



Special Weather Statement

Regarding Potential El Niño for Next Winter

Wednesday April 29, 2009 issued 11:00am

phone 530-342-1700

email: forecaster@westernwx.com

by Forecaster Marc Walsh

After nearly 4 years of La Niña conditions (although we did have a brief spell of weak to moderate El Niño in 2006), it appears the equatorial Pacific is transitioning into a prolonged, possibly moderately strong El Niño heading into late 2009 and early 2010. The graph below shows sea surface temperature anomalies, with all those "spaghetti lines" depicting various model projections into the future. Nearly all show El Niño conditions of some magnitude. To be considered to be a strong El Niño, you need a +2 on this scale (the last time that happened was in 1998 - a very wet year). El Niño's of +1 magnitude don't necessarily mean above normal rainfall for the North & Central State, but more often than not they do. Thus, there is reason to be optimistic heading into next winter (that we'll have a wet year). Note that some of the model projections show a strong El Niño (i.e. +2).

The CFS ensemble mean (heavy blue line) predicts La Niña will end during April 2009, followed by positive SST anomalies in the Niño 3.4 region during the last half of 2009.

PDF correction: Forecast NINO3.4 SST anomalies from CFS

