MONTHLY OUTLOOK

For Southern and Central California

National Report Located Here

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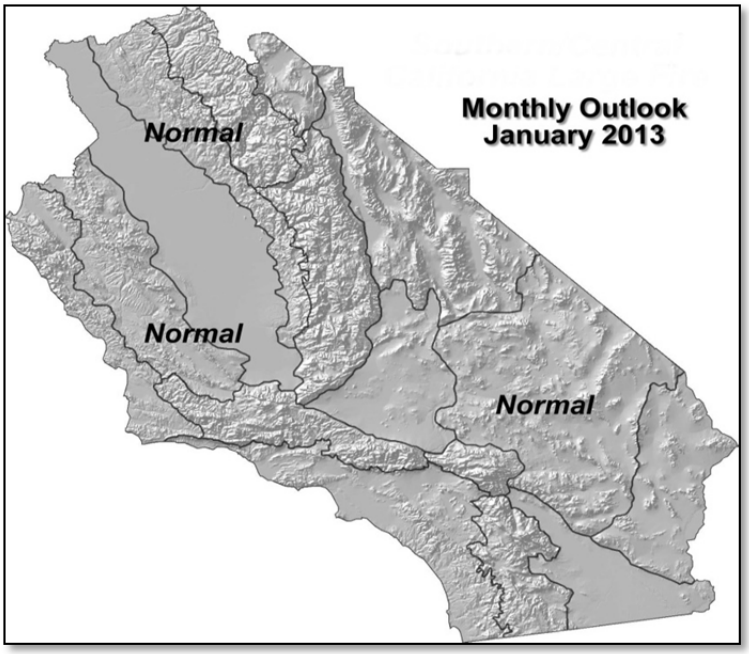


Summary

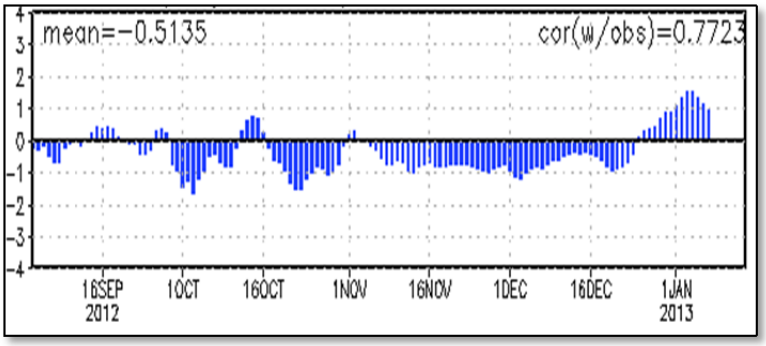
- ***Near normal temperatures.***
- ***Near normal precipitation Central CA, slightly below normal Southern CA.***
- ***Near normal large fire potential. (Little, if any, wildfire activity)***

Weather Discussion

The weather pattern changed to a much wetter and cooler one during the second half of November. This pattern continued through most of December, especially over the northern half of the state where much above normal precipitation occurred. The northern part of the state saw near record amounts of rainfall, while rainfall totals further south were closer to normal.

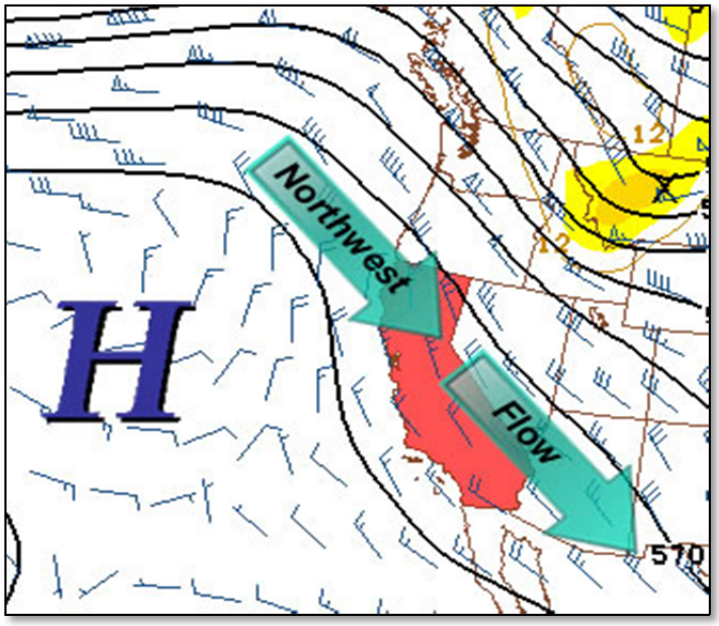
The circulation which was responsible for the above normal amounts of rainfall was an unusual amount of amplification across the Eastern Pacific and the Western U.S. A trough was located over the Pacific Northwest and the West Coast during much of the month, while a stubborn ridge brought record low precipitation amounts to the central plains. While many of the storms last month were "cold core" storms of modest intensity, some subtropical moisture reached the state in early December, resulting in copious rainfall totals in Central and Northern California **(Figure 3, next page)**.

Figure 1: PNA Forecast:



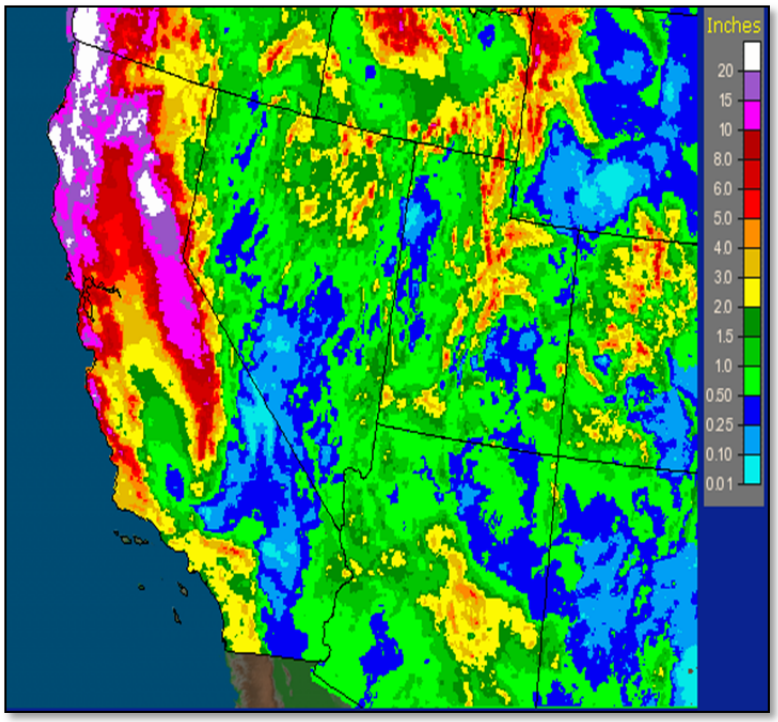
A possible contributor to the recent wet conditions was a favorable Pacific-North American Pattern. During December, the PNA was negative, which often keep the western states wetter and cooler than normal. Long range models have been indicating a change to a positive value may be upcoming, which may lead to drier and warmer weather in January **(Figure 1)**. In addition, long range models point to a less amplified long-wave pattern may be evolving over the Gulf of Alaska and the Eastern Pacific.

Figure 2: Possible January Weather Pattern



Troughing may develop over the Central U.S. Thus, a drier northwesterly flow may develop over the state toward the middle to latter part of the month **(Figure 2)**. This would lead to drier conditions, especially over Southern California. Northwesterly flow may allow for one or two offshore wind events, but this pattern usually doesn't lend itself to strong or intense offshore winds most of the time.

Figure 3: December Precipitation (radar estimation)



Fuels/Fire Potential Discussion

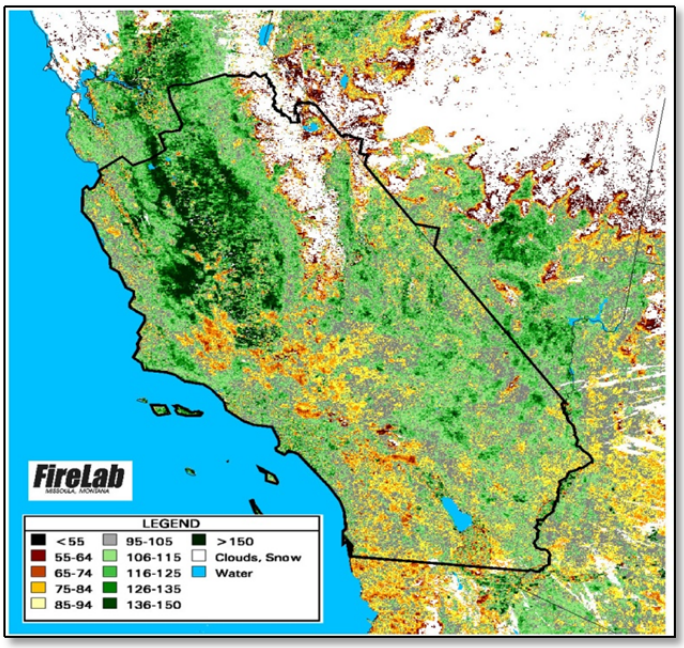
The widespread, heavy wetting rains changed the fuel state across the district appreciably. Seasonal grasses have shown a few inches of growth in recent weeks and higher elevations have seen significant snowpack accumulation.

Unlike last year, the rains so far have occurred during the height of the "rainy season" when moisture uptake in native brush is maximized. Thus, brush and shrubs are showing some new growth in places. Expect growth to be robust in January in lower elevations once sunnier and warmer weather returns.

Only a few north and east aspects of desert-adjacent area are anywhere close to dry at the current time. However, with only limited offshore winds expected during the next month, large fire potential will be very low. Receptivity to ignition will be low and little fire spread is expected during non-windy periods. No wildfire related initial attack is expected during the next month.

Although the weather may turn drier by the start of February, the precipitation of December should be enough to keep large fire potential low throughout January.

Figure 4: Departure from Average Greenness



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