

RAIN HELPS SOME BUT DROUGHT FAR FROM OVER

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Sunday's rainfall amounted to nearly two inches across parts of southeastern Oklahoma. While that may put a short-term dent in the immediate drought problems, the long-term picture still needs much improvement. The 1.90" of rain recorded at the Idabel Mesonet site was more than the previous three months combined – a meager total of only 1.45". Sunday's rainfall at many other sites across McCurtain, Choctaw, Bryan, Atoka, Pushmataha, and LeFlore Counties similarly rivaled their previous 3-month totals.

While wildfires have captured our attention across much of the state, southeastern Oklahoma has been unusually dry for a much longer time. In fact, climate statistics show that drought impacts can be found dating back to 2002. The 2005 precipitation total for the southeast region was the driest in the nation when compared to normal rainfall. For residents of southeast Oklahoma, drought is not just a heightened danger of wildfires – it is all the attendant water supply problems of low lake levels, dry streams, parched soils, and withering pastures.

The U.S. Drought Monitor, a weekly depiction of drought conditions across the country, puts the area in its D4 category – the most severe drought category they use. While the rains may provide some temporary relief, don't look for the drought to budge much in the coming weeks. The Climate Prediction Center calls for some improvement through early April, but considering how far the region has to go, the drought will not go away anytime soon.

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Attachments:

Rainfall comparison table
Drought Monitor Map
Drought Outlook Map

Mesonet Station	County	Jan 22 rainfall	Oct 24 – Jan 21 rainfall
Antlers	Pushmataha	1.34	2.21
Broken Bow	McCurtain	2.02	2.07
Clayton	Pushmataha	1.19	3.47
Cloudy	Pushmataha	1.29	2.39
Durant	Bryan	1.37	1.56
Hugo	Choctaw	1.28	1.99
Idabel	McCurtain	1.90	1.45
Lane	Atoka	1.35	1.69
Mount Herman	McCurtain	1.50	2.67
Talihina	Leflore	1.24	4.54
Wister	Leflore	1.15	3.49