

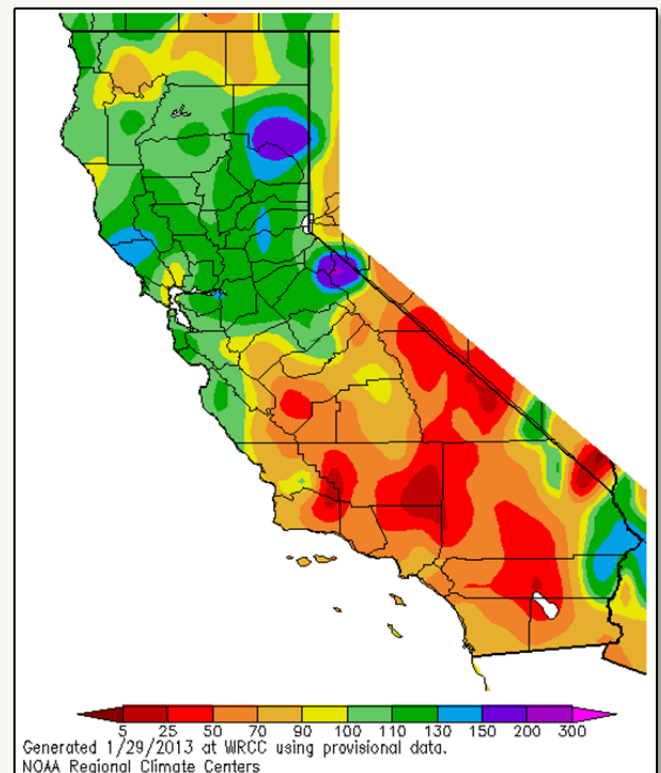
Summary

- *Temperatures Near Normal*
- *Precipitation Near Normal Over Central California, Slightly Below Normal Over Southern California.*
- *Near Normal Large Fire Activity*
- *General Fire Activity Will Increase Over The Lower Elevations By May*

WEATHER DISCUSSION

So far, this winter has been somewhat warmer and drier than usual over most of the district (**See Figure on right**). But storm frequency and intensity has been less than usual over the southern part of the state, particularly areas south of Fresno County. The northern part of the state has fared better, largely due to a series of very wet troughs which moved through the state in December. The precipitation deficit is more pronounced across the inland regions where moist low-level southerly flow has been impeded by terrain.

Much of Southern California has yet to experience a strong-cold core storm system this winter. Often, some of the strongest wintertime storms of the season occur closer to the “shoulder seasons” of November and December and March into April. These storms were notably absent in December (most of the precipitation across the northern half of the state during that time was the result of a series of storms as opposed to one strong storm)



PREDICTIVE SERVICES

MONTHLY/SEASONAL OUTLOOK



FEBRUARY THROUGH MAY 2013

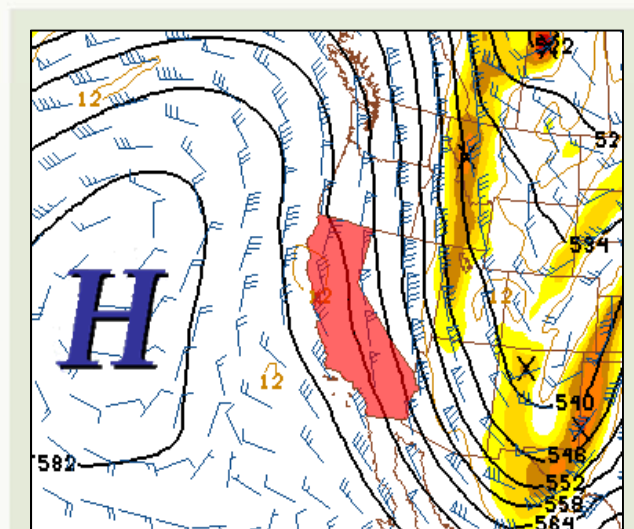
The presence of a strong ridge offshore has largely been responsible for the drier than average weather so far this season. Downstream, over the Central Rockies, a deep trough has often been present. The state has often been between the two features much of the season, resulting in wild fluctuations between much above and much below normal temperatures. Earlier in January, much of Southern California experienced the coldest temperatures in 5 years, but a few days later, highs were 10-15 degrees above normal.

The storms which have visited the state during the past few weeks have had an inland origin and have only produced light rainfall. Most regions have seen below normal precipitation during the last 30 days.

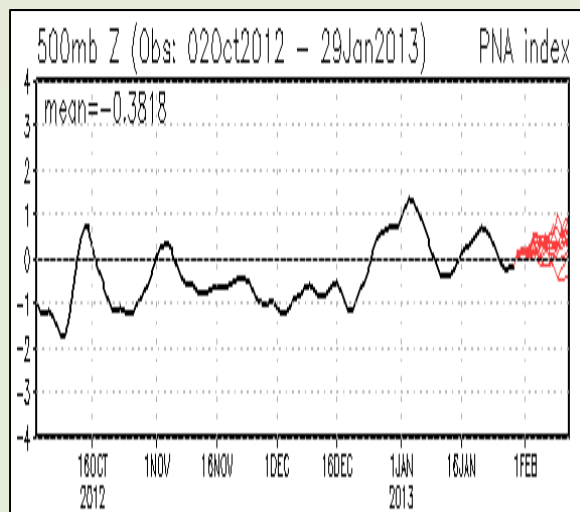
The longwave pattern which has been highly amplified across the west shows little inclination to change. The current ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation) remains near neutral and will not change enough to further influence the weather this winter. However, the PNA (Pacific-North American Pattern) may start to climb into more positive numbers later this winter, which would lead to drier conditions toward the end of winter or early spring.

Until then, expect near average amounts of precipitation to fall across the central and northern parts of the state while a persistent northwesterly flow aloft will keep Southern California slightly drier than usual. This trend toward drier weather will likely become more pronounced by March or April.

Temperatures, overall, should average near normal throughout the entire area. However, large temperature fluctuations may continue as the ridge offshore is likely to shift slightly east or west at times, causing the district to experience warm or cool episodes. Additional periods of low elevation freezing temperatures are likely through March.



UPPER AIR PATTERN DEC-JAN



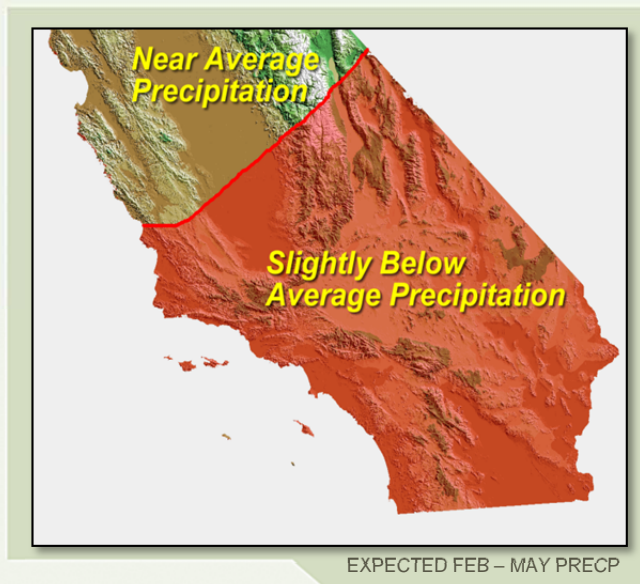
PNA OUTLOOK

PREDICTIVE SERVICES

MONTHLY/SEASONAL OUTLOOK



FEBRUARY THROUGH MAY 2013



Long range computer models are indicating an amplified ridge may become established over the West Coast by early spring. This would either represent a continuation of the highly amplified pattern of the winter or an adjustment in the longwave weather pattern across the continent. This ridge may appear after the traditional end of the “rainy season” around March 31st which would not impair precipitation too much. Overall, the seasonal precipitation should finish near average over Central California, but slightly below average over the southern part of the state (**See above**).

However, this ridge will likely generate above normal temperatures during the early spring months of April and May. One or two offshore wind events would be possible during this period of time, but overall, drying offshore winds would be less likely given this weather scenario.

FUELS OUTLOOK:

Although precipitation has been more scarce than usual this year, the timely nature of the rainfall has kept fuels moist for the most part. Seasonal grasses are continuing to grow at lower elevations, while most of the Sierra Chain is seeing snowpack of at least 110% of normal. This rainfall season will not likely sport “blockbuster” numbers at the end of the season, but it should be enough to keep fine fuels and native vegetation from experiencing appreciable drying before spring.

However, the potential of warmer than average temperatures in April or May will possibly lead to a higher ignition potential in the fine fuels. Grasses should be cured out in all but the shadiest areas by early May and a higher number of grass fires than average may be possible this spring. But long range weather patterns may keep winds from causing rapid spread and large fire growth. There may be a higher than average demand for initial attack resources this spring, but containment objectives may be met with less resistance due to a lack of wind.

California may be in better shape this spring than many states across the West. The Central Rockies, in particular, is experiencing an abnormally dry winter (rivaling the dry year of 2002) which may lead to high planning levels and resource demand outside the GACC service area.

The precipitation this winter should be sufficient to keep reservoir storage from falling much further this spring. But it will take a couple of above normal precipitation years to make up for the large precipitation deficit which was accrued during the winter of 2011-2012