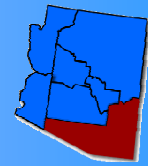




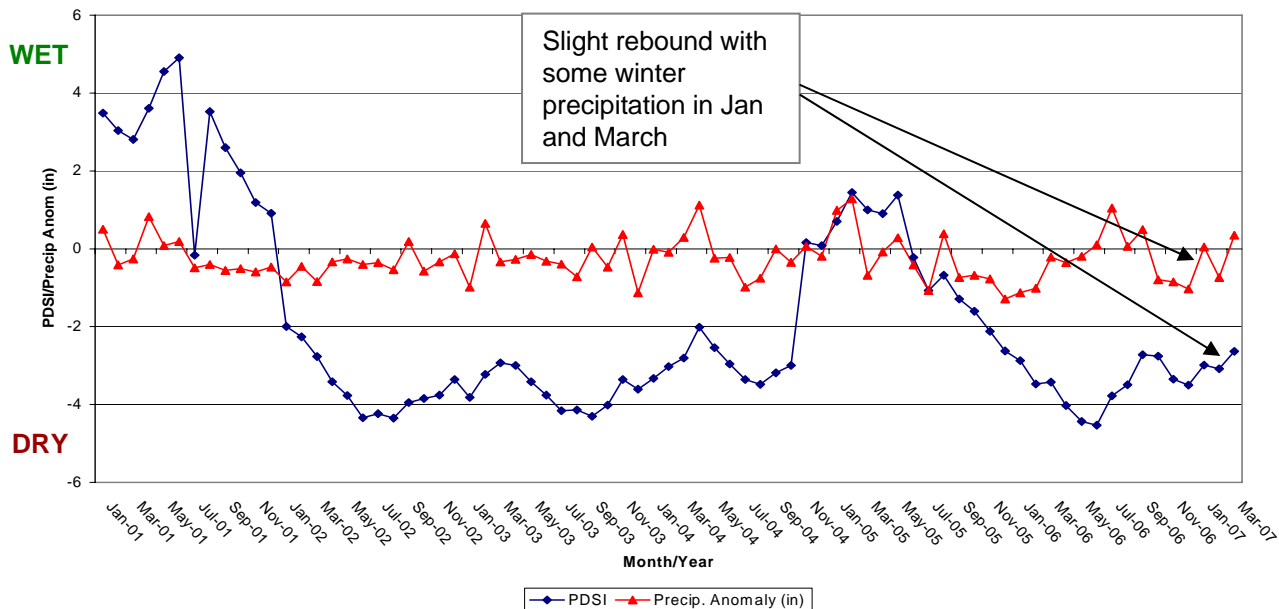
# Southeast Arizona Climate Summary Spring 2007



**April 16, 2007** – Overall the winter of 2006-07 was another dry one with total precipitation amounts generally below-average across southeast Arizona. Patterns of above-average precipitation accompanying the much anticipated El Niño event developed just south and east of the Arizona, bringing an exceptionally wet winter to much of New Mexico. Far-eastern Cochise, Graham and Greenlee counties were clipped several times by winter storms that pulled this moisture up into New Mexico in January and again in March. This storm track left much of the rest of southeast Arizona on the cool, windy and dry side of these passing storms. February was exceptionally dry with most of the region seeing less than 25% of average precipitation while Santa Cruz county only saw 2% of average for the month. Several cold snaps brought sub-freezing temperatures to most of southeast Arizona this past winter, but an early season heat wave in March brought +90 °F temps to the western desert areas. Overall temperatures were near to slightly-above average for the period of Jan-March.

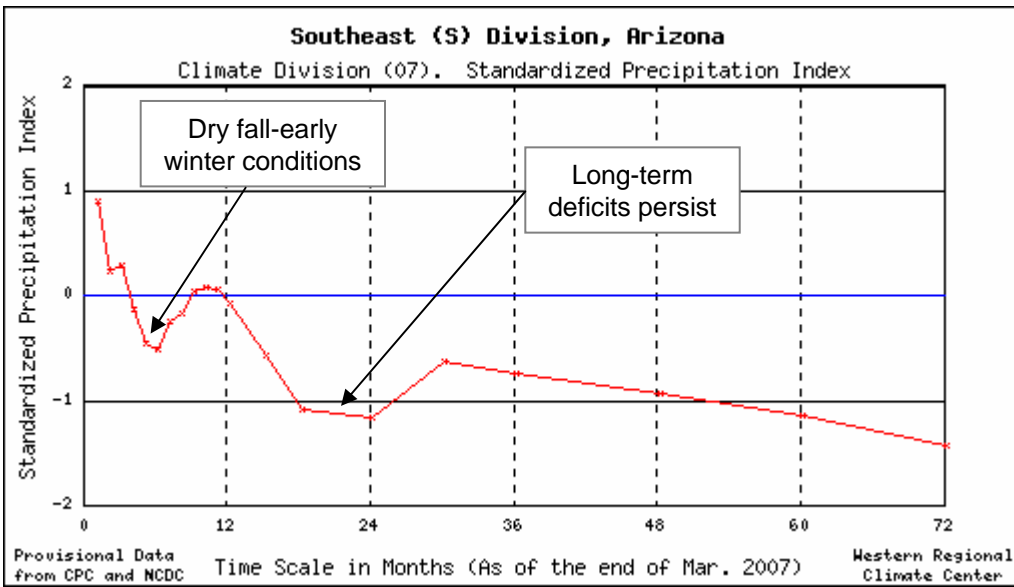
Forecasts for the upcoming spring season (May-June-July) from the Climate Prediction Center indicate that the southwest U.S. will see an increased chance of above-average temperatures and equal chances of above, below, or average precipitation. There is some indication that the dry circulation pattern that plagued much of Arizona this past winter will continue through the spring. The winter 06-07 jet stream pattern was split with a northerly storm track through the Pacific Northwest and another through northern Mexico. This pattern was weakly connected to the recent El Niño event, but the southern jet stream was displaced too far south for Arizona to benefit. The position of the jet stream consistently steered most storms away from Arizona leaving much of the region with below-average winter precipitation. Spring storm events are rare for southern Arizona, but this circulation pattern is expected to persist further reducing the chance of precipitation. Temperature forecasts indicate that temperatures will again be above-average for the spring period, consistent with long term trends. (More information on forecasts can be found at <http://www.cpc.noaa.gov>).

Southeast Arizona Palmer Drought Severity Index and Precip. Anomaly: Jan. 2001 - March 2007



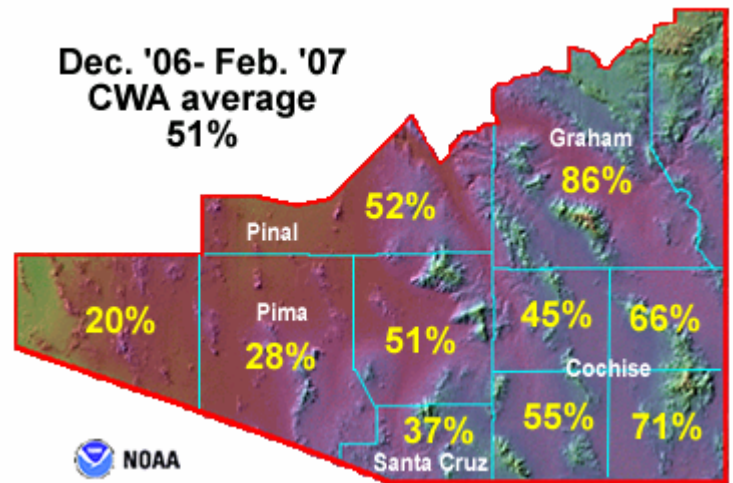
Precipitation amounts were generally below-average from last fall through early winter 2007. Average to slightly above-average precipitation in January and March helped boost PDSI values slightly indicating a minor improvement in short-term drought conditions. A closer examination of precipitation patterns across the area (next page) shows that most of this improvement occurred in far southeastern Arizona.

# Southeast Arizona Climate Summary – Spring 2007



Total March precipitation came in slightly above-average with an SPI value just less than 1. Overall the winter and fall periods together were drier-than-average with the 6-month SPI coming in at -0.5. Precipitation for the year (Apr-Mar) was close to average (SPI=0) for this period due to exceptional rainfall amounts experienced this last summer monsoon season. Longer-term drought conditions still exist at longer lags (18 to 72 months) with SPI values close to -1.

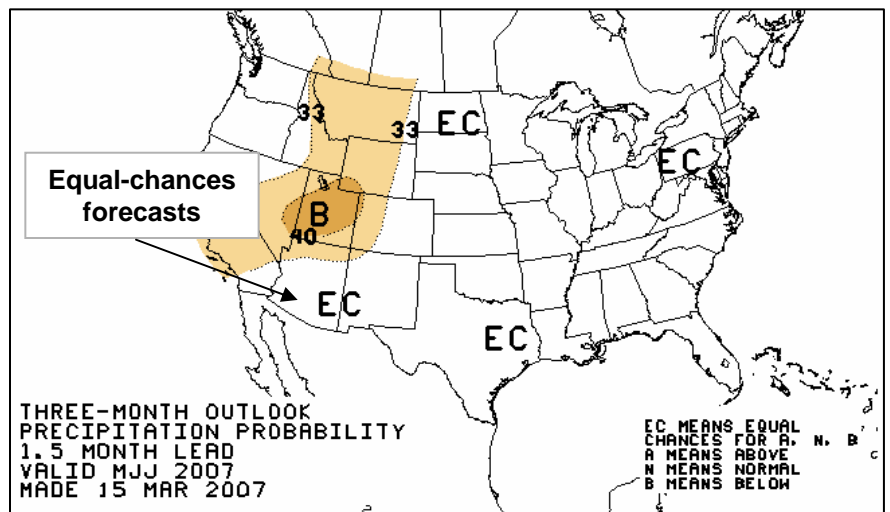
Southeast Arizona experienced below-average precipitation this past winter (Dec. 06 – Feb. 07) with areas of eastern Pima county receiving only 20% of average rainfall. Far eastern portions of the region fared better with precipitation amounts closer to, but still below-average. An active storm track just south and east of Arizona brought above average precipitation to northern Mexico and much of New Mexico. Portions of Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee counties were clipped by some of this activity leaving western areas SE AZ on the cool and dry side of passing storms.



[http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/twc/climate/seazDM/cwa\\_percent.php](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/twc/climate/seazDM/cwa_percent.php)

An online, streaming web presentation with more information on current conditions and spring forecasts is available at:  
<http://breeze.ltc.arizona.edu/p36654016/>

The May-June-July seasonal forecast from the Climate Prediction Center depicts equal chances of above, average, and below-average precipitation. This forecast means that there is an equal probability of receiving above or below-average amounts and that there is no strong climatic signal (like ENSO) on which to base a forecast. Spring is typically a dry period for SE AZ and a difficult season to forecast precipitation. There is no strong connection between Pacific Ocean temperature patterns and precipitation for Arizona during the spring. Temperature forecasts, on the other hand, confidently point to above-average temperatures through the spring into summer.



From: [http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/lead02/off02\\_prp.gif](http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead02/off02_prp.gif)