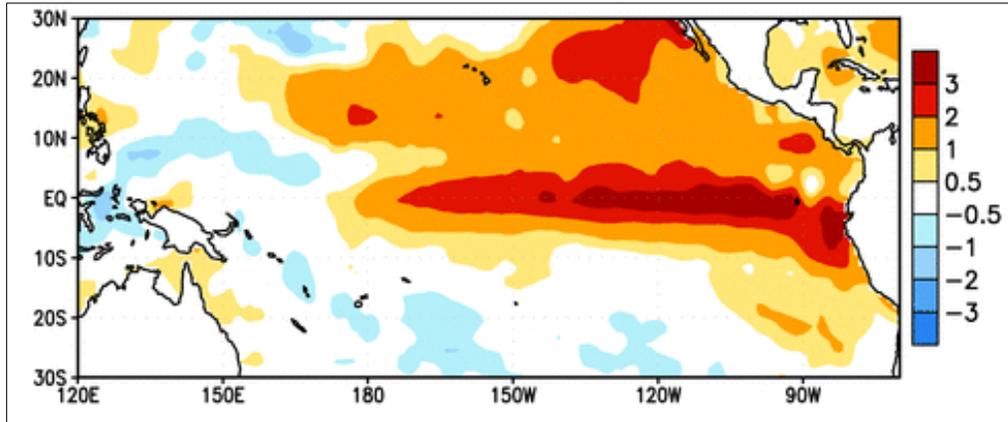


Flood preparedness: El Nino and tides in Marin



Sea surface temperature anomalies across the equatorial Pacific for the week of September 23, 2015 (°C) from the NOAA Climate Prediction Center.¹

What is El Nino? A significant increase in sea surface temperature over the eastern and central equatorial Pacific that occurs at irregular intervals, generally ranging between two and seven years.²

A strong El Nino is expected during this rainy season. There have been five previous rainy seasons on record³ with a strong El Nino (57-58, 65-66, 72-73, 82-83 and 97-98). Seasonal precipitation totals were above average during all but one of these strong El Nino episodes. During this winter (December - March) in Marin, current climate models indicate a greater chance for above normal seasonal precipitation totals than average or below normal.

El Nino and tides

Seasonal precipitation totals which are above normal don't always mean that there will be widespread flooding; however, warmer ocean temperatures will result in higher than predicted tides. Tides have recently been running up to one foot above predicted and are likely to run even higher during storms.

¹ <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/enso.shtml>

² Glossary of Meteorology – Second Edition, American Meteorological Society (2000)

³ Available records from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration extend back to 1950.



Flooding from tides along Corte Madera Creek. Staff photo, Marin County DPW

Upcoming high tides

Tides are predicted to be at or above 6.5 ft. (MLLW) on October 26th - 29th; November 23rd - 27th; December 21st - 26th; January 20th - 23rd; February 8th.

Flood Preparedness

Because Marin can experience flooding with or without El Nino, the District maintains a consistent and high level of maintenance of the pump stations, drains, creeks, and other facilities under its control.

We will be hosting a flood preparedness fair on Saturday, October 24, 2015 at the Marin Exhibition Hall where you can learn more about El Nino, get tips for protecting your property, and talk to local officials about flood preparedness.

Visit the Marin Watersheds website for information about our maintenance efforts and the flood preparedness fair. <http://marinwatersheds.org/>