



Winter & Spring Outlook Briefing

December 10, 2015



National Weather Service
Des Moines, IA
www.weather.gov/desmoines



Contact: Jeff Zogg, Senior Service Hydrologist
515-270-4501
Jeff.Zogg@noaa.gov



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Highlights

2015-2016 Winter & Spring Outlook



What	Where	Timing	Impacts
Temperatures & Precipitation	Iowa	December 2015 – February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above Normal Temperatures Favored • Equal Chances for Above, Near & Below Normal Precipitation • Wet signal for most strong El Niño winter seasons
Stream Levels	Iowa	Now (12/10/2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record high flows for this time of year especially western & northern Iowa • Much above normal most other parts of the state
Spring Flood Potential	Iowa	Spring 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk due to current & outlook conditions. • National Weather Service will continue monitoring this winter.

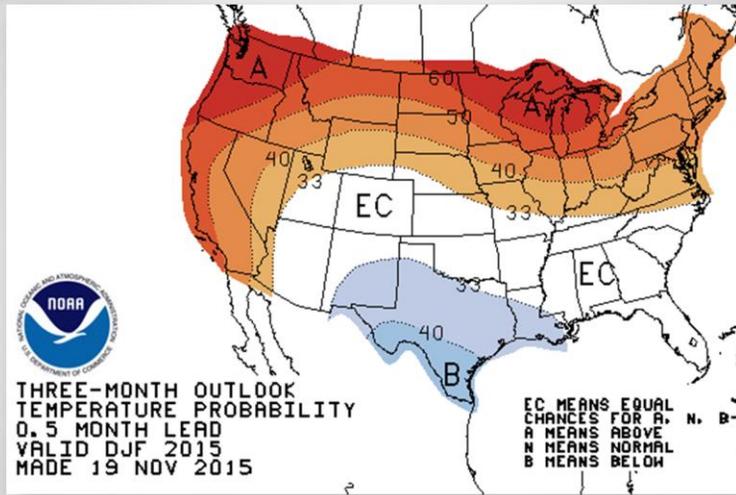


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Temperature Outlook

Winter 2015-2016



35% to 50% chance of Above Normal Temperatures



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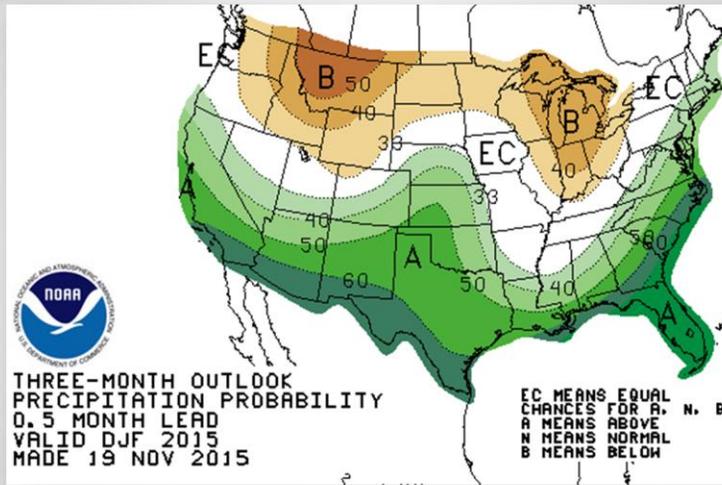
The latest NOAA temperature outlook for winter 2015-2016 (i.e., December 2015 through February 2016) calls for a 35% to 50% chance of above normal temperatures across Iowa. The chances increase from north to south across the state.

For the latest NOAA temperature and precipitation outlooks, see <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>.



Temperature Outlook

Winter 2015-2016



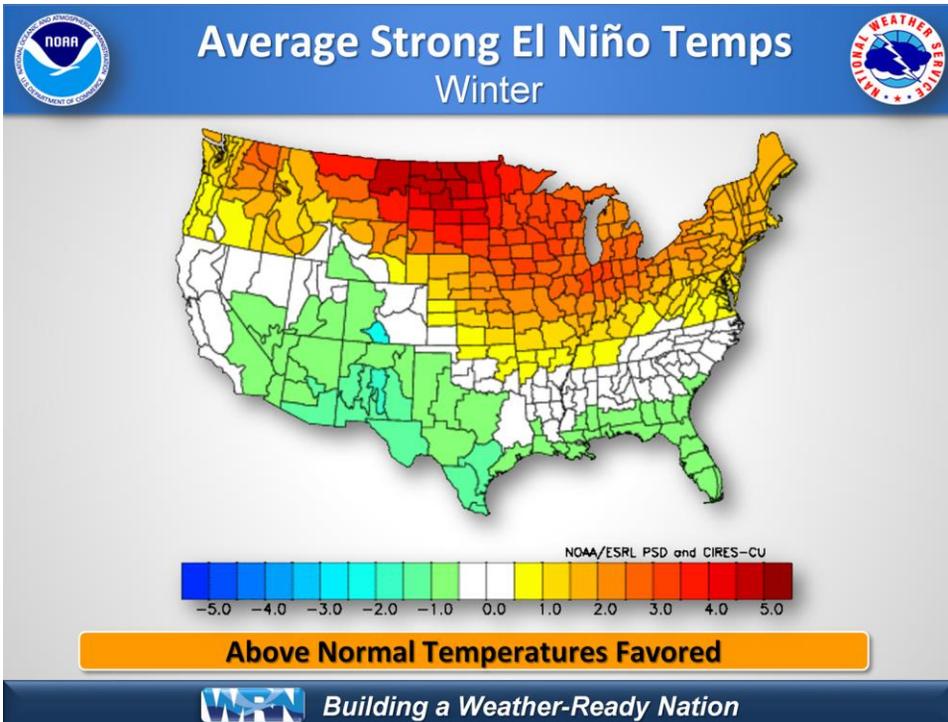
Equal Chances (EC) for Precipitation



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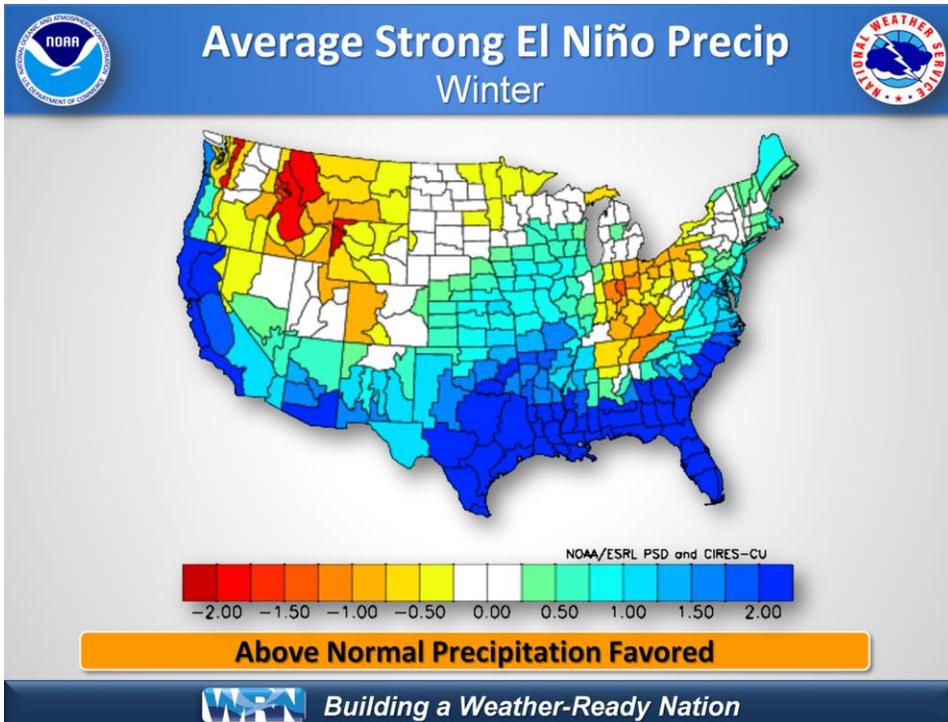
The latest NOAA precipitation outlook for winter 2015-2016 (i.e., December 2015 through February 2016) calls for equal chances (EC) of above, near or below normal precipitation. “Equal Chances” for precipitation means that there is not a strong indication of precipitation trends for this particular winter at this time. Above normal precipitation is favored just southwest of Iowa, and below normal precipitation is favored just north and east of Iowa however.

For the latest NOAA temperature and precipitation outlooks, see <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>.



This map shows temperature departures from normal of the strongest El Niños since 1950. A strong El Niño is expected to prevail for this winter. A strong signal for above normal temperatures is apparent, with lowa temperatures ranging from about 2.0 to 3.0 degrees above normal. Five out of seven years were above normal at both Des Moines and Waterloo, or 71% of the time. Thus, although El Niño does not guarantee a warm winter, it tends to shift the probabilities in that direction. Note that the historical tendencies of above normal temperatures across lowa during strong El Niños aligns well with the current NOAA temperature outlook for Winter 2015-2016.

For more information on the impacts of El Niño on lowa's weather, see the following page on the NWS Des Moines Website:
<http://nws.weather.gov/blog/nwsdesmoines/2015/09/02/el-nino-impacts-in-iowa/> .



This map shows precipitation departures from normal of the strongest El Niños since 1950. A strong El Niño is expected to prevail for this winter. A signal for above normal precipitation is apparent across the southern half of the Midwest including Iowa—although the signal for above normal precipitation for Iowa is not as strong as the signal for above normal temperatures. On average, Iowa trends wetter during strong El Niño episodes with the highest departures across southern parts of the state. Note that the historical tendencies of above normal precipitation across Iowa during strong El Niños differs from the current NOAA temperature outlook for Winter 2015-2016. Keep in mind that not all strong El Niño winters bring above normal precipitation to Iowa—it is only an average. Some past El Niño winters have brought near and below normal precipitation to Iowa as well.

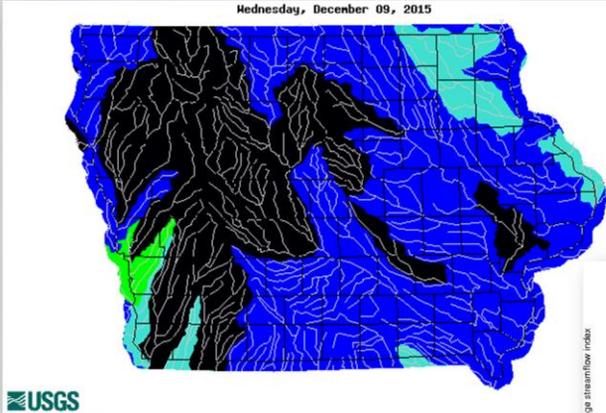
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Current Streamflow Values vs. Normal (Percentiles)

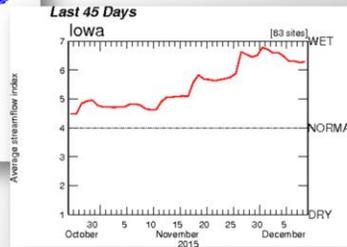


Wednesday, December 09, 2015



USGS

Explanation - Percentile classes						
Low	<10	10-24	25-75	76-90	>90	High
	Much below normal	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above normal	



The map shows 14-day average streamflows compared to normal for this time of year. Data is provided by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Iowa Water Science Center. Record high flows for this time of year exist across western and northern Iowa, as well as central and eastern portions of the state. Much above normal streamflows for this time of year exist across most other parts of the state. The graph shows the average streamflow index for the entire state over the past 45 days. On average, statewide average streamflows have been above normal for the past 45 days, and have increased relative to normal during that time.



Spring Flood Potential

Iowa



- Current streamflows being high relative to normal have increased the spring flood threat.
- Streamflows are not the only factor to consider. Must also consider factors such as expected precipitation, snow pack & soil moisture.
- The NWS will continue monitoring precipitation trends this winter to better determine the spring flood threat.
- NWS Spring Flood Outlook dates: 2/18/2015 & 3/3/2015. Outlooks will be available on NWS Webpages by 5pm on those dates.



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National Weather Service Additional Information



Storm Prediction Center: www.spc.noaa.gov

NWS: weather.gov/desmoines

The screenshot displays the National Weather Service website. On the left, the Storm Prediction Center (SPC) page is visible, featuring a map of the United States with a highlighted area in the central region. On the right, the Des Moines Forecast Office page is shown, including a local map and a navigation menu. A red box with the text "Decision Support Page: weather.gov/dmx/dsshdro" is overlaid on the page. An arrow points from this box to the "Local Information" link in the right-hand navigation menu.



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Stay up to date on the latest forecasts and warnings at the Des Moines National Weather Service website at <http://www.weather.gov/desmoines>. Further decision support information can be found in the Local information menu, and selecting Decision Support.



NWS Additional Information



www.weather.gov/desmoines



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