



Drought Status and Climate Outlook for Upcoming 12 Months
FWS SFESO – Vero Beach, FL
April 10, 2012

Short Term Drought Map:

U.S. Drought Monitor

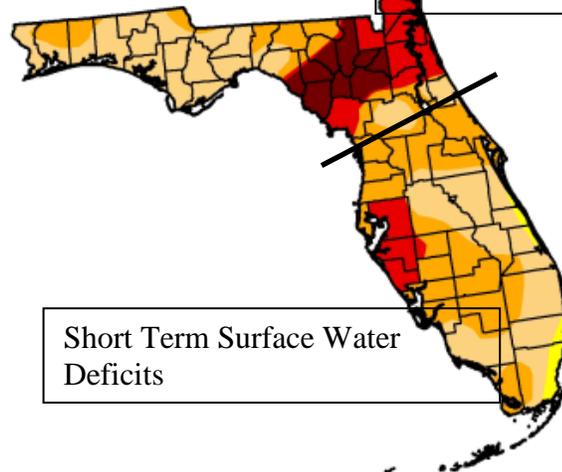
April 3, 2012
 Valid 7 a.m. EST

Florida

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	97.81	56.44	20.31	7.42
Last Week (03/27/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	97.81	52.28	15.18	0.00
3 Months Ago (01/03/2012 map)	8.91	91.09	27.41	12.84	2.61	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	38.81	61.19	27.41	12.84	2.61	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	43.12	56.88	28.83	16.85	7.85	0.00
One Year Ago (03/29/2011 map)	0.04	99.96	82.72	54.43	20.42	0.00

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, April 5, 2012
 Brian Fuchs, National Drought Mitigation Center

Figure 1 – U.S. Drought Monitor for the State of Florida.

Synopsis: Dry season weather patterns remain relatively quiet across the State of Florida. Overall, the majority of rainfall has occurred across the far western Panhandle and extreme South Florida, including the Florida Keys. However, the main drought areas of Florida have not seen any substantial rain that would lead to drought improvements. Thus, the drought situation declined for the state. Exception drought (D4) status was

introduced in the Suwannee basin because of record low groundwater levels and reduced surface flows. In west Florida, extreme drought (D3) status was expanded to the east. In northeast Florida, extreme drought (D3) status was pushed southward. South Florida had severe drought (D2) shift farther to the south and east but the consensus was to hold off on any new extreme drought (D3) status in that part of the state according to the Climate Prediction Center.

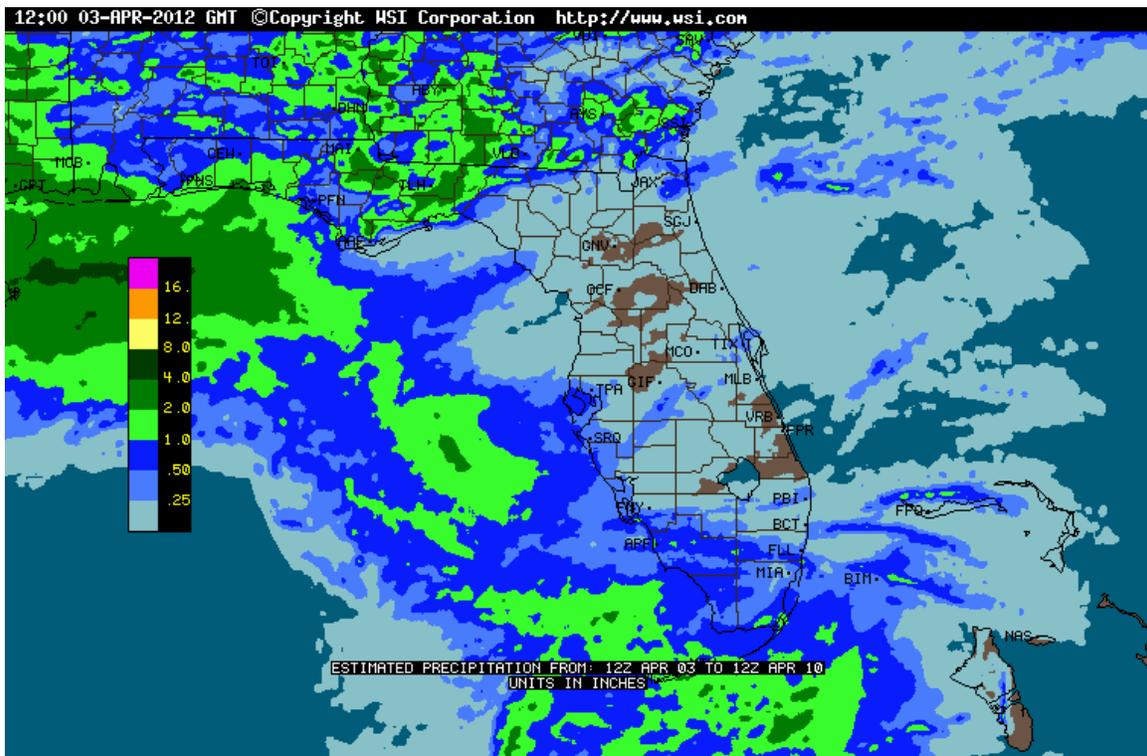
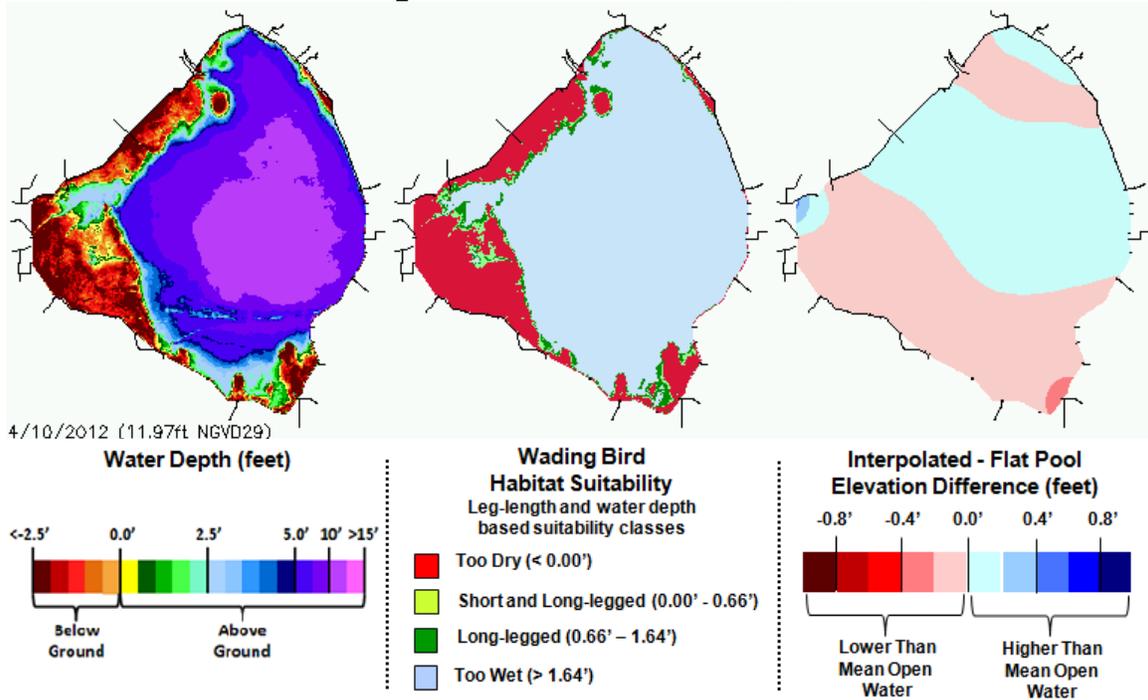


Figure 2 – Cold front induced rainfall for the week ending Monday morning, April 10, 2012.

Lake Okeechobee Water Depth Assessment Tool (WDAT)



Everglades South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool (SFWDAT)

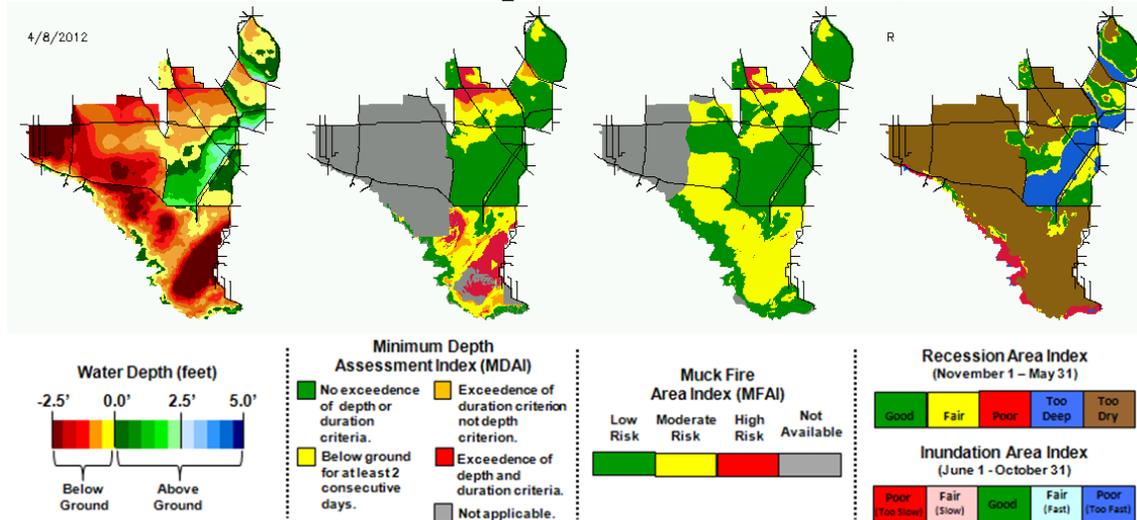


Figure 3 – Current water depths and wading bird habitat suitability for Lake Okeechobee. Current water depths, muck fire hazards, and wading bird recession rates for the Everglades.

Much of the littoral zone around Lake Okeechobee is dry with a very shallow rim of foraging area available. Much of the Everglades are also dry with the exception of southern Loxahatchee, southern WCA-2A, WCA-2B, ponded area in eastern WCA-3A along the L-67 levee, southern WCA-3A, and northern WCA-3B. There is a moderate risk of muck fires in the dry areas, and a high risk of much fires in northern WCA-3A.

Drought Impacts in the News:

Water Conservation Alert

In effect through June 30, 2012

Area Affected – Kissimmee basin and Lake Okeechobee basin - Hardee County; Highlands County; Hillsborough County; Lake County; Orange County; Osceola County; Pasco County; Polk County; and Sumter County.

The water conservation alert for Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Osceola, Pasco, Polk and Sumter counties imposed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District's Governing Board remains in effect through June 30. The alert encourages water conservation, but did not tighten current water restrictions. Lakeland Ledger (Fla.), March 3, 2012

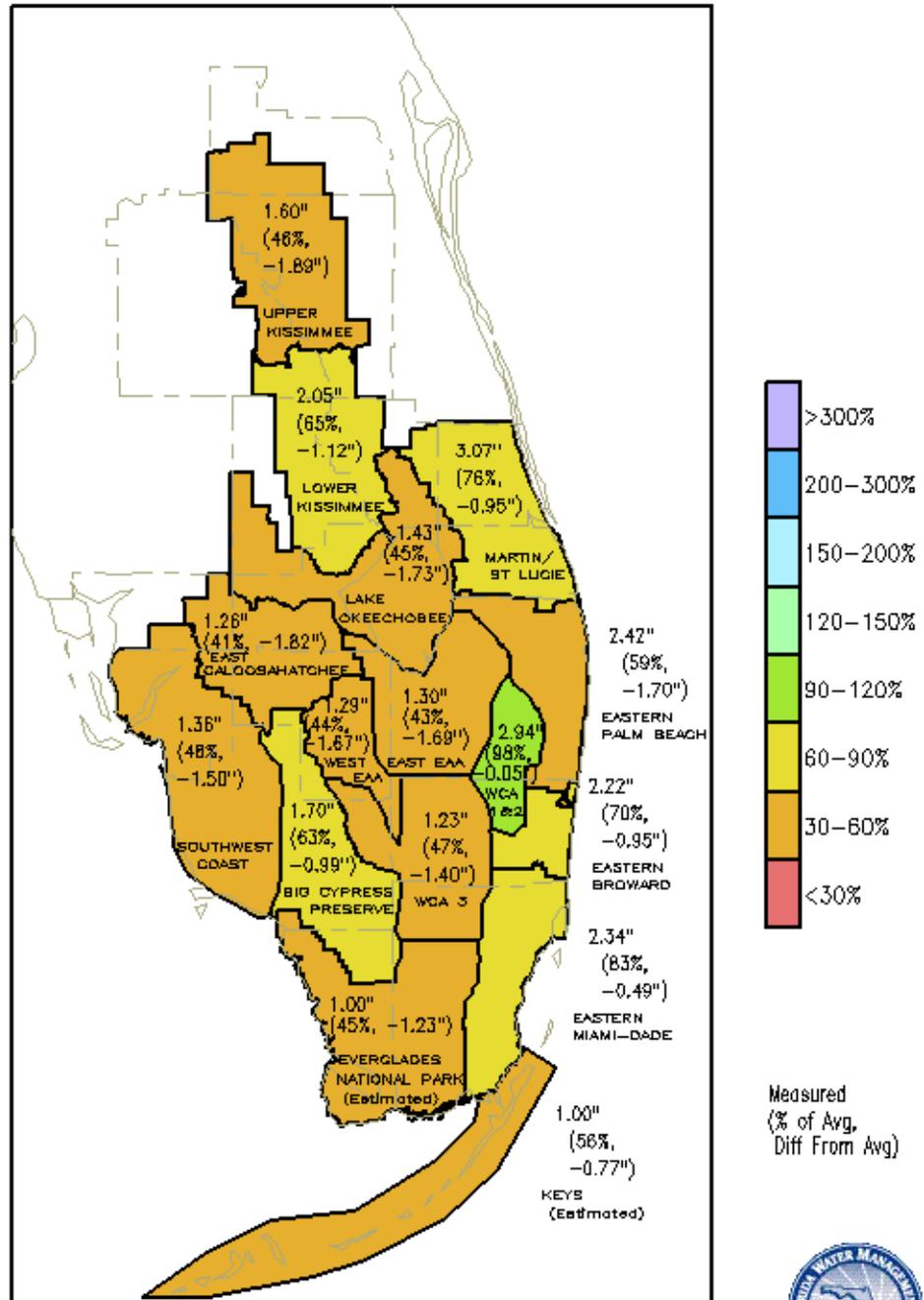
Wildfires

January 01, 2012 through March 13, 2012

Area Affected - Flagler County; Saint John's County; and Volusia County.

The Florida Forest Service region covering Flagler, St. Johns and Volusia counties has experienced 65 brush fires since the start of the year. This has been the most active fire season in the last five years. Daytona Beach News-Journal (Fla.), March 13, 2012

SFWMD Rainfall 02-mar-2012 to 01-apr-2012



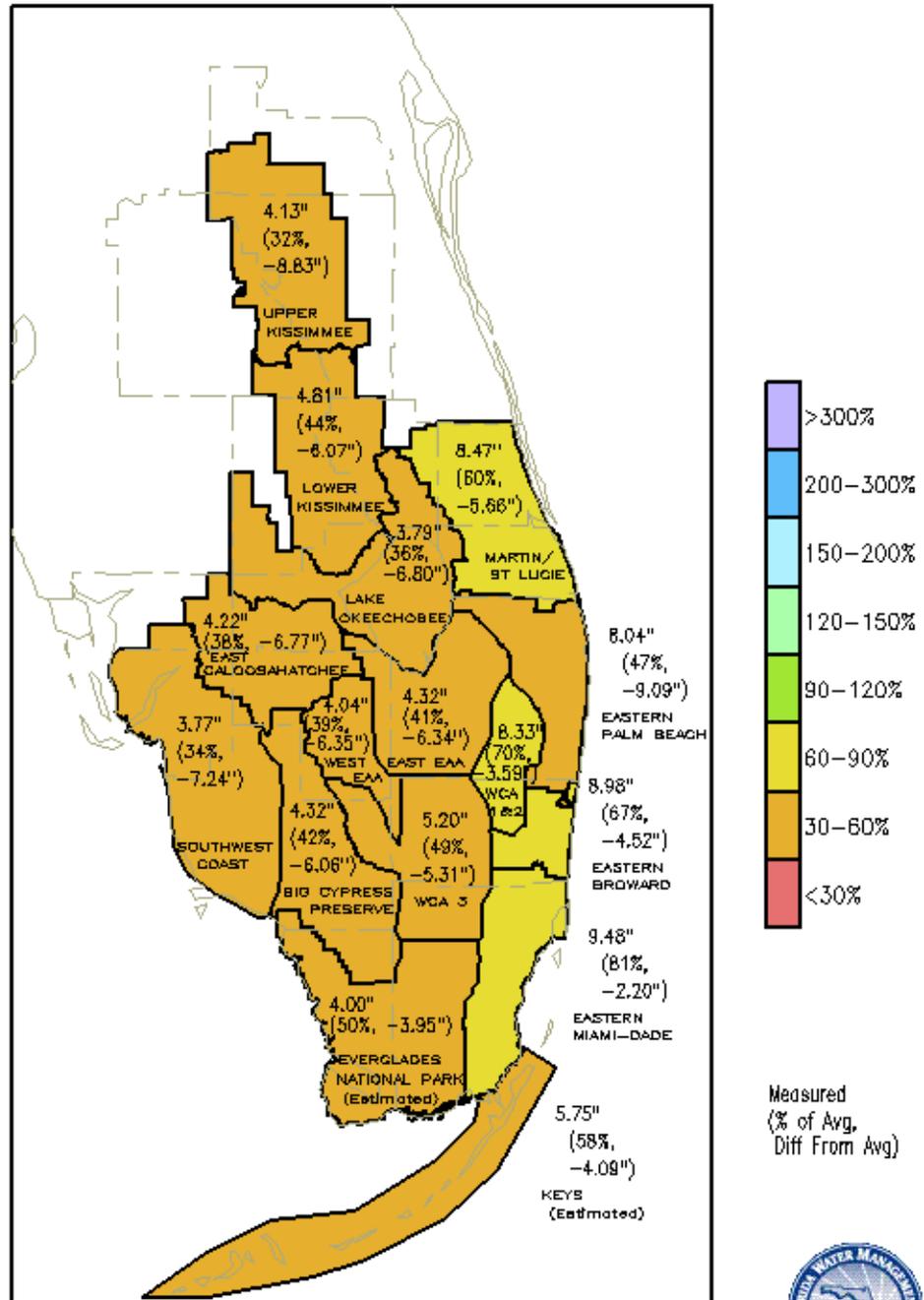
DISTRICT-WIDE: 1.77" (56%, -1.37")

GrADS: COLA/IGES

Figure 4 - Rain totals for the month of March 2012. For most areas, only 30-60% of normal rainfall has occurred this month.



SFWMD Rainfall 02-nov-2011 to 01-apr-2012



DISTRICT-WIDE: 5.33" (46%, -6.34")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

Figure 5 – Dry Season rainfall totals from November 2011 through March 2012. Only 30-60% of normal rainfall has occurred.



Drought Outlook for the Next 3 Months:

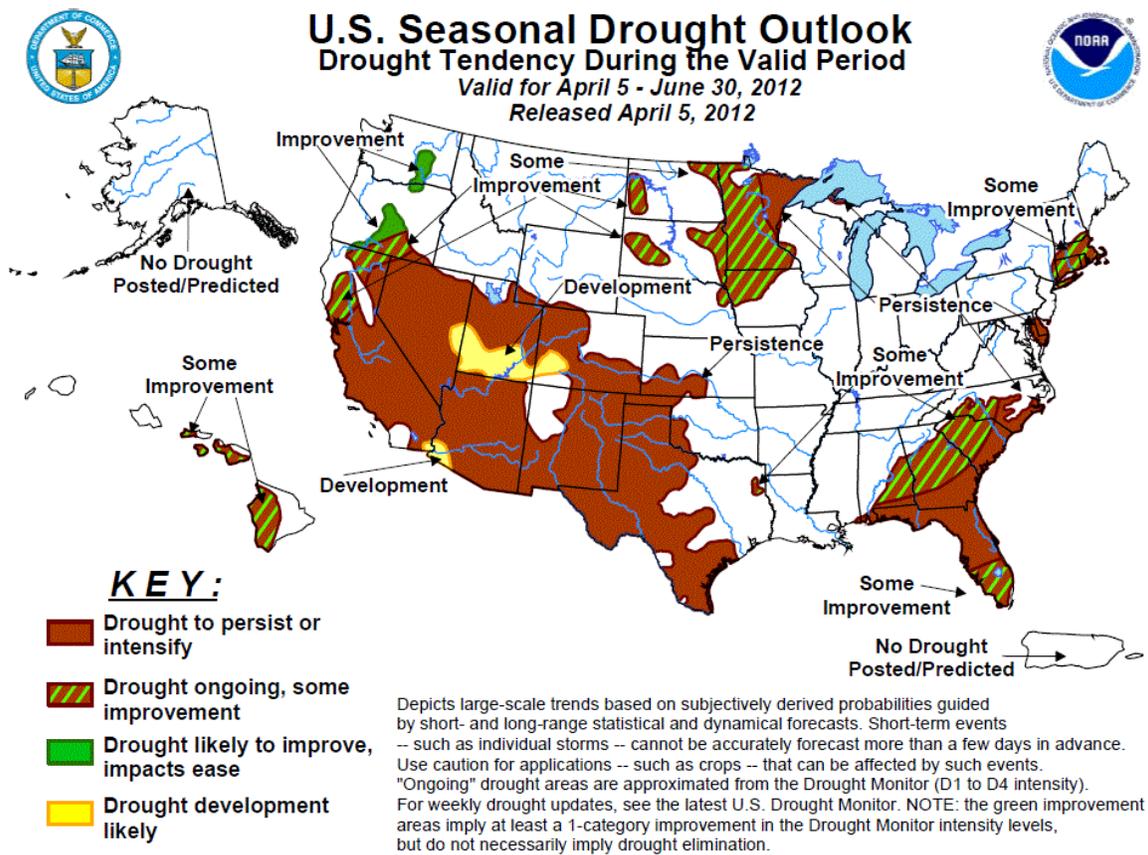


Figure 6 – Drought conditions are expected persist across most of Florida due to the weakening La Nina.

El Nino / La Nina (ENSO) Status – La Nina Advisory is in effect but ending. (Climate Prediction Center)

La Niña continued to weaken during March 2012 and should transition into ENSO-neutral in April 2012. This transition is indicated due to the observed warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean since January / February, 2012 when La Nina peaked (see Figure 7).

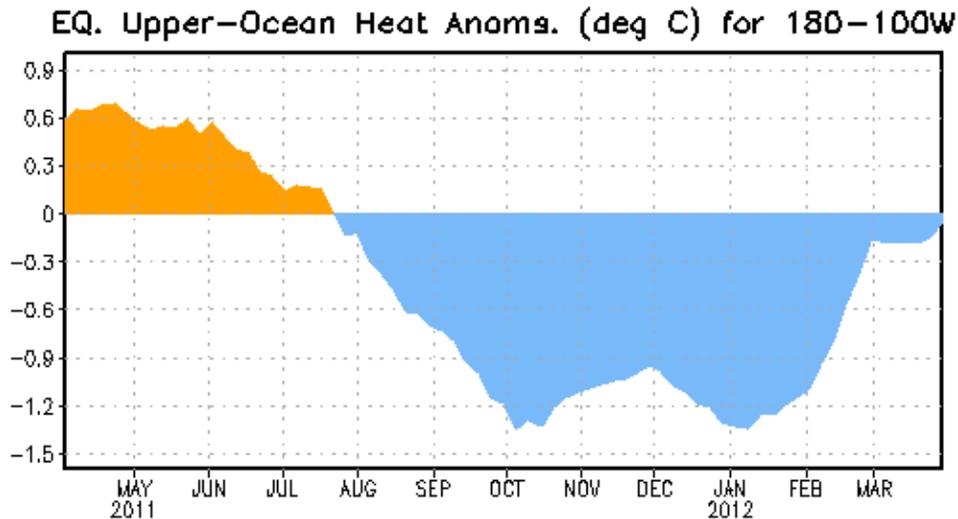


Figure 7 – Heat content of the upper section of the equatorial Pacific Ocean indicating continuous heating since La Nina peaked in January/February 2012.

Also affecting the transition to the ENSO-neutral phase are significant low-level westerly winds that have developed in the western tropical Pacific. This wind event could enhance the warming of the central and eastern Pacific within the coming few months. There is a slight chance that these coupled events could drive the cycle into a mild El Niño phase, but this is not a likely scenario.

A majority of models predict ENSO-neutral conditions beginning in April and continuing through the summer months (see Figure 8). Thereafter, there is considerable uncertainty in the forecast, which slightly favors ENSO-neutral or developing El Niño conditions over a return to La Niña conditions during the fall months.

Mid-Mar 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions

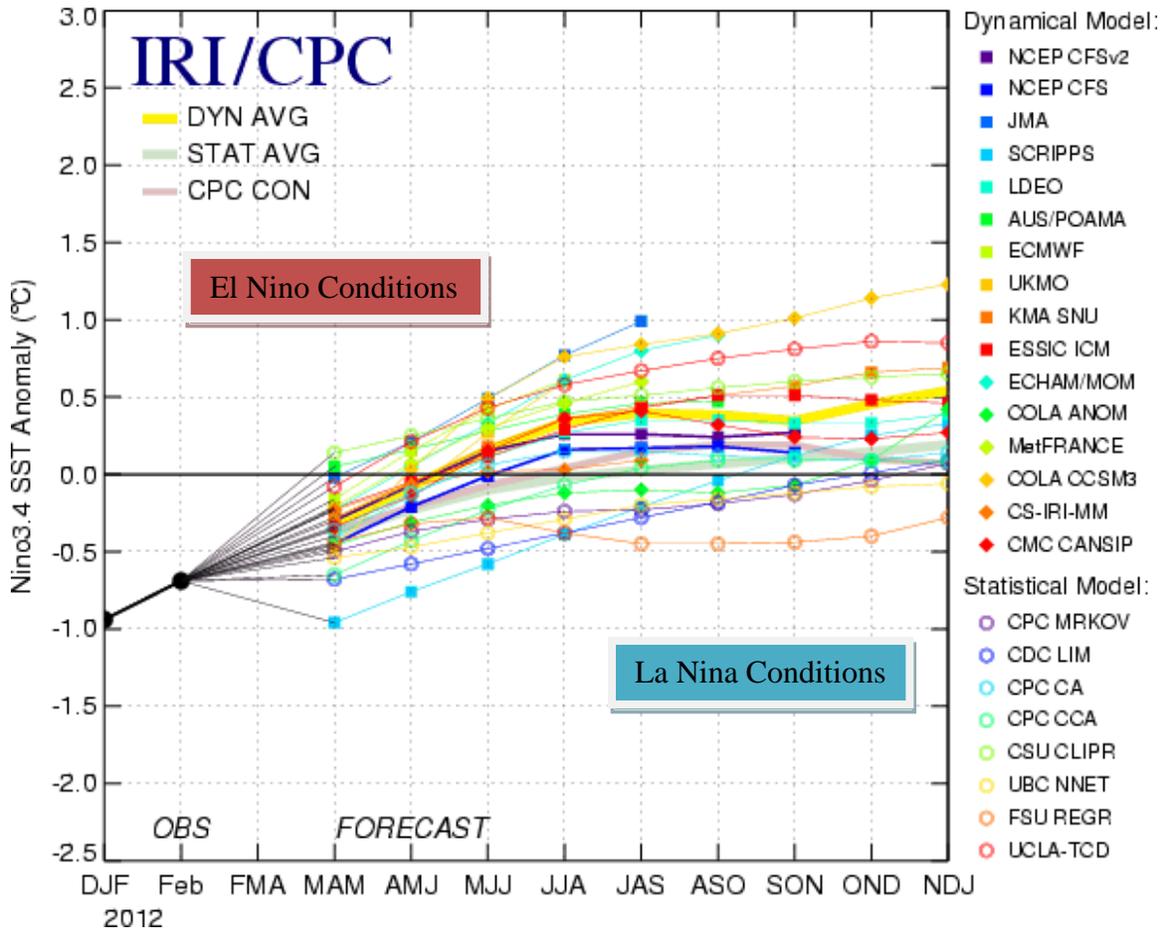


Figure 7 - All climate model runs from March 2012. The yellow line is climate forecaster's preferred dynamical model average indicating a return to ENSO-Neutral conditions this spring.

Central & South Florida Temperature Outlook:

April thru May – Warmer than normal
 May thru September – Much warmer than normal
 October – Warmer than normal
 November thru March 2013 - Normal

Central & South Florida Rainfall Outlook:

March thru May – Much drier than normal
 June – Drier than normal
 July – Normal
 August thru September – Wetter than normal
 November thru March 2013 - Normal

Lori Miller – FWS Hydrologist - 772.469.4231