

Acronyms and Glossary

Compiled by the NOAA-CU Western Water Assessment

Anomaly	The deviation of a measurable unit, (e.g., temperature or precipitation) in a given region over a specified period from the long-term average, often the thirty-year mean, for the same region.
CCC	Colorado Climate Center, State Climatologist, Colorado State University
CDs	Climate Divisions, 344 divisions used to analyze climate data. Vary in size east to west and among states, so for some purposes, 102 “mega-divisions” of similar size are used.
CDC	NOAA Climate Diagnostics Center, now a division in ESRL/PSD (see below)
CL	Abbreviation used on climate outlook maps to indicate areas where equal chances of experiencing below-normal, normal, or above-normal conditions are possible.
Climate Outlook	The NOAA Climate Outlook gives probabilities that conditions, averaged over a specified period (typically one or three months), will be below-normal (shown as B), normal (N), above-normal (A), or CL for equal chances of these conditions.
Convection	In meteorology, the rising and descending air motion caused by heat transfer. "Convection" and "thunderstorms" are often used interchangeably, although thunderstorms are only one form of convection.
Coupled Model	A numerical model which simulates both the atmosphere and the ocean and the effects of each component on the other
CPC	NOAA Climate Prediction Center, issues operational climate products
CBRFC	NOAA Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, issues river, flood, and water supply forecasts for the Colorado River Basin
CIRES	NOAA-CU Cooperative Institute for Environmental Sciences
CSTPR	CU/CIRES Center for Science and Technology Policy Research
Deterministic	In reference to a forecast, indicates single value forecast (e.g. a high of 50° F), vs. a range, and does not provide an estimate of uncertainty (see probabilistic)
ENSO	El Niño-Southern Oscillation phenomenon, see Niño 3.4
ESRL/PSD	NOAA Earth Systems Research Lab, Physical Sciences Division, with the mission to provide the observation, analysis, and diagnosis of weather and climate physical processes necessary to increase understanding of Earth's physical environment, including the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and land, and to enable improved weather and climate predictions on global-to-local scales.
GCMs	General Circulation Models, computer simulations of Earth’s weather and climate
GHGs	Greenhouse gases
HPC	NOAA Hydrometeorological Prediction Center, provides outlooks for heavy rain and snow, as well as guidance weather forecasts through five days.
HSS	Heidke Skill Score, a measure of how forecasts compare against forecasting climatological odds (1/3 for each tercile)
IC	Initial conditions, as in observations to initialize models for a weather or climate forecast
IRI	International Research Institute for Climate Prediction
JFM, etc	Climate scientists often use the first letter of each month to abbreviate seasons, e.g., JFM= January-February-March; AMJ= April-May-June, SON= Sept-Oct-Nov, etc

MBRFC	NOAA Missouri Basin River Forecast Center, issues river, flood, and water supply forecasts for the Missouri River Basin, including the South Platte River
NCEP	NOAA National Centers for Environmental Prediction (CPC and HPC is one)
NCDC	NOAA National Climatic Data Center (Paleoclimatology Program)
Niño 3.4	One of the regions in the equatorial Pacific used by NOAA to monitor and define the ENSO status. Niño 3.4 is the region from 120E W to 170E W latitude
NOAA	U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRLC	CU Natural Resources Law Center
NWS	NOAA National Weather Service
NWP	Numerical weather prediction, a prediction based on equations and based on initial conditions, or weather observations at a certain time
OCN	Optimal Climate Normals, a forecast based on persisting the average of the last 10 years for temperature and the last 15 years for precipitation for the season in question
OLR	Outgoing Longwave Radiation, a satellite-derived cloud measurement that is used to estimate tropical precipitation amounts
PDO	Pacific Decadal Oscillation - A recently described pattern of climate variation similar to ENSO, but with typically slower variations in time (e.g., multi-year, not seasons)
Probabilistic	In reference to a forecast, refers to a forecast that includes an estimate of uncertainty with a most likely range, e.g. a forecast high of 48°-52° F
QPF	Quantitative precipitation forecasts. A forecast of precipitation over a time period, usually 6- or 24- hours. QPFs are probabilistic (vs. deterministic) QPFs.
RISA	NOAA Regional Integrated Science and Assessments Program; WWA is one
RPSS	Ranked probability skill score, measures the mean-square error of a multi-category probabilistic forecast relative to the skill of a control probabilistic forecast, e.g., the climatological probability distribution. The RPSS is 1.0 for a perfect forecast and 0.0 for the reference, no-skill climatological forecast
SLP	Sea level pressure
SLR	Stepwise linear regression, a statistical analysis procedure
SOI	Southern Oscillation Index, index comparing the atmospheric pressure between Tahiti and Darwin, Australia, highly correlated with Niño 3.4
SST	Sea surface temperature
Synoptic Scale	Spatial classification for large-scale weather systems more than 200 miles across
Teleconnection:	A strong statistical relationship between weather in different parts of the globe. For example, there appears to be a teleconnection between the tropical Pacific and North America during El Niño.
WRCC	Western Regional Climate Center
WWA	NOAA/CIRES Western Water Assessment