



# Western Regional Climate Center

By Keah Schuenemann, Graduate Student, Western Water Assessment

The Western Regional Climate Center (WRCC), established in 1986, is just one of six regional climate centers across the United States managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The climate centers are all funded through NOAA's Cooperative Institute for Atmospheric Sciences and Terrestrial Applications and are directed by



Figure 14b. WRCC Staff in Dec. 2005

the National Climatic Data Center. The WRCC is located in Reno, Nevada and is within the Desert Research Institute, a campus of Nevada's University system. The WRCC is responsible for coordinating all applied climate activities and drought monitoring in the 13 western most states. They conduct research on climate issues specifically important to the West such as the impacts of climate variability, extremes weather events, and El Nino Southern Oscillation. They are also responsible for the quality control of their historic climate databases. The databases include climate readings from hundreds of stations on hourly precipitation, 15-minute precipitation, twice daily upper air soundings, lightning data, and other such information. The WRCC provides climate data from their databases to the public and private sector upon request.

There are various products and data available on the WRCC webpage. In addition, the webpage has links to other organizations with climate data, which

makes it a convenient starting point for any search for past or present climate information from the West. The types of historical climate information includes

historical summaries of individual stations or states, anomalies for water year periods, average winds, evaporation, amount of sky cover, coastal water temperatures, humidity, precipitation, climate extremes, major

storm events, and narratives on the climate of each state. Current meteorological data from ground observations, radar, and satellite imagery are all linked on one page. The site also provides long-term climate outlooks and short-term weather forecasts from the National Weather Service. In addition to climate and weather data, links to reports from organizations that have policy or planning roles in the region such as the Western Governors Association and

the Western Drought Coordination Council are available.

The WRCC currently has several ongoing research projects. The Southern Nevada Community Environmental Monitoring Project (CEMP) monitors the air for manmade radioactivity from the Nevada Test Site. The Wind Energy Assessment for Nevada is an ongoing study to find the optimal places to put wind towers for renewable energy. The El Nino and La Nina project focuses on how ENSO affects the western climate. The Yucca Mountain Climate Data Project collects meteorological data from nine sights in the Yucca Mountain area. Finally, the Washoe Evapotranspiration Project (WET) has weather stations around Reno, Nevada to collect evapotranspiration data in order to estimate crop and lawn watering needs. All of these products are available at <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/>.

This article was adapted from information in the WRCC brochure, <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/ABOUTUS.html>, and the WRCC website.

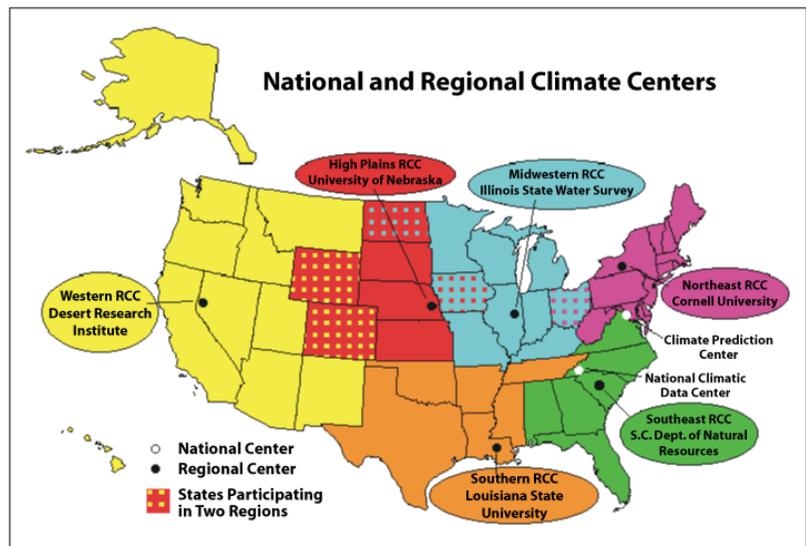


Figure 14b. Map showing locations and geographic areas covered by each of NOAA's Regional Climate Centers.

## On the Web

- High Plains Regional Climate Center: <http://www.hprcc.unl.edu/>,
- NOAA's Regional Climate Center page: <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/regionalclimatecenters.html>

