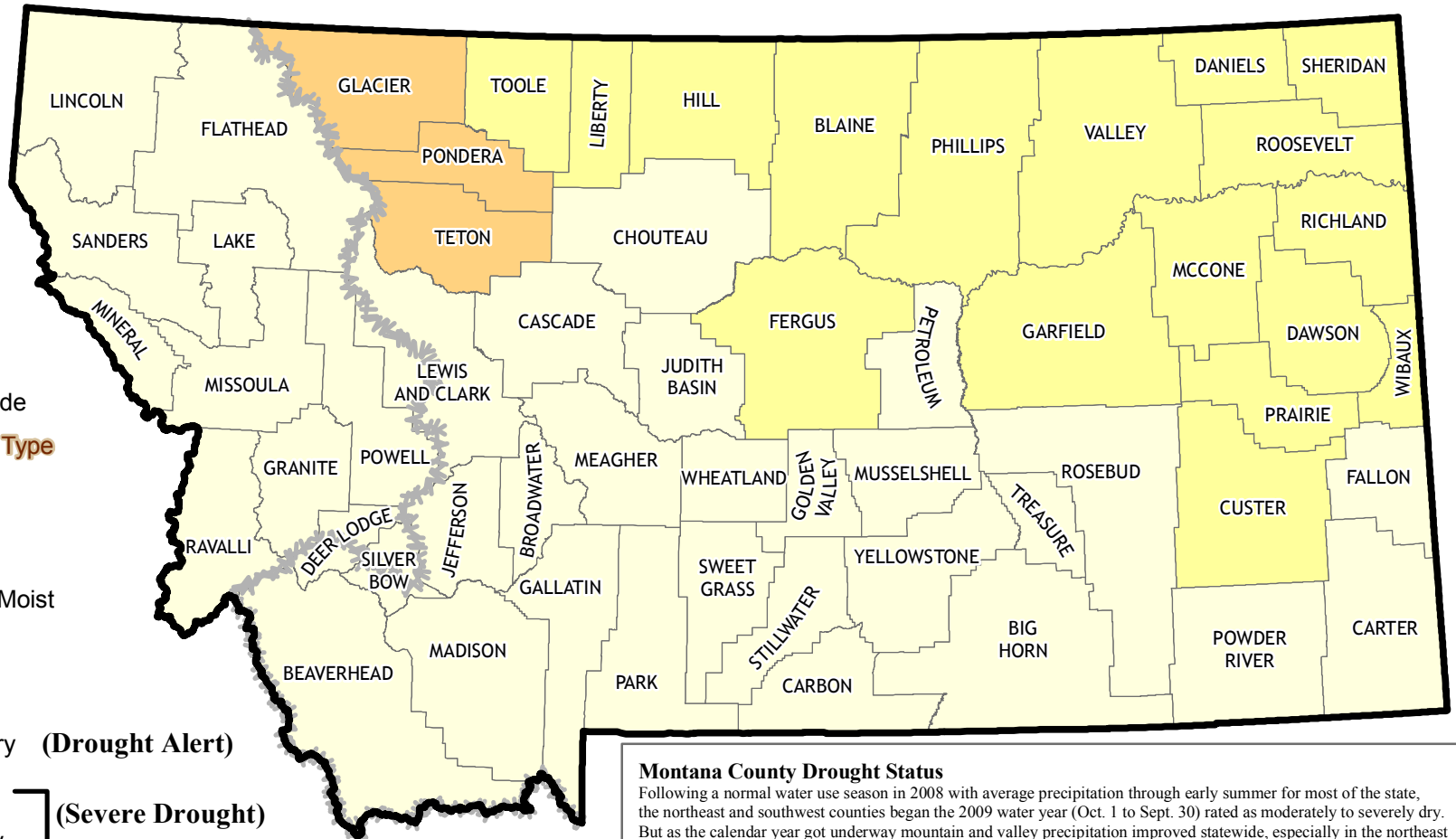


Montana Drought Status by County - April, 2009



Map Key

Continental Divide
 Drought Impact Type

Drought Status

April 2009

- No Drought - Moist
 - No Drought
 - Slightly Dry
 - Moderately Dry (Drought Alert)
 - Severely Dry
 - Extremely Dry
- (Severe Drought)**

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

Following a normal water use season in 2008 with average precipitation through early summer for most of the state, the northeast and southwest counties began the 2009 water year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30) rated as moderately to severely dry. But as the calendar year got underway mountain and valley precipitation improved statewide, especially in the northeast counties. By April, all of the counties west of the Divide were ranked as No Drought. However, east of the Divide, snowpack was down 20 percent along the Northern Rocky Mountain Front and soil moisture low for the Hi-Line counties from below average precipitation.

At its April 16 meeting, the Drought Advisory Committee heard that both state and federal reservoirs should fill with no shortfalls for water users anticipated due to good carryover storage from 2008 and average runoff expected from the mountain snowpack. The outlook for dryland farming and livestock grazing is good at this time especially across the southern tier of the state and throughout the central region east of the Divide. The NRCS April 1, 2009 Surface Water Supply Index shows all but four of the state's 52 river basins as Slightly Wet to Average.

The April 6, 2009 El Niño / Southern Oscillation (ENSO) status discussion from the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) concludes that the La Niña (cool phase) dating to early 2008 continues to weaken with neutral ENSO conditions expected to continue through the remainder of 2009. A neutral ENSO generally means normal climate conditions for Montana. Climate forecasts from CPC for the period May through July are calling for normal temperatures and a slightly elevated probability (40%) of less than average precipitation for Montana.

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>)