

# Montana Drought Status by County - December, 2008

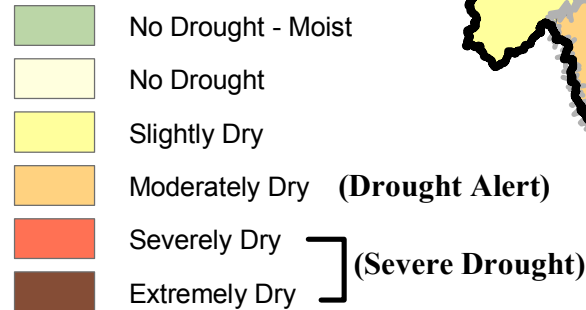
## Map Key

 Continental Divide

 Drought Impact Type

## Drought Status

December 2008



**Drought Impact Types - A** = Agricultural - Soil Moisture, Range conditions

**H** = Hydrological - Water Supplies, Streamflow, Groundwater

**Drought Alert** - Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages local officials to convene local drought committees.

**Severe Drought** - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.

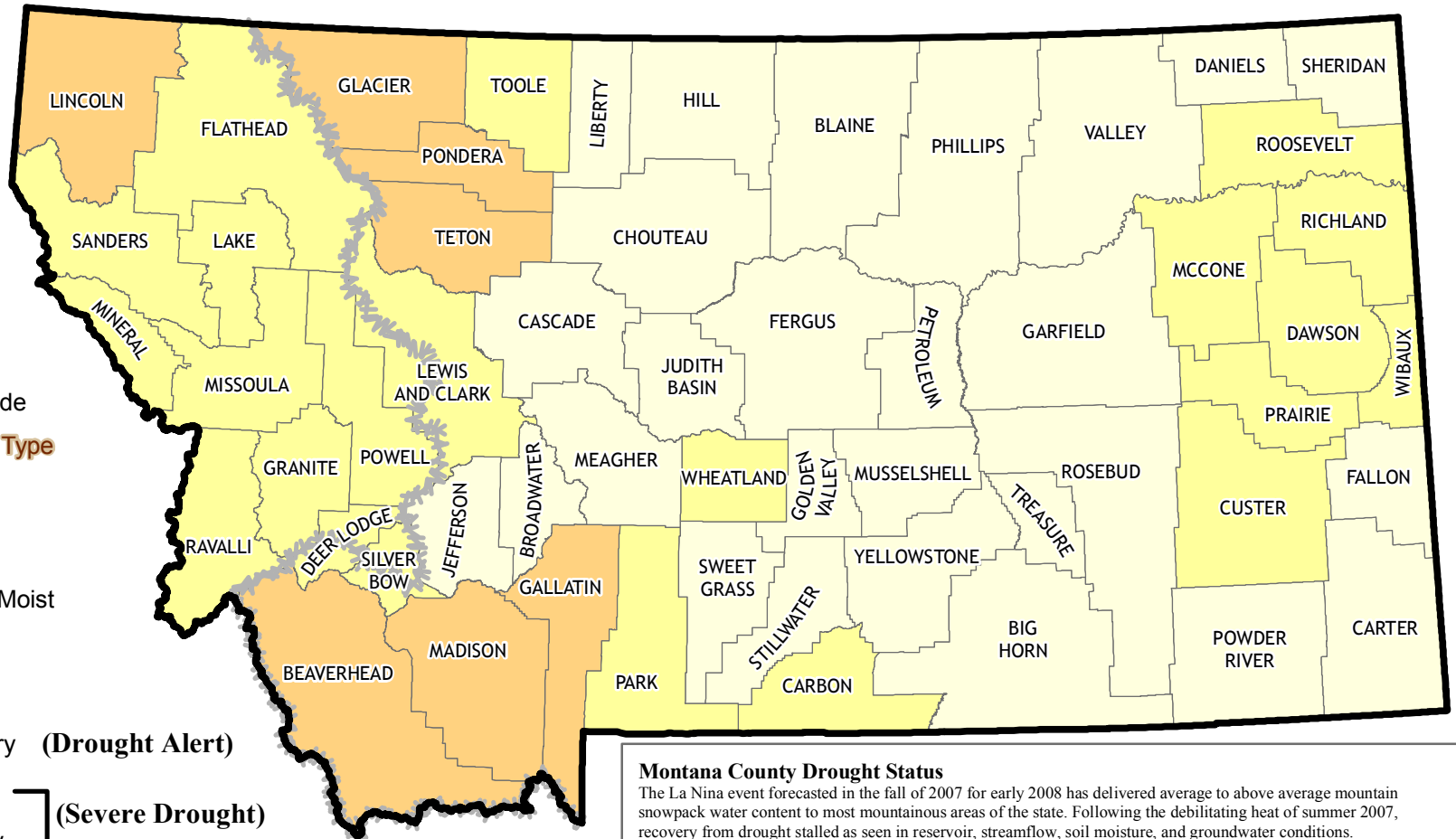
For recommended responses, see the Montana Drought Plan.



<http://nris.mt.gov/drought/>



<http://drought.mt.gov/>



## Montana County Drought Status

The La Nina event forecasted in the fall of 2007 for early 2008 has delivered average to above average mountain snowpack water content to most mountainous areas of the state. Following the debilitating heat of summer 2007, recovery from drought stalled as seen in reservoir, streamflow, soil moisture, and groundwater conditions. The plains areas of the state remain essentially where they were at the end of the 2007 growing season - dry with little snow cover. The period from December through March brings only about two to three inches in a normal year to plains and valley elevations and spring storms will be important to recovery in these areas. But the water supply outlook looks very favorable as of mid-February for surface water dependent valleys on both sides of the Continental Divide as the mountains reach the two-third mark of the snow water accumulation period for the water year. The concern at this time is whether the state will experience an early snowmelt of mountain snowpack, as in 2007, or a normal runoff period from mid-May through June.

The Governor's Drought Advisory Committee assesses water supply and moisture conditions on a monthly basis to determine drought status for each county of the state. The drought status map is used primarily to promote awareness of drought and to alert Montanans to impending drought conditions so they may respond appropriately.

**Drought Alert:** Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages watershed groups and county drought committees to convene and undertake planning for drought.

**Severe Drought:** Local officials should have local drought planning underway or should convene local drought planning at the earliest opportunity.

For information about how the drought status maps are determined or to learn more about recommended responses to drought see the Montana Drought Response Plan. (<http://nris.state.mt.us/drought/committee/DroughtP07.pdf>)