

## **U.S. Winter Outlook: NOAA forecasters predict cooler, wetter North and warmer, drier South**

### **Drought likely to persist in northern Plains**

Forecasters at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center released the U.S. Winter Outlook, with La Niña potentially emerging for the second year in a row as the biggest wildcard in how this year's winter will shape up. La Niña has a 55-65 percent chance of developing before winter sets in.

"If La Niña conditions develop, we predict it will be weak and potentially short-lived, but it could still shape the character of the upcoming winter," said Mike Halpert, deputy director of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. "Typical La Niña patterns during winter include above average precipitation and colder than average temperatures along the Northern Tier of the U.S. and below normal precipitation and drier conditions across the South."

Other factors that influence winter weather include the Arctic Oscillation, which influences the number of arctic air masses that penetrate into the South and is difficult to predict more than one to two weeks in advance, and the Madden-Julian Oscillation, which can affect the number of heavy rain events along the West Coast.

### **The 2017 U.S. Winter Outlook (December through February):**

- ◆ Wetter-than-average conditions are favored across most of the northern United States, extending from the northern Rockies, to the eastern Great Lakes, the Ohio Valley, in Hawaii and in western and northern Alaska.
- ◆ Drier-than-normal conditions are most likely across the entire southern U.S.

### **Temperature**

- ◆ Warmer-than-normal conditions are most likely across the southern two-thirds of the continental U.S, along the East Coast, across Hawaii and in western and northern Alaska.
- ◆ Below-average temperatures are favored along the Northern Tier of the country from Minnesota to the Pacific Northwest and in southeastern Alaska.
- ◆ The rest of the country falls into the equal chance

## **Operator Qualification Certification**

Our first session of OQT will be held December 5, at Franklin & December 7, at Pinckneyville on Leak Investigation. The next sessions will be January 23 & January 25, 2018 for Corrosion Control, and February 20 & February 22, 2018 for Damage Prevention.

These certification sessions are essential for small system operators to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities in preventing, mitigating, and repairing damage to gas distribution systems. The certification is done with both hands on demonstrations and written tests.

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category, which means they have an equal chance for above-, near-, or below-normal temperatures and/or precipitation because there is not a strong enough climate signal in these areas to shift the odds.

### **Drought**

- ◆ Despite the outlook favoring above-average precipitation this winter, drought is likely to persist in parts of the northern Plains, although improvement is anticipated farther West.
- ◆ Elsewhere, drought could develop across scattered areas of the south, mainly in regions that missed the rainfall associated with the active 2017 hurricane season.

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**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING IN MARCH OF 2018.**

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