

We've finished the May 19, 2015 Bulletin 120 (B120) forecast update. The forecast includes observed conditions through the morning of May 19, 2015. The forecast is posted at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir?s=b120up> .

Forecast Summary:

The projected median April-July runoff in the major Sierra river basins ranges from 2 percent of normal on the Tule River to 40 percent of normal for the Total Inflow to Shasta Lake and the Sacramento River above Bend Bridge forecast points. The forecast increased for the Shasta Inflow, Sacramento River at Bend Bridge, American River and all rivers south of the Mokelumne except for the Kern River. The 10 percent exceedance forecast for all rivers is less than 25 percent of normal with the exception of the Inflow to Shasta Lake and the Sacramento River above Bend Bridge. For ten rivers, the 10 percent exceedance level forecast is less than 20 percent of average.

Runoff:

Through about the first 18 days of May, all rivers in the Sierra are flowing below 40 percent of normal. All but the Inflow to Shasta Lake, the Sacramento River above Bend Bridge, and the Tuolumne River are flowing below 20 percent of the May average.

Precipitation:

Precipitation for the 2015 water year accumulated at the following rates of average:

Region/Index	WY accumulated precipitation through May 19, 2015 Units = percent of average
Northern Sierra 8-Station Index	74 (34.7 inches)
San Joaquin 5-Station Index	44 (17.0 inches)
Tulare Lake 6-Station Index	43 (11.9 inches)

Snowpack:

The snowpack as of the morning of May 19, 2015 stands at the following (based on snow sensors):

Region	Snow Water Equivalent (inches)	% of April 1 Average	% of May 12 Average
Northern	0.2	1	2
Central	0.4	1	2
Southern	0.2	1	2
Statewide	0.3	1	2

Weather and Climate Outlooks:

The six-day weather forecast indicates cumulative totals of up to an inch of precipitation over the Feather and American river basins today and tomorrow. Less than ¼ of an inch are expected southward. Freezing levels are expected to range from near 9,500 feet, the current level, to near 12,500 feet by Monday.

The NWS Climate Prediction Center (CPC) one-month outlook for June, issued May 21, indicates equal chances of above or below normal precipitation for all of the state. The same outlook predicts increased chances of above normal temperature statewide.

The CPC three-month (June-July-August) outlook, issued May 21, indicates equal chances of above or below normal precipitation statewide. The same outlook predicts increased chances of above normal temperature statewide.

El Niño conditions are present. Positive equatorial sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies continue across most of the Pacific Ocean. There is an approximately 90 percent chance that El Niño conditions will continue through the Northern Hemisphere summer of 2015, and a greater than 80 percent chance it will last through 2015.

It is imperative to remember that spring offers the least predictability in the state of the El Niño Southern Oscillation for the coming winter and that conditions that might point to such an event have occurred in the past and failed to produce. Late summer is a more realistic time frame to assess the potential of an El Niño event and whether or not it

will have any influence on the coming winter season. As a whole, El Niño offers zero predictability of hydrologic outcome for the northern part of the state.

Next Update:

The next Bulletin 120 forecast update for conditions as of Tuesday, May 26, 2015 will be available Thursday, May 28, 2015. If you have any questions regarding this forecast or need guidance prior to the next update, please contact a member of the Snow Surveys staff.