

Southwest Area Monthly Outlook

February 2013



WEATHER FACTORS AND OUTLOOK:

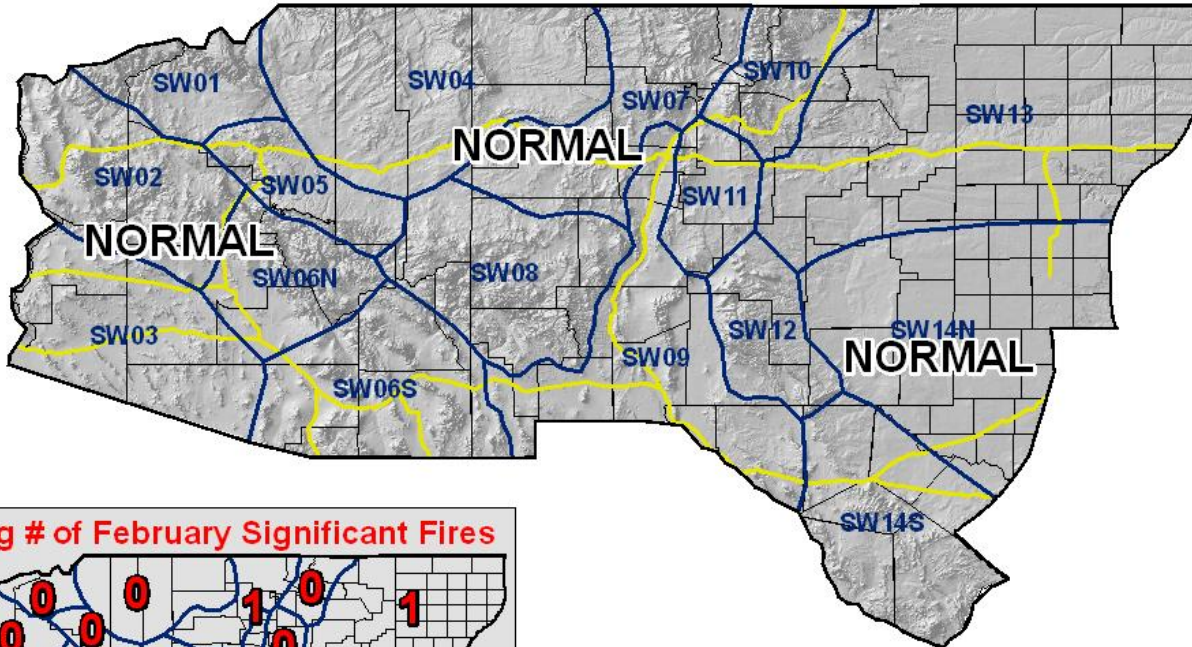
Drought Conditions: As of January 29th, the U.S. Drought Monitor indicated severe to extreme drought across nearly all of New Mexico and west Texas except for much of the Trans Pecos region down towards Big Bend where Abnormally dry to no drought conditions exist. Most of Arizona has moderate to severe drought although a few small pockets of extreme drought exist across both south-central and northeastern sections and only Abnormally dry conditions exist across the lower CO river valley region. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook released January 17th predicts persisting drought nearly area-wide through March of 2013 with development expected across far southeastern New Mexico into southwest Texas.

Precipitation Anomalies and Outlook: Monthly precipitation through nearly all of January was near to Above average across much of central/western/and northeastern Arizona with southeastern sections of the state drier than average. Above average precipitation was found across both northwestern and far southeastern New Mexico with below average readings in between. The latest CPC climate outlook for February depicts a focus for Above Normal precipitation across the northern half of Arizona into far northwestern New Mexico with much of Arizona and the northwestern 1/3 of New Mexico in the Above average area. Southwest Area Predictive Services doesn't necessarily disagree with this forecast, but believes that best chances Above Normal precipitation this month will be a just a tad further east from northeastern Arizona eastward across northern New Mexico. Of course, the exact track and intensity of the storms will be pivotal in regards to both the amount of moisture received as well the foci for the highest amounts.

Temperature Anomalies and Outlook: Much of January saw average high temperatures running 2 to 9 degrees Below average across most of region. The warmest temperatures relative to normal were across the far eastern plains where readings rose to between 1-3 degrees Above average. The latest CPC climate outlook for February features an enhanced likelihood of Above Normal temperatures for about the eastern half of the area. Southwest Area Predictive Services also believes the highest likelihood of Above Normal temperatures will be across eastern half or so of the region.

Significant Fire Potential	Normal Fire Potential area-wide. Significant fire activity normally is low to non-existent in February coincident with the normal progression of winter and continued cold minimum temperatures. Overall, an expected on/off active pattern will likely continue over the next few weeks with a few storm systems expected to drop eastward across the region from the west-northwest. This will allow for periods of much colder temperatures and likely bouts of well-needed moisture across parts of the Southwest Area, esp. focused north.
Prescribed Fire Implications	More than likely well-needed stormy periods will create significant challenges for prescribed fire planning and implementation through February. If any activities are planned, an eye towards upcoming and forecast weather conditions in the 3-10 day time frame is pivotal as the jet stream continues to remain strong and active.
Miscellaneous	None.

Monthly Significant Fire Potential Outlook February 2013



Avg # of February Significant Fires



* Based on fire sizes which would require mobilization of additional resources from outside the immediate area (or PSA)

Significant Fire Potential

- Below Normal
- Normal
- Above Normal