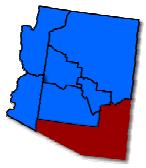
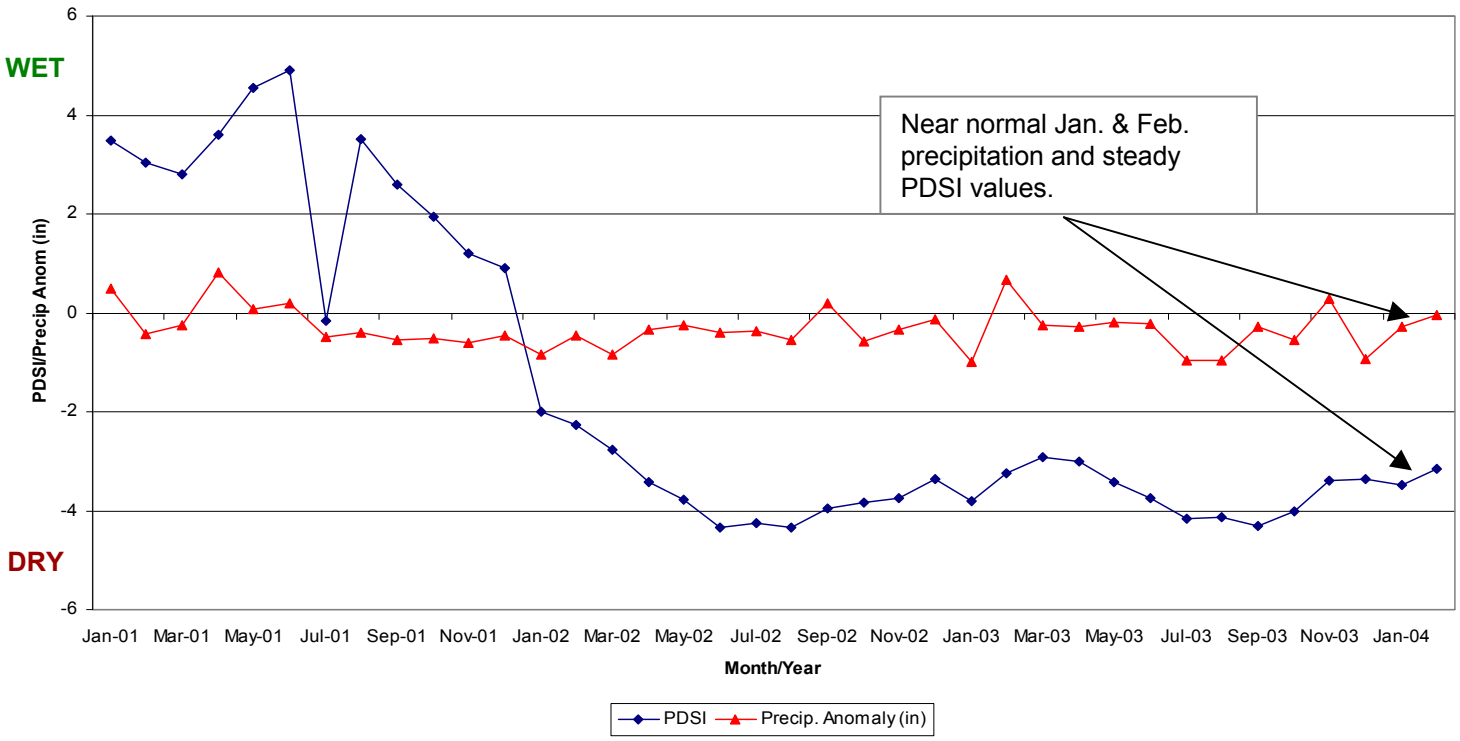
Southeast Arizona Climate Summary
Spring 2004



April 1, 2004 – February brought slightly below normal temps and near normal precipitation while March was the warmest on record for many locations across southeast Arizona. Several low pressure systems brought much needed winter precipitation including significant snow to higher elevations. March was dramatically different with several daily record highs set for Tucson and an all time high average monthly temperature of 66.7ºF. Most days were dry in March, but two separate convective thunderstorm events pushed precipitation amounts to near normal amounts across the region.

Forecasts for spring/early summer (April-May-June) from the Climate Prediction Center continue to predict that the southwest U.S. will see above normal temperatures with an equal chance of below, above, or normal precipitation. The lack of strong El Nino or La Nina conditions in the tropical Pacific continues to reduce the signal typically used to make higher confidence precipitation forecasts for the southwest U.S. The higher confidence temperature forecast is based on the upward trend in regional temperatures continuing.
(More information at http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/)

Southeast Arizona Palmer Drought Severity Index and Precip. Anomaly: 2001-2004



Near normal winter precipitation kept drought conditions from worsening as reflected in the steady PDSI values. Precipitation deficits going back to late 2001 have contributed to the very low PDSI values. Several inches of above normal precipitation will be necessary to fully satisfy the long-term deficits.

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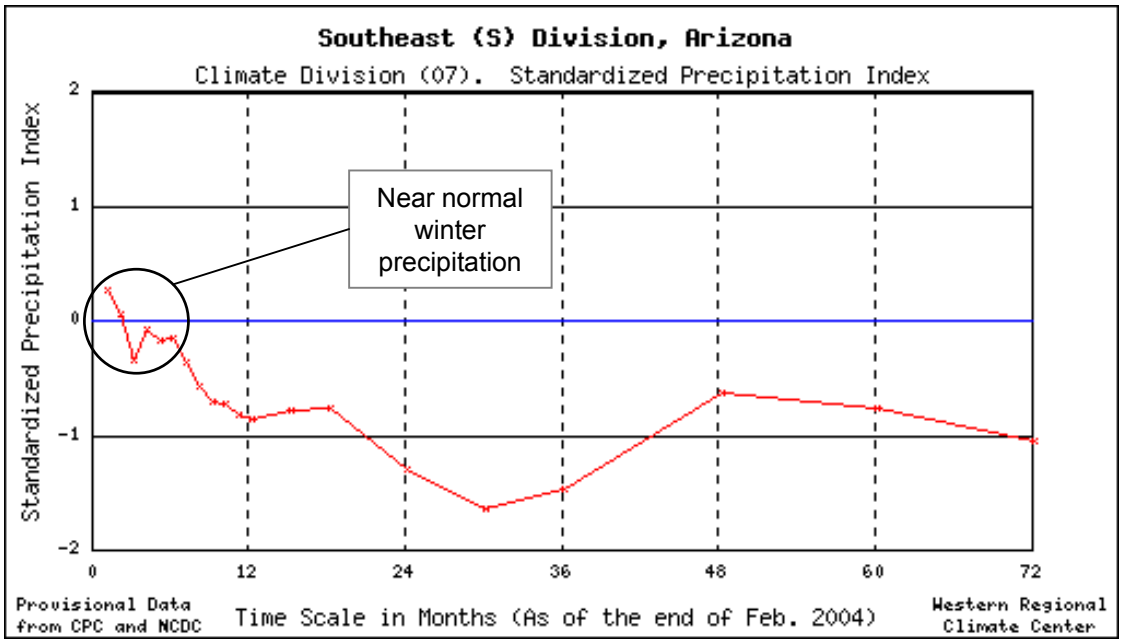


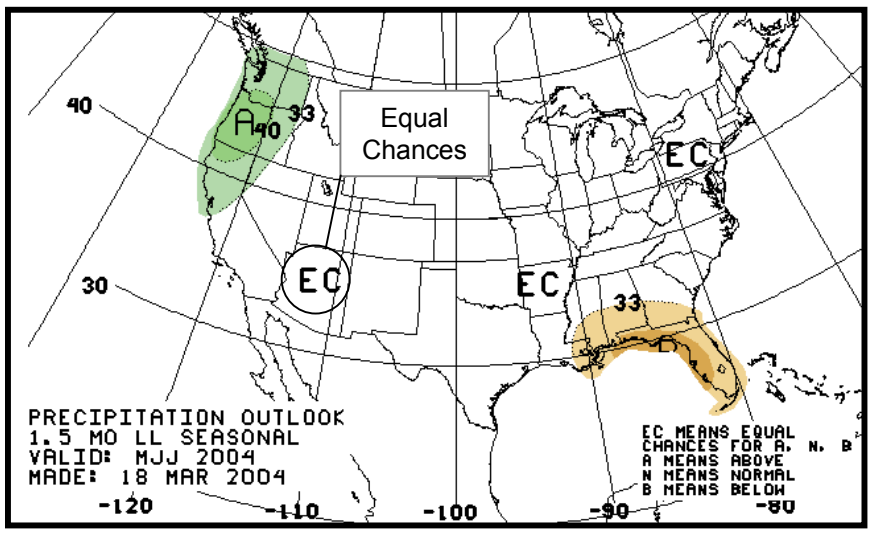
Precipitation in January and February helped to boost seasonal totals bringing SPI values closer to 0 (normal) for the 1-6 month lag period. Total precipitation for the 12 month period through the end of February is still close to one standard deviation below normal. Two and three year precipitation totals are still close to 1.5 standard deviations below normal.

Monthly average temperatures for February were below normal at most locations across SE Arizona. Precipitation amounts were variable across the region with most locations experiencing near normal conditions. Chiricahua National Monument received twice its normal amount of precipitation while Safford only saw half its normal amount.

Location	Feb. 2004 Avg. Temp (F)	Feb. Long-term Avg. Temp (F)	Feb. 2004 Total Precip(in.)	Feb. Long-term Avg. Precip (in)
Willcox	44.4	45.7	0.84”	0.87”
Safford	46.5	48.4	0.36”	0.63”
Chiricahua N.M.	42.4	45.1	2.17”	1.18”
Douglas	45.6	49.4	0.60”	0.67”
Tucson	50.8	54.6	0.45”	0.88”

(data from http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tucson and http://wrcc.dri.edu)

The May-June-July seasonal forecast from the Climate Prediction Center shows equal chances of above,normal or below normal precipitation. The ‘equal chances’ forecast is due to neutral El Nino conditions in the tropical Pacific Ocean. The lack of strong El Nino or La Nina conditions makes a high confidence precipitation forecast for the southwest U.S. region difficult. Temperature forecasts are predicting above normal summer temperatures across most of the western U.S. and are based primarily on strong decadal trends.



From: http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead02/off02_prcp.gif