation (bottom) Probabilistic Outlook for November 2026 (CPC)

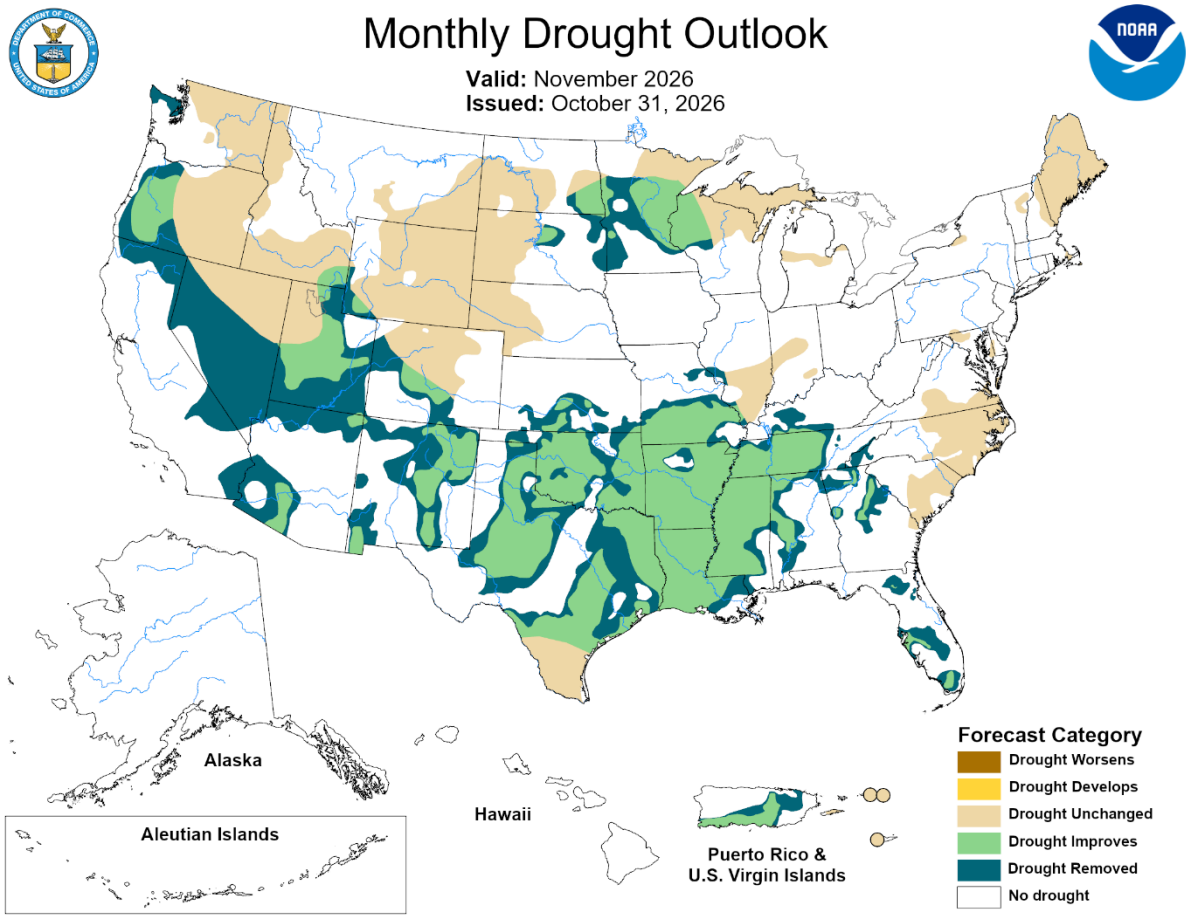


Figure 13: Drought Tendency Outlook for November 2026 (CPC)

Detailed monthly summaries and the full archive can be found at ndsu.edu/ndsco.

NDAWN monthly, seasonal, and annual climate statistic maps can be found at ndawn.info/climate_statistics.

Sources

North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN)

National Weather Service (NWS)

U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Climate Prediction Center (CPC)

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