



2026-27 El Niño Briefing

Current Status: El Niño Advisory

National Weather Service LOX/SGX



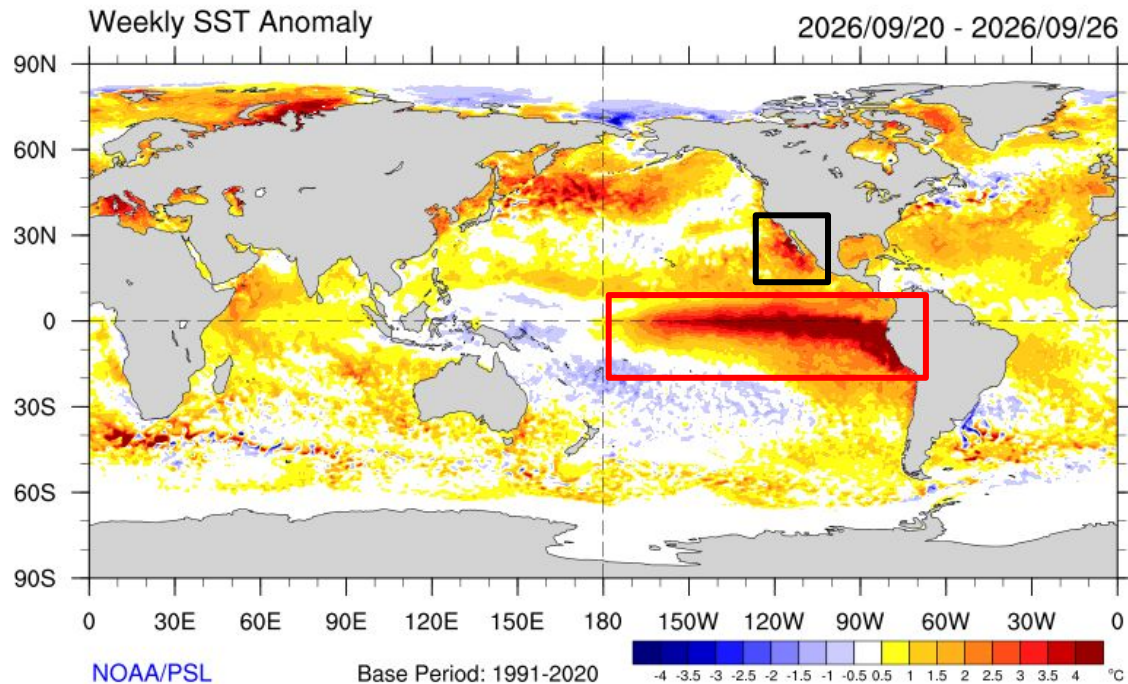
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service



How will the Atmosphere Respond?

El Nino is an **Oceanic** Phenomenon.

The primary uncertainty for Southern California's storm potential lies in the atmospheric response. Although **the ocean is broadcasting a clear climate signal**, it remains to be seen how efficiently the atmosphere will convert that signal into local weather impacts.

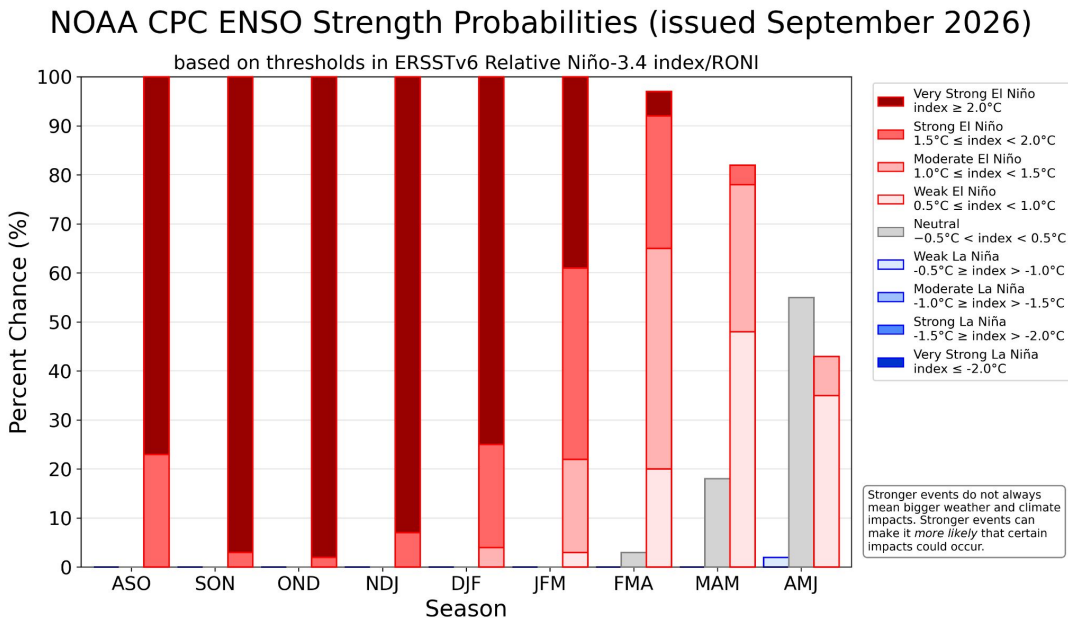




Warmer Ocean Temps Come Without a Guarantee

Record?

Historic?



Super?

Godzilla?

An active storm track and its associated impacts in Southern California are far from **guaranteed**, despite the presence of a *very strong El Niño*. While this climate pattern certainly shifts the odds in favor of wetter weather, it is not an absolute promise.



Surf and Coastal Flood Outlook - Hurricane Rachel



- High confidence of southerly swells from Rachel
 - **Tue to Fri** (Oct 6th-9th)
- **High risk** of elevated surf and strong rip currents
- **Moderate risk** of coastal flood:
 - High tides between 6.5 and 7.0 feet.
 - Tides will continue to be around a foot above normal
 - Will remain elevated into this winter
 - Locally increased risk due to erosion from previous surf & coastal flood events

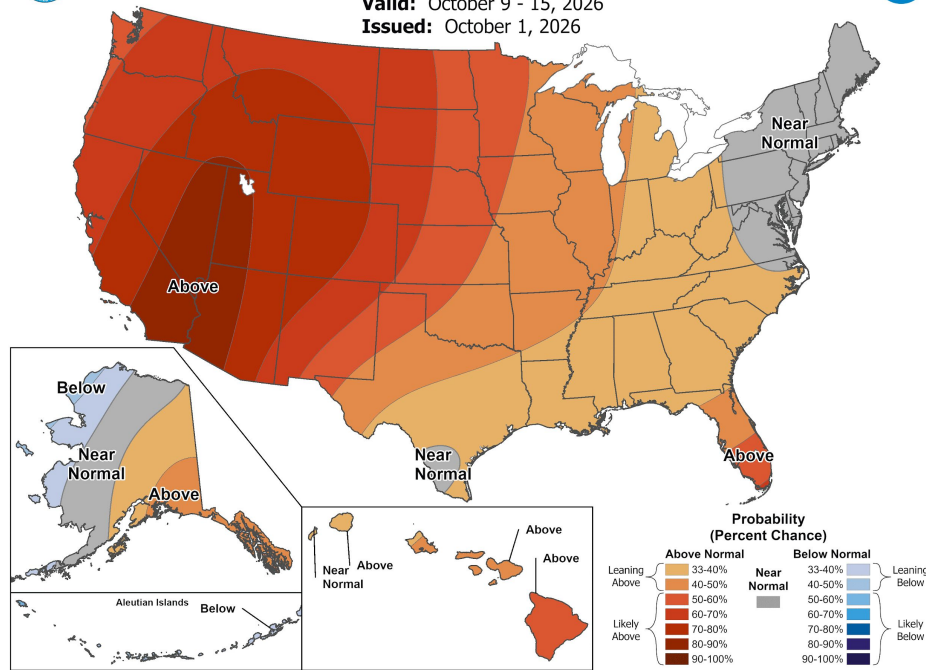
8-14 day Temperature & Precipitation Outlooks



8-14 Day Temperature Outlook

Valid: October 9 - 15, 2026

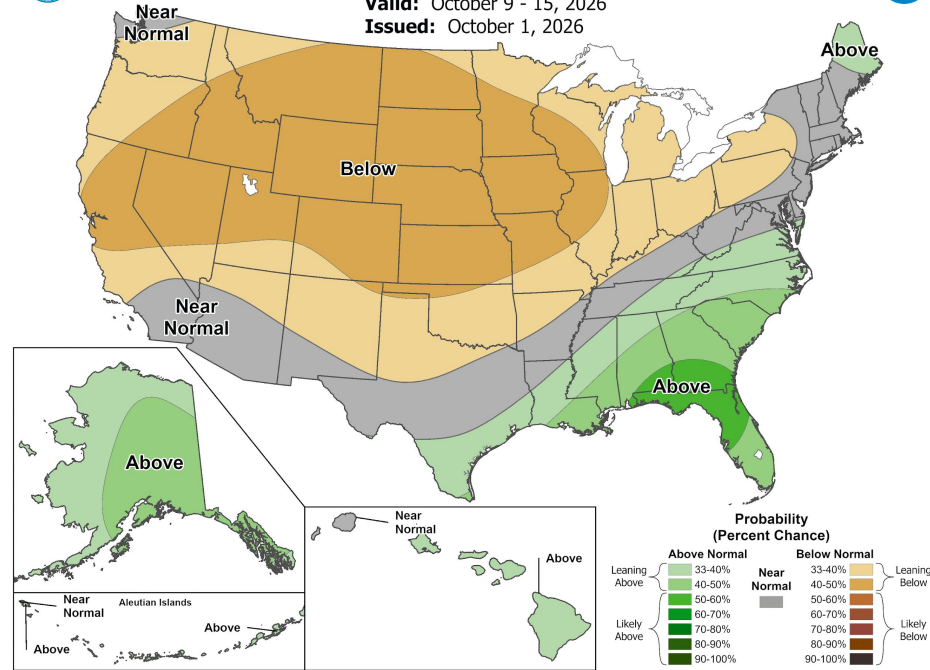
Issued: October 1, 2026



8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook

Valid: October 9 - 15, 2026

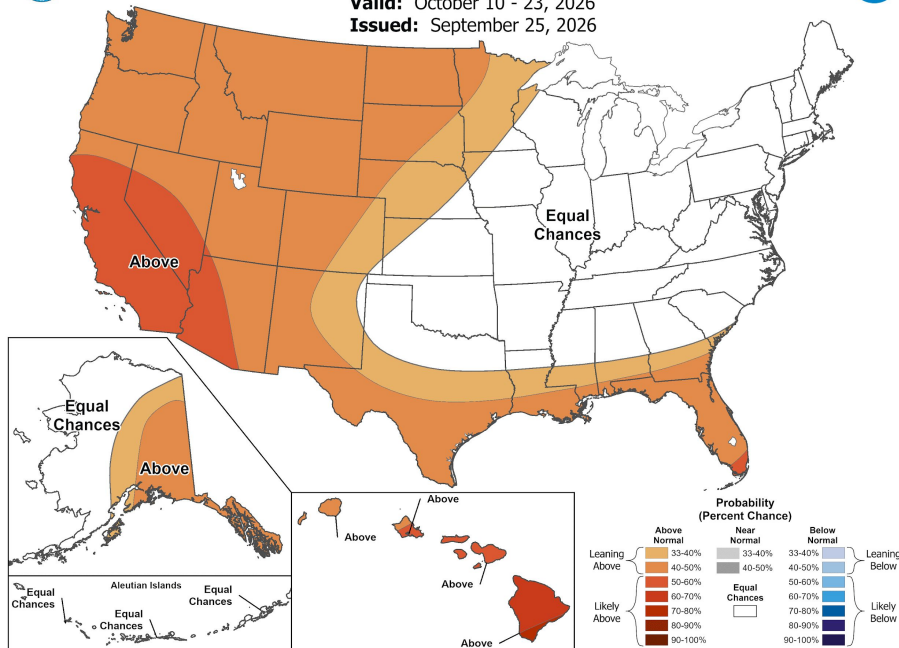
Issued: October 1, 2026



3-4 Week Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

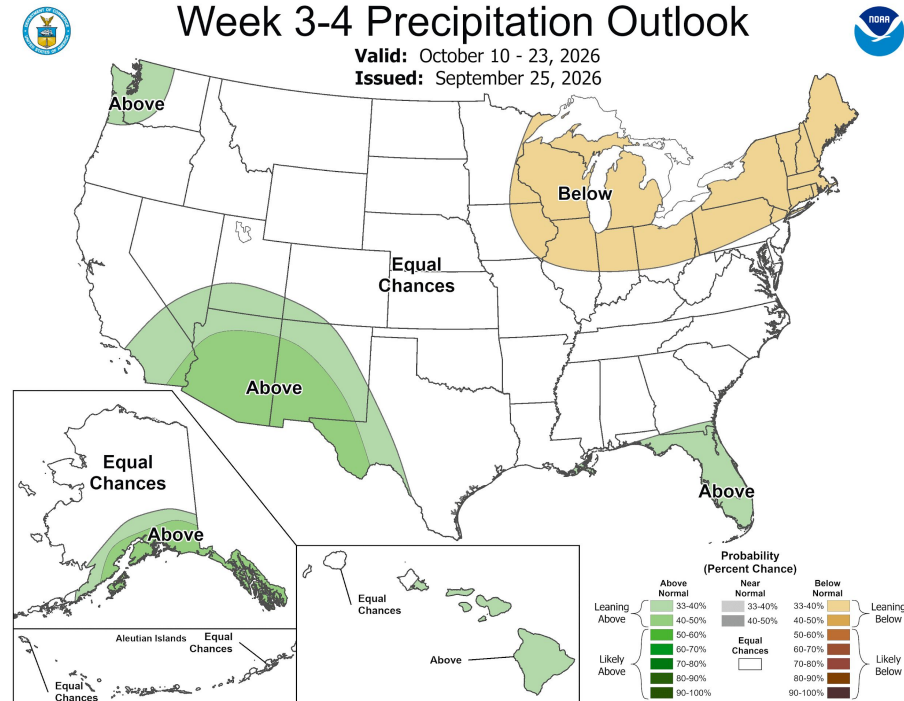
Week 3-4 Temperature Outlook

Valid: October 10 - 23, 2026
Issued: September 25, 2026



Week 3-4 Precipitation Outlook

Valid: October 10 - 23, 2026
Issued: September 25, 2026

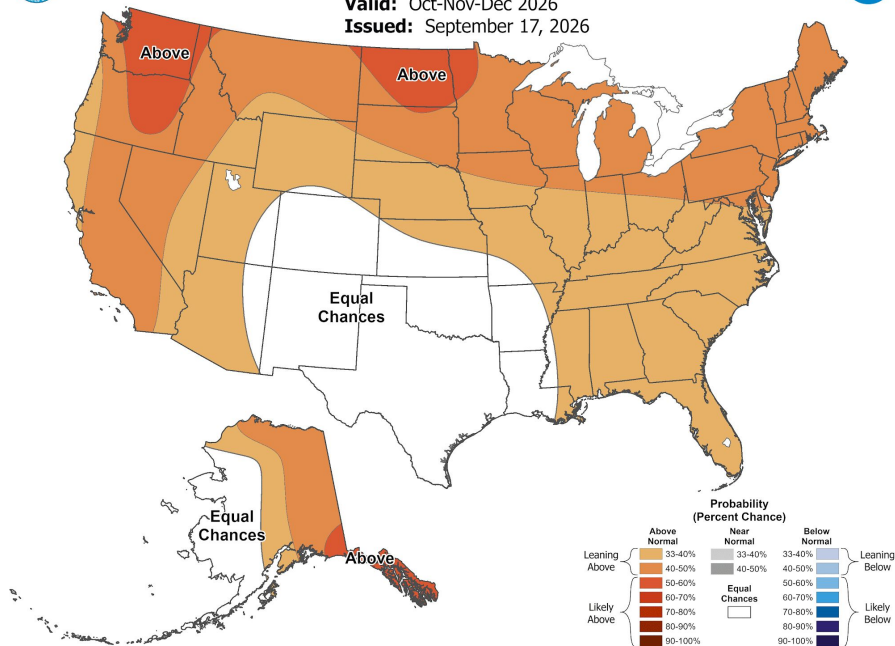


Seasonal Outlook October - December



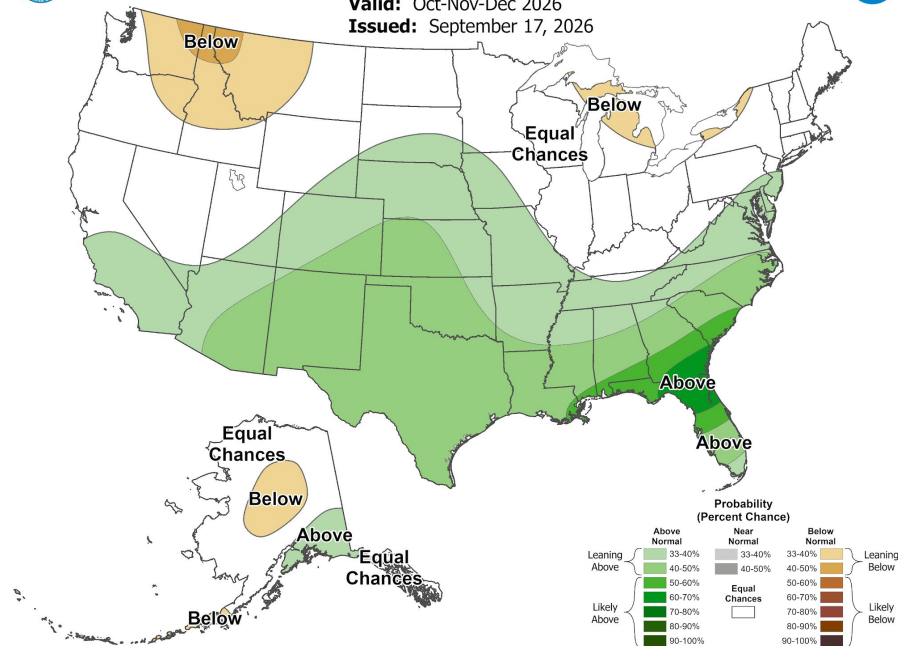
Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2026
Issued: September 17, 2026



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2026
Issued: September 17, 2026



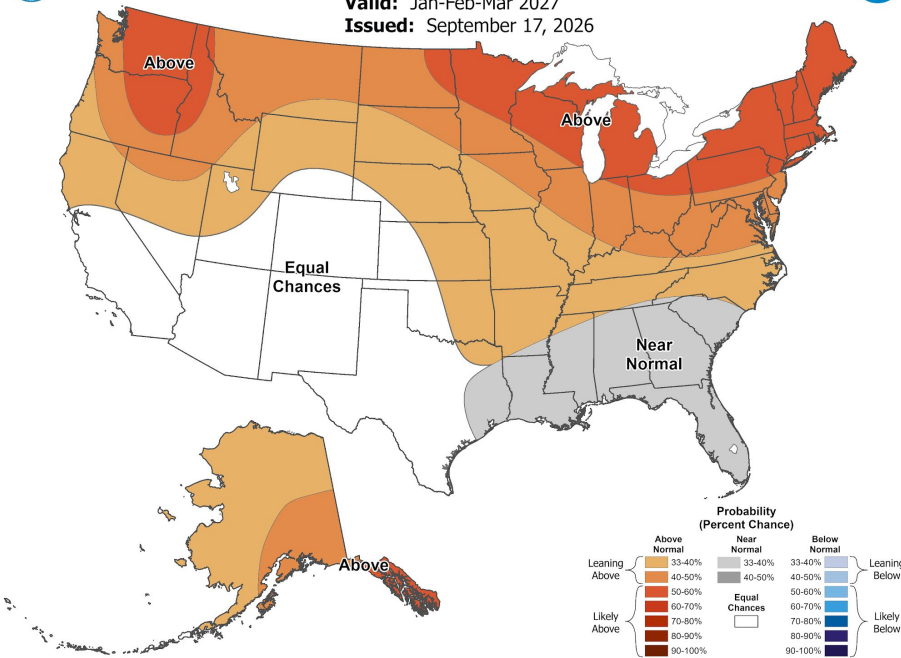


Seasonal Outlook January - March



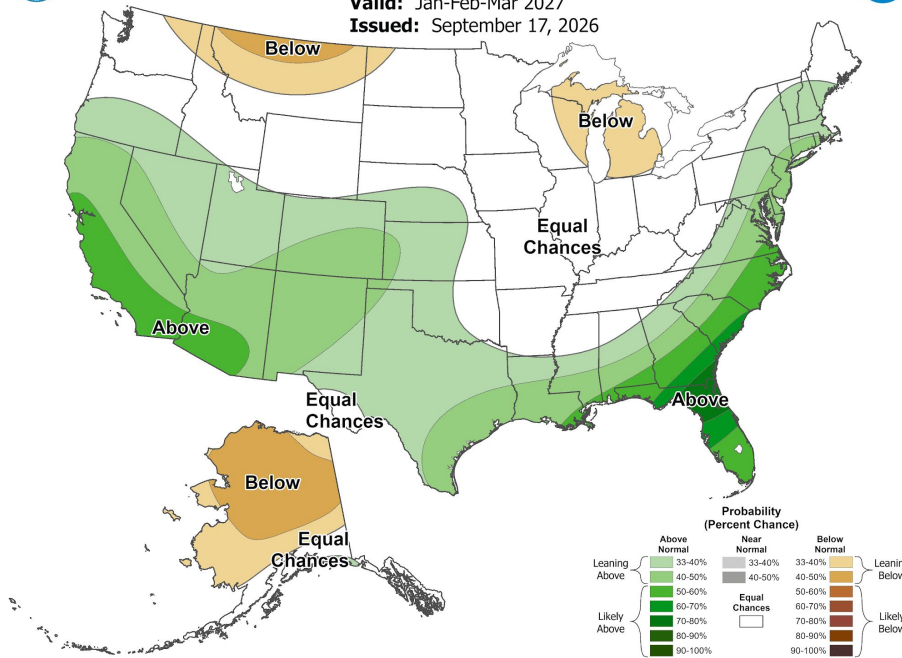
Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2027
Issued: September 17, 2026



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2027
Issued: September 17, 2026





El Niño Impacts across Southern California

Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting



Ocean Temperatures vs. Atmospheric Coupling: While record ocean warmth is a key indicator of El Niño, *the atmosphere must actively interact—or "couple"—with that heat to effectively steer storm tracks into Southern California.* Although the ocean is already warmer than normal and is expected to remain so through the winter, it is currently uncertain whether the necessary atmospheric coupling will occur for the area

Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting



Seasonal Backdrop vs. Individual Storms: El Niño shapes the overarching climate patterns over a season, but *it is not a storm itself*. While it sets the broader environmental stage, *it does not dictate the timing, track, or intensity of specific weather systems*

Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting

Forecast Horizons for Burn Scars and Infrastructure:

- *Accurately* predicting Quantitative Precipitation Forecasts (QPF), peak hourly rain rates, and debris flow thresholds relies on *short-range, high-resolution modeling and real-time observational data*
- As a result, site-specific forecasts are delivered within a few days of a storm's onset, once *the system enters a reliable window of predictability*



Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting



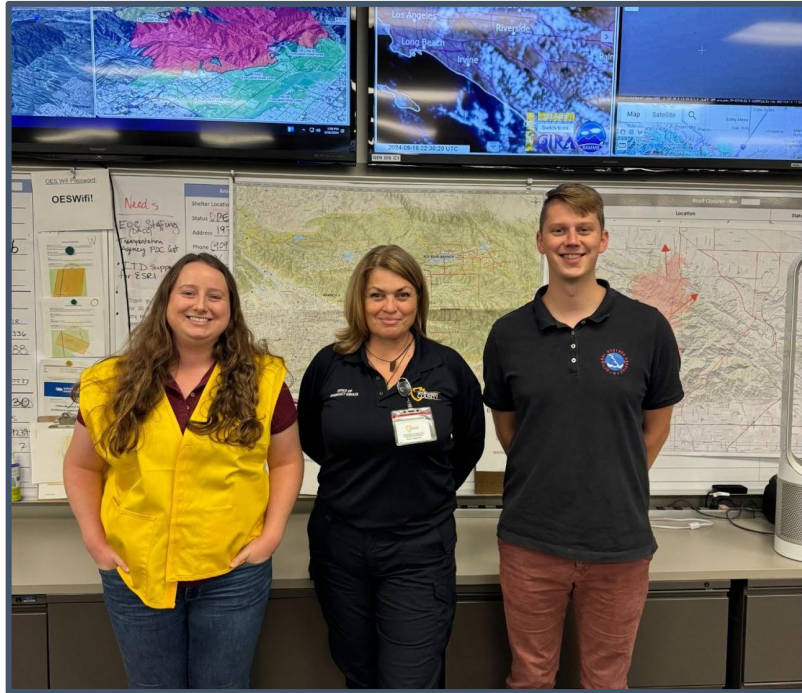
Our Objective Role of the NWS: As part of our Impact-Based Decision Support Services (IDSS), our role is to provide you with *objective forecast data, clear ranges of uncertainty, and expected timing to help guide critical decisions*

Calibrating Risk: Probabilities vs. Certainties



Understanding the odds: While a strong El Niño tilts broad regional probabilities toward a wetter season, *the likelihood of severe impacts occurring in any specific neighborhood or location remains far from guaranteed*

Calibrating Risk: Probabilities vs. Certainties



Risk Analogy (To a Winning Sports Team on a Road Trip): Facing a top-ranked sports team on the road increases the statistical chance of a tough game, but it is far from an automatic loss; most outcomes are decided in the moment, or play-by-play. Thus, *an active seasonal setup stacks the odds, but it does not predetermine a disaster*

Calibrating Risk: Probabilities vs. Certainties



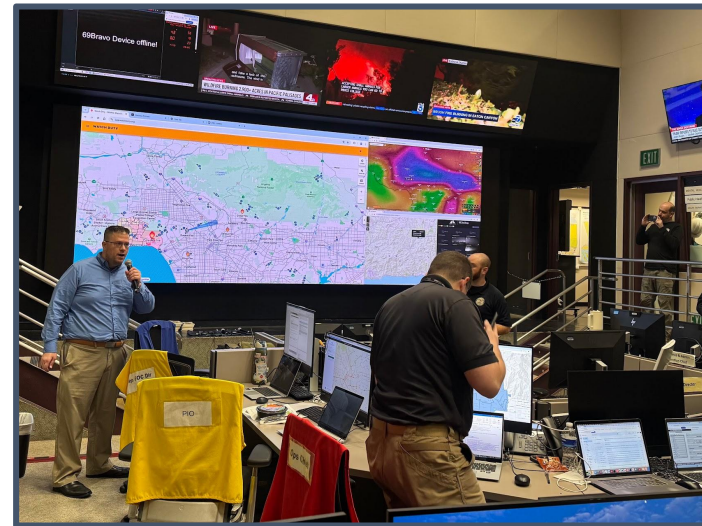
Grounded Communication: To keep our communities from tuning out important alerts (warning fatigue), we will talk about seasonal climate trends as shifted odds or increased chances, rather than inevitable disasters



Addressing and Preventing Warning Fatigue

Preserving Warning Integrity: To ensure the public remains responsive during actual emergencies, we are avoiding extreme or catastrophic language when discussing long-range, probabilistic climate outlooks. We want people to take action when it truly matters.

- **Protecting Life-Safety Compliance:** We are concerned that if communities anticipate an immediate disaster that fails to materialize early in the winter, public compliance with critical short-fuse Warnings drops significantly later in the season



Addressing and Preventing Warning Fatigue

Clear Horizon Separation:

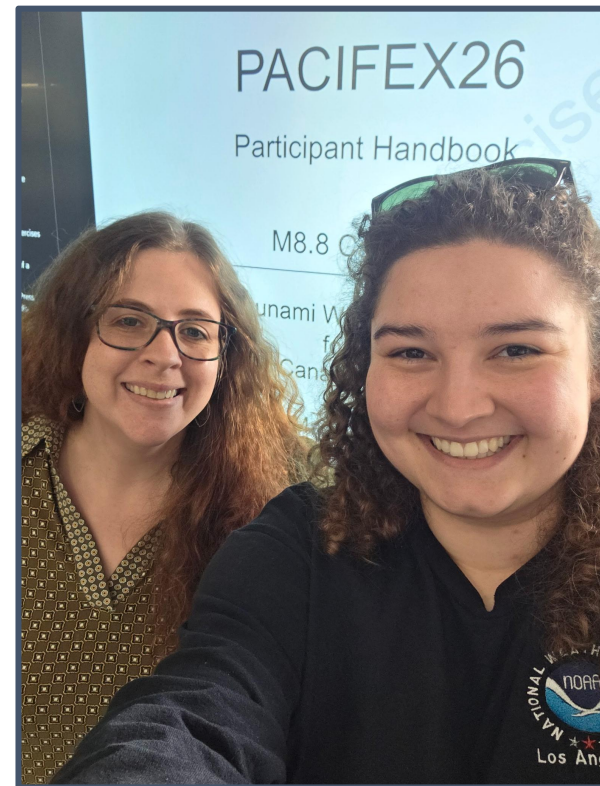


- *Seasonal Climate Outlooks:* These provide broad shifts in probability to build long-term situational awareness and support long-range planning efforts
- *Event-Driven Watches & Warnings:* These are reserved strictly for imminent, high-confidence hazards that pose a direct threat to life and property

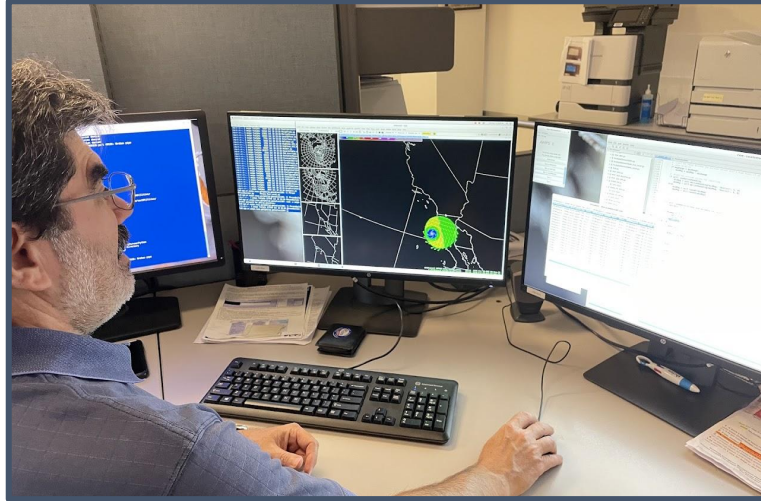
Maintaining Trust: By keeping our seasonal risk messaging proportional, we ensure that our high-urgency alerts carry the maximum possible impact when severe weather actually threatens

Operational Reality vs. "What-If" Scenarios:

- Research-Based Analyses: These often explore *theoretical maximums*, compounding risks, and extreme tail-risk possibilities (such as statewide worst-case scenarios)
- NWS Operational Products: These focus on actionable, real-world probability distributions driven by reliable ensemble modeling. While we do message reasonable worst-case scenarios, we only do so when *sufficient scientific evidence and reliable probabilities exist*—typically when a specific storm is clearly on the horizon



Delineating Operational Forecasts from Hypotheticals



Why we aren't providing site specific forecast information yet?

- The probabilities of specific weather conditions at any one location this far out are still *too small* (despite being elevated above normal) to reliably provide explicit predictions

Delineating Operational Forecasts from Hypotheticals

Why we aren't providing site specific forecast information yet?

- Although the very strong El Niño elevates the baseline risk for high-impact scenarios, such as freshwater flooding, coastal flooding, damaging surf, and severe weather, current probabilities are not high enough to issue explicit predictions without serious concerns for warning fatigue. Should a destructive weather event materialize, forecast confidence will rapidly increase within a few days of onset, at which point our messaging will reflect that heightened certainty





NWS Briefing Framework & Operational Cadence

Twice-Weekly Briefing Rhythm: We will continue a **consistent** briefing schedule to provide ongoing meteorological updates throughout the season

- **Tuesday Operational Briefing (NWS Core Partners):** *Dedicated* technical session tailored for NWS Core Partners focused on scenario predictability, probabilistic guidance, and local planning thresholds
- **Friday Partner Briefing (NWS Core Partners & Media):** *Broad-audience* briefing to present 7-day outlooks, forecast confidence, and risk messaging, as well as key messages





Form A Partnership: Let's Work Together



We are here for you!

Twice-weekly office hours on Slack to ask questions, including one immediately following this call: [wfo-los-angeles-ca](#)

Thank You!

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