

NOAA experts give monthly update on U.S. and global climate conditions

June 16, 2016

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) held their Monthly Climate Briefing telecast on June 16, 2016. The presentations summarized NOAA's May U.S. and global climate analyses, monthly and seasonal forecasts, and the outlook for La Niña development. The speakers were Deke Arndt and Brad Pugh, both of NOAA.

Arndt discussed recent temperature trends in the U.S. and globally, pointing out that May 2016 was the warmest May on record at 0.87°C (1.57°F) above the 20th century average, a trend driven largely by globally warming ocean temperatures and partly by El Niño. He emphasized that 2016 to date is the warmest year on record, over 0.24°C (0.43°F) warmer than the previous record set in 2015, and that 9 of the 10 warmest months on record have occurred since February 2015. Temperatures in all U.S. states were above average in spring 2016 (Alaska saw its warmest spring ever recorded), with the warmth driven primarily by high overnight temperatures (rather than afternoon temperatures). This increase in overnight temperatures is consistent with trends over the last 15 years. Arndt observed that drought generally decreased across the contiguous U.S., particularly in the Great Basin and northern California, due to higher spring rainfall.

Pugh summarized the NOAA Climate Prediction Center's forecasts for July and the summer season (July - September). The recent El Niño ended in May, but there is strong likelihood for a La Niña to develop over the next several months. Above normal temperatures were predicted for most of the lower 48 states and Alaska in July and the summer season, with moderately wetter conditions on the Gulf Coast, Florida, and western Alaska, and drier conditions in the northwest U.S. Pugh considered drought development likely in the northwest U.S. over the summer due to lower precipitation and higher temperatures.
