

Southwest Climate Outlook

Vol. 10 Issue 11

November Climate Summary

Editor's Note– The November issue of the Southwest Climate Outlook is abbreviated due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The publication of complete issues will resume in December.

Drought– Drought conditions intensified from moderate to extreme in central Arizona in the last 30 days. Nearly half the state is classified with moderate or a more severe drought category. In New Mexico, drought conditions remained virtually unchanged from one month ago. Currently, about 91 percent of the state is classified with at least moderate drought.

Temperature– Temperatures generally have been within 2 degrees F of average across the Southwest. While parts of southern Arizona deserts have been warmer than average, higher elevations in Arizona and New Mexico have experienced cooler-than-average temperatures.

Precipitation– In the past 30 days, several early winter storms moved across the region from southwest Arizona to northeast New Mexico, delivering above-average precipitation to those regions. Meanwhile, southeast Arizona and the southern two-thirds of New Mexico experienced less than 75 percent of average precipitation.

ENSO– Weak La Niña conditions persisted in the past month. Most models project that La Niña will continue through the winter; models and historical observations suggest that the intensity of the event will fall in the weak to moderate range.

Climate Forecasts– Temperature outlooks for the December–February period call for increased chances for above-average temperatures in most of New Mexico and below-average precipitation in most of both states. The odds for drier-than-average conditions are highest in the southern tier of Arizona and New Mexico where La Niña impacts are strongest.

The Bottom Line– Drought conditions remain entrenched in nearly all of Arizona and New Mexico, the residual effect of the dry 2010–2011 winter and a so-so monsoon. The expectation is that dry conditions will continue in part because La Niña has returned. Although forecasts suggest the La Niña will reach at most a moderate strength, this does mean precipitation deficits will also likely be moderate. In the past, weak La Niña events have produced both high and low precipitation anomalies in the Southwest. Although storms tend to be pushed north during La Niña events, the jet stream often meanders more than during El Niño events, and it occasionally bows enough to waft frigid Arctic air into the region, like it did last winter when record cold air froze many parts of Arizona and New Mexico in early February.

Disclaimer – This packet contains official and non-official forecasts, as well as other information. While we make every effort to verify this information, please understand that we do not warrant the accuracy of any of these materials. The user assumes the entire risk related to the use of this data. CLIMAS, UA Cooperative Extension, and the State Climate Office at Arizona State University (ASU) disclaim any and all warranties, whether expressed or implied, including (without limitation) any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. In no event will CLIMAS, UA Cooperative, and the State Climate Office at ASU or The University of Arizona be liable to you or to any third party for any direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, special or exemplary damages or lost profit resulting from any use or misuse of this data

Table of Contents:

1 November 2011 Climate Summary

SWCO Staff:

Mike Crimmins, *UA Extension Specialist*
 Stephanie Doster, *Institute of the Environment Editor*
 Dan Ferguson, *CLIMAS Program Director*
 Gregg Garfin, *Institute of the Environment Deputy Director of Outreach*
 Zack Guido, *CLIMAS Associate Staff Scientist*
 Gigi Owen, *CLIMAS Assistant Staff Scientist*
 Nancy J. Selover, *Arizona State Climatologist*



This work is published by the Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS) project and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension; and is funded by CLIMAS, Institute of the Environment, and the Technology and Research Initiative Fund of the University of Arizona Water Sustainability Program through the SAHRA NSF Science and Technology Center at the University of Arizona.