Drought Monitoring Technical Committee Update

to the
Arizona Interagency Coordinating Group

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Arizona Drought Monitoring Technical Committee
Precipitation Comparison Colorado River Basin

WY 2010 to April

WY 2011 to April

WY 2012 to April
Long Term Drought Status Comparison

April 2011

January 2012

April 2012
Precipitation in Selected Watersheds for Past 19 Years

**Salt Watershed 12-month Precipitation**
(Apr-Mar) Median 15.55"
7 of last 19 years > median

**Little Colorado Watershed 12-month Precipitation**
(Apr-Mar) Median 13.68"
6 of last 19 years > median

**Santa Cruz Watershed 12-month Precipitation**
(Apr-Mar) Median 15.45"
5 of last 19 years > median

**Upper Gila Watershed 12-month Precipitation**
(Apr-Mar) Median 11.65"
8 of last 19 years > median
Impacts

- Some stock tanks dry or very low
- Expect wildlife to move to catchments for water, and 60% or more of those are low.
- Expect to need water hauling
- Not much green up – forage production is low
- Producers has reduced their livestock herds again and many began hauling water back in September.
Impacts

- Grasslands fire danger is about normal in the central and northwest deserts due to limited fuel.
- Southern Arizona still has grass from last fall, and it is dried out and standing upright, so that has a higher fire danger.
- Mohave County – poor forage conditions, streams and springs drying out.
- Moderate fire danger at the higher elevations and low danger at the lower elevations.
Restrictions on State Lands prohibiting campfires, charcoal–burning devices, and torches. Includes AZ State Parks and Game & Fish wildlife areas in Cochise, Graham, Pima, Pinal, and Santa Cruz counties.
Thank you!

Questions?

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SUMMER 2012 OUTLOOK

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Focus on tropical Pacific
Increasing cool anomalies = Possible La Nina
Sea Surface Temperature Anomalies

Warm anomalies developing off of S. America
Atmosphere usually slower to respond than oceans
Long-Range Computer Guidance

![Graph showing IRI/CPC predictions for El Niño and La Niña]

- El Niño
  - Strong
  - Mdt
  - Weak

- La Niña
  - Weak
  - Mdt
  - Strong
Temp Outlook – JJA 2012

THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY
1.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID JJA 2012
MADE 19 APR 2012

EC MEANS EQUAL
CHANCES FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW
* Warm temperatures
* Windy periods as upper level systems pass by
* "Dry" thunderstorms (lightning with little rain) early in monsoon
Precip Outlook – SON 2012

THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY
4.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID SON 2012
MADE 19 APR 2012

EC MEANS EQUAL CHANCES FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW
Summary

- The winter 2011-2012 La Nina event is rapidly ending.
- Notable “tilt” toward warmer than normal for summer 2012.
- No significant precip signal.
- Not unusual during the summer, when small-scale features drive the weather.
- Neutral to El Nino conditions coming in the fall/winter?
“We are not in production, we’re just in marketing”

Bill Bunting
NWS Fort Worth, TX
Questions? Contact Us

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