

...ENSO NEUTRAL CONDITIONS EXPECTED INTO EARLY 2009...

AT THE PRESENT TIME SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURES ACROSS THE EASTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC ARE ABOUT NEUTRAL. THE CLIMATE PREDICTION CENTER IS EXPECTING THESE CONDITIONS TO CONTINUE THROUGH THE UPCOMING WINTER AND INTO EARLY SPRING 2009.

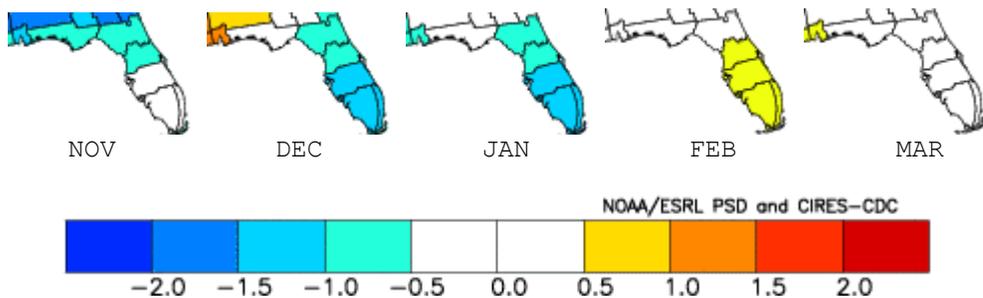
DURING NEUTRAL PHASES OF ENSO (EL NIÑO/SOUTHERN OSCILLATION), THE DETAILS FOR SUCH THINGS AS TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL CAN BE HIGHLY VARIABLE. RESEARCH OVER THE YEARS HAS SHOWN THAT THE IMPACT OF OTHER OSCILLATIONS SUCH AS THE NORTH ATLANTIC OSCILLATION (NAO), ARCTIC OSCILLATION (AO), PACIFIC-NORTH AMERICA OSCILLATION (PNA), AND THE MADDEN-JULIAN OSCILLATION CAN PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE WEATHER ACROSS FLORIDA DURING THE WINTER AND EARLY SPRING. THEY CAN ACT TO ENHANCE OR SUPPRESS THE IMPACT OF ENSO, OR CAUSE EXTREME VARIABILITY IN THE WEATHER ACROSS FLORIDA.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA THIS WINTER?

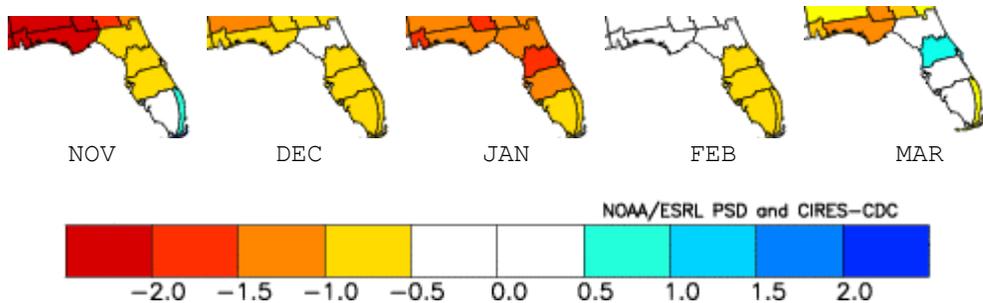
IN GENERAL FOR THE WINTER OF 2008-2009 (DEC/JAN/FEB) WE'RE LOOKING FOR TEMPERATURES TO BE NEAR TO SLIGHTLY BELOW NORMAL WITH RAINFALL BELOW NORMAL. HOWEVER, AS MENTIONED ABOVE, CONDITIONS FROM WEEK TO WEEK CAN BE HIGHLY VARIABLE DEPENDING ON THE PHASE OF SOME OF THE OTHER OSCILLATIONS.

IF WE FURTHER DISSECT THESE PARAMETERS BY MONTH AND COMPARE THE PREDICTED ENSO CONDITIONS FOR THE UPCOMING WINTER TO OTHER SIMILAR YEARS SINCE 1950, IT APPEARS THAT MOST OF THESE WINTERS STARTED OUT COOLER THAN NORMAL INTO JANUARY, THEN TURNED WARMER THAN NORMAL AS WE MOVED INTO FEBRUARY. RAINFALL FOLLOWED A SIMILAR TRACK WITH BELOW NORMAL AMOUNTS OCCURRING FOR MOST OF THE WINTER THEN RETURNING TO SLIGHTLY ABOVE NORMAL IN MARCH. BELOW ARE COMPOSITE IMAGES FOR EACH MONTH DURING SIMILAR ENSO YEARS.

COMPOSITE TEMPERATURE ANOMALIES (°F) FOR SIMILAR YEARS:



COMPOSITE PRECIPITATION ANOMALIES (INCHES) FOR SIMILAR YEARS:



THEREFORE, IT LOOKS LIKE OVERALL WE SHOULD SEE RATHER COOL DRY WEATHER INTO JANUARY, THEN MILD AND SLIGHTLY WETTER CONDITIONS COULD RETURN BY MARCH.

FREEZING TEMPERATURES DURING THESE SIMILAR YEARS TENDED TO OCCUR LESS OFTEN THAN NORMAL, BUT THE ONES THAT DID HAPPEN OCCURRED MOSTLY DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEASON. LONG TERM AVERAGES INDICATE THAT THERE IS ABOUT TWO TO FOUR DAYS OF FREEZING TEMPERATURES EACH WINTER ACROSS INLAND PORTIONS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA WITH ONLY ABOUT ONE OVER SOUTHWEST FLORIDA. FURTHER NORTH ACROSS THE NATURE COAST THERE ARE MANY MORE DAYS WITH FREEZING TEMPERATURES. SOME LOCATIONS SUCH AS INVERNESS AND BUSHNELL HAVE ON AVERAGE AROUND 10 DAYS... WHILE FURTHER NORTH NEAR CHIEFLAND THERE ARE AS MANY AS 20 DAYS ON AVERAGE WITH TEMPERATURES FALLING TO OR BELOW FREEZING EACH WINTER.

THE LAST ENSO THAT HAD SIMILAR NEUTRAL CONDITIONS WAS DURING THE WINTER OF 1996-1997. DURING THIS WINTER TEMPERATURES STARTED OUT NEAR TO SLIGHTLY BELOW NORMAL THEN CLIMBED WELL ABOVE NORMAL BY FEBRUARY. RAINFALL WAS GENERALLY BELOW NORMAL THROUGH THE ENTIRE WINTER.

AFTER SOMEWHAT DRY WEATHER FOR THE LAST FEW MONTHS ACROSS MUCH OF WEST CENTRAL...THE OUTLOOK OF BELOW NORMAL RAINFALL FOR THE UPCOMING WINTER IS NOT A GOOD INDICATOR. MOST LIKELY THE CURRENT WATER RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE ACROSS MANY PORTIONS OF WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WILL REMAIN IN PLACE THROUGH THE UPCOMING WINTER AND INTO NEXT SPRING.

RESIDENTS OF WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA SHOULD REMAIN INFORMED OF POTENTIAL WEATHER EVENTS THIS UPCOMING WINTER AND EARLY SPRING. STAY TUNED TO LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS AND NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR THE LATEST WEATHER INFORMATION.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ENSO...PLEASE VISIT THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE TAMPA BAY PAGE AT WWW.WEATHER.GOV/TAMPABAY OR THE CLIMATE PREDICTION CENTER AT WWW.CPC.NOAA.GOV

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