



TRANSCRIPT

NOAA 2021 U.S. Spring Outlook Virtual Media Briefing March 18, 2021 at 11 a.m. EDT via GoToMeeting

Hosted by NOAA National Weather Service Public Affairs

Media advisory about briefing

[NOAA to announce U.S. Spring Outlook and flood risk on March 18](#)

Spring Outlook news release

[Spring Outlook: Drought to persist, expand in U.S. West and High Plains](#)

1:58

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us for the announcement of NOAA's Spring Outlook and flood risk for 2021.

2:06

This media briefing is being recorded.

2:08

If you would not like to be recorded, please disconnect at this time.

2:14

My name is Jasmine Blackwell, and I'm the media contact for the Spring Outlook.

2:19

At the conclusion of this media briefing, you can reach me by e-mail at jasmine dot blackwell at NOAA dot gov, that's J-A-S-M-I-N-E, dot B-L-A-C-K-W-E-L-L at N-O-A-A dot G-O-V.

2:37

Or by phone at (202) 841-9184.

2:45

You can find the news release, and maps related to today's announcement on NOAA.gov.

2:50

And I would like to bring your attention to the chat box to the right of your screen, where you can find a direct link to the news release.

2:59

The beginning of today's media briefing will consist of about 15 minutes of remarks from our experts, and then we will take questions from reporters.

3:07

If you would like to ask a question during the question and answer portion of this briefing, please click the hand icon in the go to webinar window, next to your name in the attendee list that appears to the right of your screen.

3:21

My colleague, Lauren Gaches, will then call upon each quarter that has virtually raised his or her hand, and your line will then be unmuted.

3:30

Please be sure to state your full name and your media affiliation when asking your question.

3:36

The NOAA experts, with me today, to speak about the spring outlook are Mary Erickson, Deputy Director of the National Weather Service.

3:45

John Gottschalck, Chief of the Operational Branch at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, Ed Clark, Director of the National Water Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and we're also joined by doctor Don Fine Associate Director of Water Resources with the US Geological Survey.

4:05

And with that, I will turn it over to Mary Erickson.

4:12

Thank you, Jasmine.

4:14

I'd like to echo Jasmine's warm welcome to our reporters joining us for the announcement of NOAA's 2021, Spring, Outlook, and Flood Risk.

4:25

We're very glad that you could join to hear this important message.

4:28

Each of you is vital to ensuring our forecasts for seasonal weather and water events reach all members of local communities that may be at risk of flooding or other hazardous weather this spring.

4:41

Our scientists at NOAA produce this spring outlook to help people and businesses in the United States prepare for potential impacts on their lives and livelihoods.

4:50

This is key to building a more weather ready nation for all -- one that is ready, responsive, and resilient to extreme Weather, Water and Climate events.

5:01

The U.S. spring outlook includes three components: Flood Risk, Predictions for Temperature and Precipitation, An Outlook for drought from April through June.

5:12

We assess where the water will be, and whether we'll have too much or too little.

5:17

For the first time, in three years, we are not predicting major flooding, which is good news for many, but the message is not entirely positive.

5:26

Water levels in the West are low and we are predicting prolonged and widespread drought.

5:32

The southwest is already experiencing widespread, severe to exceptional drought and will remain the hardest hit region in the United States this spring.

5:41

In the southwest and other drought affected areas, water supply will continue to be a concern.

5:48

Jon Gottschalk will discuss the drought outlook, along with the temperature and precipitation outlook momentarily.

5:55

But before he does, I'd like to say a few words about preparedness.

5:59

In recent years, much of the nation has experienced widespread historic flooding.

6:04

In fact, just last year, more than 128 million people were at risk for flooding in their communities.

6:11

This year, it is a different story.

6:13

NOAA hydrologists do not predict major river flooding for the first time since 2018.

6:20

And although the overall threat this spring does not include major flooding, moderate to minor flooding is likely in limited areas. So we must remain diligent about our risk. And remember, significant spring rainfall can cause localized flash floods at any time.

6:37

People underestimate the force and power of water.

6:40

Many flood related deaths occur due to an individual walking or driving into or near floodwaters.

6:48

This is preventable.

6:49

It's never safe to drive or walk into floodwaters.

6:53

Please help everyone remember our key message: turn around, don't drown.

6:59

Folks can stay up to date with the latest local forecast, and we hope they will not let their guard down because heavy rainfall can still lead to devastating flooding events, even in areas where the overall risk is forecast to be low or has not been impacted by flooding before.

7:17

In talking about preparedness, flood insurance can be the difference between recovery and financial devastation.

7:23

We encourage folks to visit fema's National Flood Insurance Program Website at www.floodsmart.gov to learn more about how you can protect yourself and your family this spring.

7:36

As always, our scientists and Noah's 13 River Forecast Centers, and our 122 local Weather Forecast Offices, are continuing to support their local decision makers and efforts to ensure community readiness for potential flood impacts.

7:52

This year marks 10 years of our Weather Service vision to build a more weather ready nation, and we acknowledge that we cannot meet this vision for a weather ready nation alone.

8:03

Teamwork and partnerships have been and will continue to be absolutely essential to our success.

8:09

Through our Weather Ready Nation Ambassador program, we now have a diverse array of more than 11,380 organizations.

8:19

Who, in addition to our partners in the emergency management community and the Weather Water Climate Enterprise act as force multipliers to become societal change agents to help us achieve these successes in community readiness.

8:33

We look forward to continuing to leverage these partnerships with communities and organizations across the nation.

8:40

We're focused on ensuring that our products and services are accessible to all Americans, including those under-represented and most vulnerable, realizing our vision of a more weather ready nation for all.

8:53

Before handing it over to John, I would like to take the time to thank our federal partners for joining us today.

9:00

We'll get a streamflow update from Dr. Don Cline of the Department of Interior's, US.

9:04

Geological Survey, and Brad Rippey from the US Department of Agriculture and Karen Gleason from the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information are also with us today to lend their expertise during the question and answer portion.

9:19

Thanks to all of you.

9:21

With that, I will turn it over to John at Noah's Climate Prediction Center who will discuss the drought, temperature and precipitation outlook. John?

9:36

Thanks, Mary.

9:37

Nearly one half of the country extending from the Pacific Coast to the Great Plains and upper midwest, is currently experiencing moderate to exceptional drought.

9:47

The region that has been hardest hit by what represents that most significant drought since 2013, is the southwest US.

9:56

In this region, the failed monsoon during the summer of 2020, the development of La Nina in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, and it's associated below normal precipitation this past winter resulted in the widespread, ongoing, moderate to exceptional drought conditions that we are seeing in the southwest.

10:16

We expect drought conditions to persist, and grow in coverage over the next three months with expansion of drought conditions primarily favored for much of the High Plains, as well as the Southern two-thirds of the Florida Peninsula, and many of the drought impacted areas listed above range land, and packer's winter. We have already experienced adverse effects.

10:38

All of it all of which were exasperated by the february arctic air outbreak.

10:44

Much of the Northern Plains and Upper Mississippi Valley absorb substantial snowball, past winter and make the Northern plains in particular susceptible further drought intensification.

10:55

Do the favorite, above normal temperatures.

10:58

Drought improvement or removal is likely for small regions.

11:03

Drought across the eastern half of the contiguous US.

11:06

In a small region in the Pacific north-west where the ladder improvement is primarily related to anticipated snow melt over the next three months.

11:15

Despite the recent heavy snowfall, from the front range of the Rockies eastward to the North-Central Great Plains.

11:23

Favorite above normal temperatures and in some areas below normal precipitation, over the spring as a whole, maintain the risk for drought development.

11:31

Also in the region, are seasonal mean temperatures warmer than normal conditions are favorite for nearly the entire contiguous United States.

11:41

Above normal temperatures the spring, in combination with low soil moisture are likely to contribute to worsening or further crop development in the Central and Southern Great Plains.

11:51

Hawaii, in western and northern areas of Alaska, are most likely to observe above normal temperatures, during the April through June period.

11:59

Only the far Pacific northwest.

12:01

Alaska Panhandle and East Alaska, or favored to observe below normal temperatures for the April to June period.

12:09

Looking at the precipitation outlook, above normal precipitation is favored for parts of the Great Lakes, the Ohio Valley.

12:17

While the Central Pacific Coast across the Rockies to the Southern Plains

12:22

Are most likely to experience below normal precipitation during the April through June period.

12:29

That concludes my remarks and with that, I will turn it over to add that will speak about the Spring flood risk.

12:37

Thank you, John.

12:38

I'll reiterate the takeaway that we're not predicting major flooding. However, water levels in the west are low and we're predicting prolonged and widespread drought.

12:47

NOAA categorizes flood risk as minor, moderate, major, or record flooding.

12:51

See the news release for definitions of these categories, but in brief, minor flooding means minimal or no property damage, but roads may be inundated. Moderate flooding means some, some inundation of structures and roads near Streams. Major flooding means extensive inundation structures in roots.

13:08

And record flooding is when flooding, meets or exceeds historical levels.

13:13

Approximately 82 million people are at risk for flooding in their communities, with nearly nine million at risk for moderate flooding.

13:20

However, overall, a reduced risk of spring flooding exists this year, attributed mainly to a dry fall and winter, along with limited snow, still remaining on the ground.

13:30

Major flooding is not expected this spring season.

13:33

Please be advised that this outlook is on the timescale of weeks to months, not days or hours, and localized flooding may be caused by heavy intense rainfall at any time.

13:43

The Lower Missouri River Basin is currently experiencing ongoing and forecast minor to moderate flooding, and as with typical years, the risk of minor to moderate flooding is predicted to continue through the spring over the lower third of the Missouri River Basin.

13:58

Over the coastal plain of the Carolinas.

14:00

An elevated risk of widespread minor to moderate flooding exists, driven by above normal precipitation over the winter months, which has led to highly saturated soil conditions and above to much above normal stream flows.

14:12

The basins with moderate flooding risk are the noose and the lower keep the river basins in North Carolina.

14:18

The lower PD river basin in the Carolinas, the lower CMT, and Edisto River basin, South Carolina.

14:25

Additionally, an above normal flood risk with minor to isolated, moderate flooding, It was predicted, particularly in the early spring months over the lower Ohio River Basin, due to a wet winter, leading to ongoing flooding, and saturated near surface soils.

14:41

For much of the Western United States, it is too early to assess spring flooding due to continued snowfall in the higher elevations.

14:48

Heavy rainfall from thunderstorms or rapid warming could increase this risk. However, the risk is high for flooding and debris flow in areas with burn scars for recent wildfires.

14:59

Additional river basins with the risk of spring flooding are identified in her hydroelectric assessment, which is linked in the news release on NOAA.gov.

15:07

Our hydrologic assessment also provides information about the nation's water supply forecast for agriculture, municipalities and industrial uses.

15:14

Water supply predictions are generally too much below normal, across much of the southwestern United States, Southern Oregon and Idaho, and across the Rocky Mountains due to below too much below normal snowpack combined is ongoing widespread drought.

15:29

Finally, our assessment also provides a first look at some of the major drivers influencing summer hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico in the Chesapeake Bay.

15:37

The predicted reduced spring flood risks across the majority of the Mississippi River Basin, is anticipated to result in a near normal springtime discharge of nutrients and fresh water from the Basin.

15:48

We should create conditions for an average hypoxic zone in the northern Gulf of Mexico this summer.

15:54

In the Chesapeake Bay. We're also expecting an average hypoxic zone based on the predicted near normal spring flood risk. These conditions are based on the assumption of typical summer conditions, such as tropical storms or drought.

16:08

Heavy rainfall at any time can lead to flooding even in areas where the overall risk is considered low.

16:13

Rainfall, intensity and location can only be accurately forecast days in the future. Therefore, flood risk can change rapidly.

16:20

The public can determine whether their community is in a flood risk area by monitoring local flow conditions at [water dot weather dot gov](http://water.weather.gov). This concludes the hydrologic Outlook portion. And now we'll invite my colleague, Dan Klein, from the US. Geological Survey to provide updates on our nation's current river conditions. Don, over to you.

16:41

Thank you, Ed.

16:43

I'll take just a few minutes to confine my remarks to describing this map and explaining what you're seeing here.

16:49

This is the National Water dashboard that shows current conditions or stream gages across the country about 7500 gages.

16:58

This map was pulled yesterday at one PM Eastern Time, but the data are live if you move to go into the Dashboard yourself.

17:07

Then there's a short tour of the color coding here is circles that are green.

17:15

Our stream gages that are in normal conditions for this time of year, and that's about 42% of the gages across the country.

17:24

Gages that are orange or red are below normal.

17:29

25% of the gages fall into that category, and you can see the Western drought that was just discussed.

17:35

You can also see that Southern Michigan, Northern Indiana Ohio, the Cumberland Plateau.

17:41

Those few other areas are fairly well below, normal, sold right now in March.

17:48

Then colors that are light or dark blue, or black are above normal.

17:56

And you can see the concentration there is really in the eastern portions of Nebraska, Kansas, and most of Missouri at this time, and that represents current high-water as a result of recent precipitation. Does that describe that?

18:14

Although major flooding is not forecast for the next coming weeks and months, it's highly probable unlikely that any given heavy rain event we will see these kinds of high water signals that are stream gages local.

18:32

So, with that, I'll conclude my remarks and turn it over to Jasmine.

18:40

Thank you, Don.

18:41

Before we move on to the Q and A portion of our media briefing, I would just like to remind you of the instructions that were given at the top of the call.

18:49

If you would like to ask a question, please click the hand icon in the goto Webinar window next to your name in the attendee list that appears to the right of your screen.

18:59

My colleague, Lauren Geishas, will then call upon each reporter that has a virtually raise 10.

19:05

Once you are called upon, your line will be unmuted.

19:08

Please be sure to state your name and media affiliation when asking your question.

19:15

With that, I will turn it over to Lauren who will be moderating the questions and answers.

19:21

Thanks so much, Jasmine.

19:24

Again reporters, please use the raise hand icon available to you in the attendee window next to your name.

19:29

Our first question I see here comes from step Borenstein.

19:35

Says, Give me just a quick moment and I will open your line.

19:41

Good. Thank you. Actually, it's two questions.

19:44

one from Mary, and then 1 for 1 of your many drought experts, maybe David or John?

19:53

In terms of, you're talking about how there's very little, you know, major flooding but all this worsening droughts when you weigh it in terms of damage to the economy and damage to crops overall.

20:11

Given this spring outlook, what makes it?

20:14

The worst is the worsening drought, more damaging than the lessening flood or because flood is so damaging. As you say this is, in the end, a net positive.

20:28

So, the US. In other words, trying to weigh the two risks, one that's gone down.

20:33

one that's gone up, which is made, you know, what, in the end, whereas the net net positive net negative, then in terms of historical, can you weigh how bad the drought outlook is for this time period mid march compared to previous years? Thank you.

20:59

I think that Yasmin, Robert, David? Rank order.

21:08

This particular drought in the west that you're able to do that day part.

21:14

Prediction Center, as far as the drought goes in our outlook here, we still have some time for the agricultural to provide timely rainfall.

21:29

If you do get the rainfall it's because it's coming at what time of the season, the spring, late spring and early summer is a wet season for most of the central part of the country. And we're only generally March right now, although we are predicting below normal precipitation, above normal temperatures.

21:45

If the rains are timely enough, we still could be OK as far as the actual output of the agriculture and the Caster's arranges go.

21:55

So unknown right now towards the hydrological aspect. Goes probably defer to Ed Clark or someone else answers your question.

22:08

Actually, I'm just trying to figure this tense, this, in other words, the net net is, which is, which is worse, and then in terms of just, you know, what I was looking for for you more was the context of half.

22:21

Where does this way upon him, like the last 20 or 30 years discipline, the worst or medium?

22:28

I want to be as far as actual agriculture impacts.

22:33

Can give you a better statistic.

22:35

Read.

22:40

This is Brad Rippey right now, we see the majority of the drought focused across the western half of the country.

22:48

And that does include key winter wheat production areas, as well as a lot of pastures and rangeland from the Plains westward.

22:58

Those have already been impacted to some degree by the current drought and we do expect to see those impacts continue as drought is expected.

23:10

Are they the heart of the corn and soybean production areas? It is too early, as you mentioned, to really be terribly concerned about the drought impacts.

23:19

I did look at the numbers from the drought monitor this morning.

23:22

We have roughly about one S of the US. Corn and soybean production areas currently experiencing drought and that's mostly in the western production areas.

23:31

In terms of spring wheat, that would be a bigger concern. Most of the spring wheat grown across the northern Plains, 78% of the spring wheat production area is currently experiencing drought.

23:42

That area last had a significant drought in 20 17.

23:46

We do have concerns in some of our western production areas, particularly the high Plains, the drought could be a big factor as we move into the early part of the growing season for some row crops.

24:13

This is Lauren, I believe, sasse, but hopefully addresses your question. So thank you so much.

24:18

I think we have our next question from, let's see here. It looks like Brian Sullivan.

24:26

Brian, your line should be open. All right. Awesome.

24:30

Thanks, everyone, for doing this. I'm kind of focused on the crop situation in California, as well as, you know, you covered the winter wheat and spring wheat in the mid-west, but for California. You know, amens take a lot of water, a lot of vegetables out there. Any kind of prognosis as to what we can expect and those lands?

24:52

Yeah, this is Brad Rippey again.

24:54

Currently looking at the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada based on information provided by the California Department of Water Resources.

25:03

It looks like we're going to end up with about a 60% of average snowpack that might take up a little bit over the next couple of weeks, but we're effectively to the end of the accumulation season.

25:14

Lot of the water that goes into agriculture comes from the Sierra Nevada watersheds.

25:20

And so, there are going to be some important local and regional decisions on how that water is allocated for agriculture and other purposes.

25:29

That's a question too much detail to really get into and address here.

25:34

But, I think, suffice to say there will be some water cutbacks allocation cutbacks in California and perhaps elsewhere in the southwestern quadrant of the country this spring.

25:45

So there could be some impacts on these high, high water demand crops, like your crops, and, and other things require a lot of water. But, again, that's more of a local and regional question, and probably too much to address in this national forum here.

26:05

Um.

26:09

What do you folks see for the Colorado River?

26:20

For Colorado River added, can you direct us to the right RFC for that question? Yes, let's turn to Paul Miller at the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center.

26:30

Hey, everybody.

26:33

So the Colorado River Basin, we've had pretty dry winter snowpack accumulation.

26:39

Um, it's, it's, everything is forecast. It should be well below normal.

26:45

Our water supply forecasts, also, all forecasted to be below normal at this point.

26:52

So there's no real blood risk but most of our concern is, but the inflow into the reservoirs, and that's what our stakeholders are mostly concerned about this year.

27:06

We've just had such a long persistence, drought, period.

27:11

Many of our reservoirs, especially the large ones, like, like, Nepal, are at very low levels.

27:17

Um, and I probably defer to our colleagues in Reclamation to get into the policy impacts of that.

27:25

But, yes, just generally, dry conditions throughout the Colorado River Basin.

27:36

But happy to talk in more detail about any of that.

27:40

Let's handhold.

27:44

Thanks, Brian.

27:46

No, That's that's great. Thank you.

27:47

I was just trying to get an overview of the Colorado and the reservoir, so he answered the question perfectly.

27:55

Stamper.

27:57

It looks like our next question comes from Davis Nolin.

28:01

Davis, your launch the open, please let us know your outlet as well.

28:07

TV shows two simple questions: We'll be doing a story on the evening news about this course, in the beginning, you sort of gave out a recall: this flavor but, I wouldn't I was already featuring in my mind, OK? This is a generalized localized flooding from individual thunderstorm. And what the word that correctly, sort of, you might have Q and What was it? Could you say that one more time, I'm recording it, so it gives your verb, instead of, sort of, say, correctly, You know, for my part of the country, know, just shows minor flooding in some of my southern Western sanctions, brown national itself. It doesn't have any flooding it off, but we all know that there's still going to be localized shrinks. You repeat that statement for me, just so I can say directly. And I have one other question, could you once again give the descriptors of minor moderate major?

29:00

And I want to get that, so I can say that correctly as well.

29:05

And can you help us with that?

29:08

Yeah, so the statement I said was that, Please be advised that this outlook is on the timescale weeks to months, not hours, or days. And localized flooding may be caused by heavy intense rainfall at any time. And I'll give you the definition again minor flooding means have minimal or no property damage, but roads may be inundated.

29:29

Moderate flooding means some inundation of structures and roots near Streams. And major flooding means extensive inundation of structures and roots and then record flooding, as measured by the US. Geological Survey is when flooding meets or exceeds historical levels.

29:46

OK, Thank you, very much.

29:51

It looks like we have a question from Joe Graal. Jelena Are you able to unmute your line and ask your question?

30:03

She may not be able to looking here in the chat window. She did ask if we could talk about the factors driving the outlook in the New York area, so I think that's for temperature and precipitation.

30:19

Yeah, I think for the north-east, I'll pass it to Ron Horwood these ERS, senior hydrometeorologist, Hydro meteorologist at north-east River Forecast Center.

30:30

Thank you.

30:32

Yes, Hi.

30:33

This is Ron Horwood with the north-east River Forecast Center right now for the metro. New York City area, we're seeing water supply.

30:44

I'm not being impacted too much. The snow has melted off of the Catskills, which supply the main drinking water for New York City.

30:53

And, as long as we ensure, normal, to above normal precipitation, As this forecast, we don't see any widespread drought, or water supply issues going forward at this time.

31:12

Great. Thank you, John. Do you want to add for temperature and precipitation in that area?

31:18

Yes, for example, the New York City region, as you can see on the map, that's on display.

31:23

Now, we are continuing to favor above normal temperatures in the Greater New York City area, and with a precipitation map, we also are favoring above normal precipitation, as far as the precipitation goes, the primary factors.

31:39

You know, driving leave the outlook this year.

31:42

For somebody areas, or towards the Great Lakes and Northern Ohio Valley, there is some residual potential La Nina influence, which tends to favor above normal precipitation, that some of those areas, further to the east.

31:54

Some of the general basis for the outlook is just generally longer term precipitation trends that have been pretty, strongly positive, as well as support from a number of our numerical weather forecast and climate forecast models were had very good consistency or favoring above normal precipitation there. and for temperature, also, similar factors were involved for the temperature outlook.

32:21

Great, thank you.

32:23

It looks like I have another question here from Nancy Garder. She's put a question in the chat window and our question is: Can you walk through the factors that you believe will contribute to worsening drought across the Central and Northern Plains? Are there any El Nino or la Nina influences and looking at the persistence of climatology B and savor, I believe Nancy is located in Oklahoma so, that may I'm sorry, Omaha, World Herald.

32:52

Yeah, I cannot pick that, Lauren.

32:54

So, there's a number of factors, one with respect to developing a drought condition.

33:01

We really had overwhelming support from a number of different factors including to some degree residual anemia factors, which went as we go into the later spring. Do favor a slight tilt toward warmer temperatures across parts of the interior, but with such generally dry or soil moisture condition.

33:20

And as I mentioned earlier, some of the numerical climate forecast that we use, the token overwhelmingly consistent over time. That we really have higher competence and above normal temperatures across much of the country, and that includes Central Plains region. And so with those factors overall, even though they needed to play some role, it was really a combination of many different factors on the precipitation. And for the target temperature and precipitation.

33:50

And again, linear does play a role with generally drier conditions from the Northern Rockies down across the eastern and central High Plains for example and into the south-west, including Texas.

34:04

And so what do you need to play? Probably more of a role there, but, also, again, very consistent signatures in many of our forecast guidance products to help us with that in addition to feedback from low soil moisture conditions across much of that area.

34:19

So, I hope that answers your question.

34:23

Thank you, John.

34:25

I see, let's see here. I believe John Schwartz has a question from The New York Times. John, if I unmute your line, let's see if I can grab him himself, need it, that's OK. So John's question is, could one of our experts potentially talk about what the forecasts for drought mean for the upcoming wildfire season?

34:49

Sure, I can take a first stab at that.

34:53

In general, as you can see, if we bring the drought monitor map up, you can see just how extreme the drought has been across many areas of the southern Southern High Plains and south-west. And for example, this dark shade there are, you know, stream two exceptional drought, which cover a pretty large area from the south-west into the western parts of Texas. And so the drier conditions in general, obviously, are certainly a favorable factor for wildfire, as well as favorite, pretty, strongly favored.

35:27

Prospects were above, above, normal temperatures.

35:30

Then when you work and also favorite below normal precipitation across much of those areas, it would tend to favor, probably enact a wildfire season. There's other factors, of course, that an impact that as far as feels at the surface and other more, varying factors, wind and humidity.

35:46

But as a general climate perspective, there's likely to be an enhanced wildfire season across the Southern High Plains setting with time over the course of the spring and summer into some of the higher latitudes moving forward in the south-west.

36:04

Great, John. Thank you. And hopefully that answers your question.

36:09

At this time, I'm not seeing any other reporters with their hands raised. So I'll just give one more reminder, in terms of how to ask the question, in case anyone would like to still do so, There is a hand icon, next to your name on the attendee list, feel free to use the raise hand function, and I will keep an eye out here for another moment to see if anyone else has a question they'd like to ask.

36:28

I see that say here, it looks like Seth has another question. Let me open line.

36:34

Yeah, Seth yourselves muted if you can open the line.

36:41

I get. Let me try this again maybe for Mary. Especially when you look at billion dollar weather disasters in the past year. Flooding often brings in you these billion dollar weather disasters, and drought, sometimes less so.

36:56

So overall, for the US as a whole when you see this hot worsening droughts that you were talking about, but few less flood risks, I'm trying to figure can you just try to give me some sort of do you think this is a net positive, or is this a net negative in terms of damage for and costs for the United States.

37:22

I think Seth, I guess what I would say is that, you know, even last year, we did have as a part of our \$2020 billion disasters. So, a drought induced component from the Western central drought and heat on the summer to fall period. We also had contributions to the disasters from the fires.

37:46

It's, it's not in our swim lane to be predicting the economic impact. So I would defer to others on that. And that's why we had the folks speak from, from the ag, you know, components and things like that. I would say that it's definitely something that we're watching and very concerned about. It does play into the billion dollar disasters and I would like to see if our colleague from NCI would like to Karen Gleason if she would like to make any comments about how we look at those billion dollar disasters.

38:25

This is Karen Gleason from the National Centers for Environmental Information. The billion dollar weather and climate disasters product that we maintain at NCI.

38:37

indicated last year certainly that the western wildfires, which were extensive across the Western US, not specifically localized, know, we're a major contribution to the cumulative disaster total's money wise.

38:54

The drought, as well as a separate entity, was also rather extensive. But those, it takes no periods of time for those to accumulate.

39:03

Whereas, if you look at flooding events, they're somewhat discrete.

39:07

And because of that, you know, you can accumulate losses perhaps more quickly. So, I'm not sure that I can actually state whether one is a net gain or a net loss. But on the timescales that they occur the drought. And the fires tend to accumulate over a longer period of time. Whereas the the flooding events tend to be more localized and discrete over a certain number of days. But can have large impacts like, I said over a short period of time.

39:42

Thank you.

39:46

Looks like our next next question comes from Mario Mario, are you able to open your line?

39:57

No.

39:58

Yeah. Maybe go. Yes. We can hear you.

40:02

The the four stage region of the article checks experiences.

40:07

Large amounts of rain, and the map ISO has us on a really low level for drought.

40:16

What can we experience here in Northern Louisiana, East, Texas, Oklahoma, and southern Arkansas, in terms of flooding conditions for the spring?

40:29

And can you direct us? Yeah, let's, let's, There's a couple of folks. Let's first start with Jeff ... at the Lower Mississippi River Forecast Center.

40:41

For those particular areas, what we're looking for right now, we've had some minor, and even some are already occurring this year, from some of the heavier rainfall that we had in that article, a text area. Currently, right now the projections that we're looking at for the next few weeks to months, minor to some isolated, moderate flooding along those areas. Specifically tributaries, going into the Red River, portions of the ... River and some of the smaller tributaries that go into the wash tub themselves. Further to the west over in the north-west, part of, I'm sorry, the north-east part of Texas. Some of those tributaries into the soil or drainage is in the cyber strangers. Also. We would have a chance of mind or maybe some isolated moderate flooding for the next weeks to months.

41:25

Is that due to an increase?

41:28

Precipitation over the fourth reason, or because everything flows for Northern Louisiana from the north and the Red River.

41:41

So, we expect more rainfall for this area from the Gulf or flooding from other regions, let's say the mid-west.

41:52

Yeah, for those areas because specifically like the wash down and even the tributaries going into the red, specifically in the northern part of Louisiana. So, that's probably just going to be, you know, just the typical rainfall that we get for the spring starting spring here on Saturday. But that we typically do get that kind of minor to isolated, moderate flooding across that area. We're kind of categorizing the risk as really a normal risk for your area this year, So, anytime we do get heavier rainfall that falls into those areas of stuff, we certainly can get some minor flooding due to isolated moderate. Now, for the Red River itself, you know, the the the main stem of the Red River self, we're really not looking for for flooding along those locations really talking about just the tributaries that actually go into it.

42:44

Thank you.

42:46

You're welcome.

42:48

If I could just follow up on that, Lauren, real quick, from a climate perspective, following up on the previous speaker, I certainly would agree that the more higher frequency, if you will, with rainfall, that would cause a problem from a longer term climate perspective.

43:05

We, at a current time, at work, we are favoring below normal temperature, or sorry, below normal precipitation, from the Texas area, across parts of the Western High plains. So again, that would be a factor that would potentially limit seasonal rainfall totals that may help, but again, that's just one factor, Just wanted to add that, Becky.

43:26

There are limited one more question. There are limited periods of drought here, that have been forecasted by the local TV stations and the National Weather Service here in 3, 4.

43:36

We fall on the edge of these. Well, the increased amount of drought in the Western areas spill over into our region.

43:46

Right now, we're not calling it the data.

43:49

Look at it can be shown right now that the main areas of concern for expansion of the drought, your valve, it would be more on the higher planes to your left the Florida Peninsula. So right now, we're not really seeing that at the current time.

44:05

Thank you again.

44:07

Awesome, thank you.

44:09

Our next question comes through in the question box for Rice with USA Today is asking: well, no one ever produced a spring severe weather forecast.

44:18

Is the science not quite there yet for such a forecast?

44:26

Mary, is that one you might want to take?

44:30

I'll defer to Mary, but I, I can make some comments on that after she finished.

44:36

Sure, John, would totally welcome that. Thanks for the question. This is Mary Erickson, deputy director of the National Weather Service. We continue to expand our seasonal seasonal prediction capabilities. And, you know, this is definitely the severe weather component, is one of those things that will be thinking about the predictability. There are some things that are uncertain, particularly with precipitation predictability. So maybe John wants to comment on that. It's one of the challenges.

45:08

Yeah, definitely, Mary. Certainly one of the factors in that, I will say that it would be.

45:14

Internally, we have internally within now there are groups that are working with various partners from academia and other national labs.

45:23

On whether the prospects for skillful predictions are reliable prediction of the seasonal timescale for severe weather are possible. So, I would characterize that we're looking into it, as Mary said, and we're evaluating it for a sign for the integrity of that. But we're not at the stage where we were producing operation looks at that time scale for severe weather at the current time.

45:50

Thank you.

45:51

Let's see here. Our next question is from Stacy more. Stacey, you have self muted, so if you're able to unmute and open your line and let us know what you're with.

46:01

Hi. Yeah. Thank you, Stacy more and was high desert publishing.

46:05

We're in the Mojave Desert in Southern California.

46:10

And my question was, if somebody can speak to the reasons behind the failed monsoon season, we saw here in the south-west and weather conditions like drought above normal temperatures are going to be more likely continuing into the future.

46:32

I can make this a John, got sharpens debussy. I can make some comments about the failed ones soon. As I'm sure you know, there's so many different factors that go into whether the monsoon will be of a robust or fail in the case of the past 2020 year. We never really received or the strong monsoon rage if you will, across the one. But never really, very much established to the point where you get that very good north with the push of moisture. Now, the next obvious more basic understanding of it are, obvious answer is the factor that, related to that.

47:10

We had more traffic to the further to the north in our intersecting with that area and also reduced no moisture but those reasons why those things that occur on timescales of months and seasons. You know, we're still in the process of distributing that for that particular event so we don't have any solid answers for you on that.

47:30

But we do, are looking into, actually, within the CPC itself, this year, some of the factors that led to that failed monsoon, as far as drought moving forward.

47:42

Really would, would favor having comments from Karen perhaps at NCEI, and she's interested in taking up that question.

47:57

This is Karen at NCEI.

47:59

What was the specific question, I think she mentioned that she wanted to know how drought conditions may be being offered as we move forward in the future.

48:10

Yeah.

48:12

Understood, yes. So, my understanding is that we do anticipate in parts of the west, for droughts to occur more frequently and be more intense as time goes on. That's something that we are already starting to observe, and that we anticipate seeing as we move forward into the future.

48:37

Great. Thank you.

48:41

Thank you.

48:43

Our next question is one that has come through in writing, So I will read it. It comes from Perry, Elliot ... and Tyler Texas, who's asking, looking at your predictions. We are expecting drought to either persist or develop an eastern Texas. But also, we're

expecting minor flooding risks or your charts, where is that flood risk coming from, and how does that coincide with the drought risk, either in the same location or nearby?

49:11

Let's start with perhaps, the drivers behind the flood risk, Greg Waller, from What's Golf RFC?

49:21

Thank you, Ed.

49:22

The easiest way to explain it is you are right on the gradient, portions of West Texas, and South Texas de La Nina took hold longer than normal precipitation and drought conditions.

49:36

However, in East X is the way the rainfall patterns have set up the rivers across East Texas going over into Jeff's area in Mississippi or in Louisiana.

49:45

Those areas have had enough rain to keep the soil saturated, fill up a lot of the lakes and those lakes in that area are not designed with flood storage. They're water supply.

49:55

So, as Ed mentioned before, you know, the short-term high intensity rain events, you know, will likely produce the usual, minor flooding on those East Texas Rivers specifically in my area, the NHS, Angelina, and the Sabine.

50:10

So, you're right on the area, where the lack of rainfall is strengthening the drought, but you've had enough rainfall to keep things saturated.

50:20

And as we know in this area, spring convective, thunderstorms, produce locally heavy rain that could get the rivers responding.

50:28

So it is difficult to explain increasing drought yet there is a flood risk.

50:33

That portion of East Texas is right on the gradient.

50:36

And it is in the bull's eye for both the weather threats or climate threats.

50:43

Thank you so much.

50:45

Let's see here. I see one more hand raised from Tom Frank, with any news, Thomas, you're able to unmute your line, You should have extra question.

50:53

I question probably for Karen about the billion dollar disaster report that comes out every year.

51:00

I noticed last year that all of the wildfires were counted as a single event, ah, FEMA would count it as probably 20 or 30 events.

51:09

Why do you count them all as one event? And is there any thought about counting them as separate events and dividing them up?

51:17

Because they'll have, you know, different locations summer in Colorado, Summer, and all over the place near different starting and ends.

51:26

This is Karen Gleason at NCEI. That's a very good question.

51:31

I understand that there are concerns because both for drought and wildfires they cover, you know, quite they can cover extensive areas.

51:41

Adam Smith, My colleague, is, is the person, the individual, who actually assembles these and I believe there are reasons, I don't have, I don't know what they are.

51:50

But there are reasons for categorizing them and bumping them together as if they were one event.

51:58

But I understand that it can be either confusing or, you know, you might want to break them into sort of distinct or discrete events if possible. But it's sometimes it's hard to do. So, if there are connections between them. So, it's, the way it's been done, since the, the product has been in existence. And so, I, again, I would have to defer to my colleague, Adam Smith, who unfortunately isn't on this call, as to the reasons behind you know, making sure that these events are, lumped together as one event, rather than than several separate events.

52:43

Thanks, Karen.

52:47

Jasmine, it looks like that appears to be our last report, or question for today. With that, I will turn it back over to you to conclude today's briefing.

52:55

Thanks, Lauren.

52:57

That will conclude our media briefing for today. And I want to thank all of our participants who dialed in from our partner agencies at USGS, USDA, and across in NOAA and the National Water Center, National Centers for Environmental Information, Climate Prediction Center, and the Regional River Forecast Centers.

53:15

If there are any additional questions today, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

53:20

Again, my email address is jasmine.blackwell@noaa.gov

53:23

That's J A S M I N E, dot, B, L A, C K, W E, L, L, at NOAA dot gov And I can also be reached by phone at (202) 841-9184.

53:40

If you don't already have the news release with the Outlook and flood risk maps, they are all available on NOAA.gov. And also, link in the chat box to your right.

53:51

The audio and video from this call will also be available online, and linked in our press release this afternoon.

53:57

Thank you all, and have a wonderful day.