



News for Immediate Release

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Notes from Winter Outlook Workshop

DWR annually convenes scientists from the weather and climate fields in a workshop to discuss potential water year conditions. The Water Year 2011 workshop was held on November 17, 2010, in San Diego.

The seasonal outlook discussed at the November 17 workshop can be characterized as an experimental product – it should not be confused with an operational weather forecast.

Operational weather forecasts are relatively skillful for a lead time of up to two weeks; the state of the science does not permit a similar level of skill for longer-term outlooks. The status of El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions is an important predictor of potential outcomes at a seasonal time scale.

It is used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center and the scientists at the winter outlook workshop to assess the upcoming water year.

A webcast of the entire workshop can be viewed at:

http://www.water.ca.gov/drought/docs/winter_workshop/Winter%20Outlook%202011/msh.htm.

Key Workshop Points

- Water Year 2011 follows an approximately average Water Year 2010. Water Years 2007-09 were dry. The last statewide wet year was Water Year 2006.
- El Niño conditions were present during the wet months of Water Year 2010. There was an unusually rapid transition to La Niña conditions during the late spring of 2010. Strong La Niña conditions are projected to persist at least through the upcoming winter, with a better than 50 percent chance that the present event could become a two-year event.
- Relatively wet early fall conditions to date are not likely to persist throughout the remainder of the water year.

- Strong La Niña conditions are likely to mean a drier than average year for Southern California.
- Northern California may experience about average conditions overall, with the potential for a wetter fall transitioning to a drier spring.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

Contact the [DWR Public Affairs Office](#) for more information about DWR's water activities.