

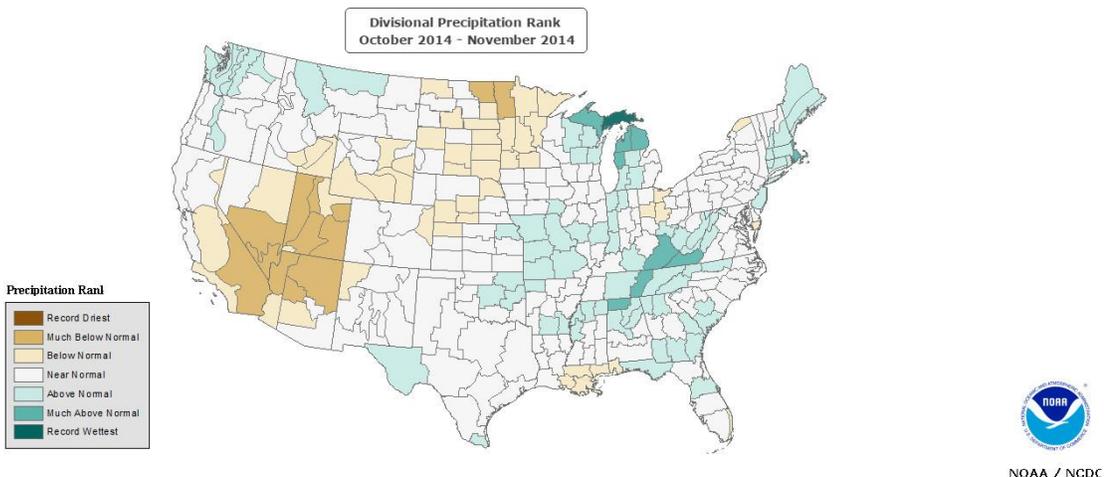
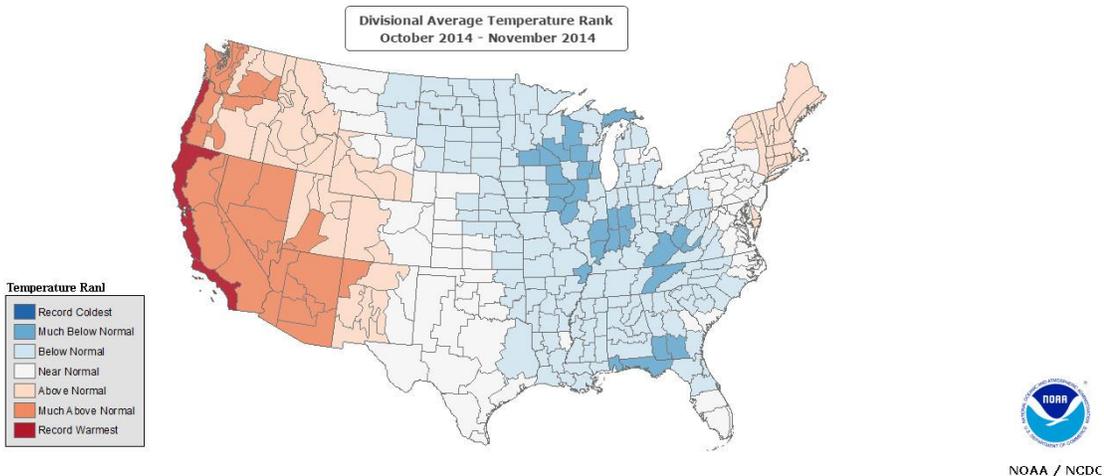
Weather and Climate Summary and Forecast

Winter 2014-15

Gregory V. Jones
Southern Oregon University
December 10, 2014

As I write this the west coast is about to experience one of the strongest storms it has seen in three years or more. The forecast for moderate to heavy rain runs nearly the entire length of the west coast with the bull's-eye from the Bay Area to Southern Oregon. Just three weeks ago we had a lingering ridging pattern over the west coast producing relatively warm and dry conditions and trough over the eastern US producing early cold and wet conditions there. Currently it appears that the ridge in the west has broken down enough to allow for a more zonal (west to east) and more southerly flow bringing more systems across the Pacific and further into California than the last few years. This shift is further supported from NOAA's recent climate models runs that suggest that the ridge has dwindled and a more normal storm track is likely the rest of this winter. These changes are thought to have come from ocean temperatures cooling slightly over the North Pacific in the last 30 days or so.

Combined October and November were largely warmer than normal across the west (especially along the coast and coastal valleys) and cooler over the majority of the east (see figure below or attached). For precipitation, October-November remained relatively dry in the southwest, near normal in Northern California and Oregon, and slightly wetter than average in Washington (see figure below or attached).



Short term forecasts from the Climate Prediction Center and others point to a generally warmer and wetter than normal period through Christmas and the rest of December. The longer term forecast for Dec-Jan-Feb reflects the strong likelihood of continued warmer than normal conditions along the entire west coast, with greater likelihood of wetter conditions in the southwest, normal rainfall amounts in Northern California and Oregon, and the potential for drier than average conditions in Washington. Of course there is still the potential for El Niño conditions to develop in the Tropical Pacific. Currently the Climate Prediction Center says that "there is an approximately 65% chance that El Niño conditions will be present during the Northern Hemisphere winter and last into the Northern Hemisphere spring 2015." However, they are still pointing to it being more likely a weak El Niño which typically means that west coast conditions are mixed and not as strong of a contributor to regional forecasts. I will follow with an update in January or as conditions warrant it.

Gregory V. Jones, PhD
Environmental Science and Policy
Southern Oregon University
1250 Siskiyou Blvd
Ashland, OR 97520
541-552-6758
gjones@sou.edu

