

Weather and Climate Summary and Forecast

June 2026 Report

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Summary:

- A warmer than average¹ May for the vast majority of the western US.
- May was also generally drier than average across the western US, especially in the southwest, the Great Basin, and parts of the Rockies. Isolated areas of wetter than average include south-central Oregon and north-central California, and northwestern Montana. Significantly wetter conditions were observed across much of Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado, indicating early-season monsoon flow (which is also forecast for the summer).
- Drought concerns continue over much of the country. The western US appears to be headed to a record drought footprint as the summer warmth sets in, while the eastern US is likely to see some relief over the next three months.
- Active storm track across the North Pacific over the next week or so with the potential for some precipitation in the PNW and possibly slightly cooler temperatures. But it will be warm and dry elsewhere in the West.
- The forecast for the West during June is pointing to generally warm and dry, especially in the PNW.
- The 90-day forecast for the middle of the summer continues to point to a high likelihood of a warmer and drier western US. The developing El Niño in the Tropics is getting a lot of buzz as it could develop into one of the stronger events on record by the end of 2026 and start of 2027. But during the summer, forecasts are pointing to a more active subtropical jet stream and a greater chance of monsoon flow coming into the western US. With conditions currently quite dry and likely to remain, the wildfire season in the western US could be quite active.

Past Month and Year to Date:

Temperatures in May 2026 were mostly warmer than average in the western US. (Figure 1 has a scale bar that is extended to +15 degrees, which masks the more subtle differences for most regions.) Overall, the western US saw most regions experiencing May temperatures that were 0.5-2.5 degrees above average, with scattered areas in Northern California, the PNW, and Northern Rockies seeing departures of 3-6 degrees above average. Scattered areas in central to southern California along with portions of Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico experienced temperatures 1-3 degrees below average. A warmer than average month was also experienced throughout most of the Plains and portions of the southeast, while other regions in the south, the Ohio River Valley, and northeast experienced May temperatures from 1-3 degrees below average (not shown).

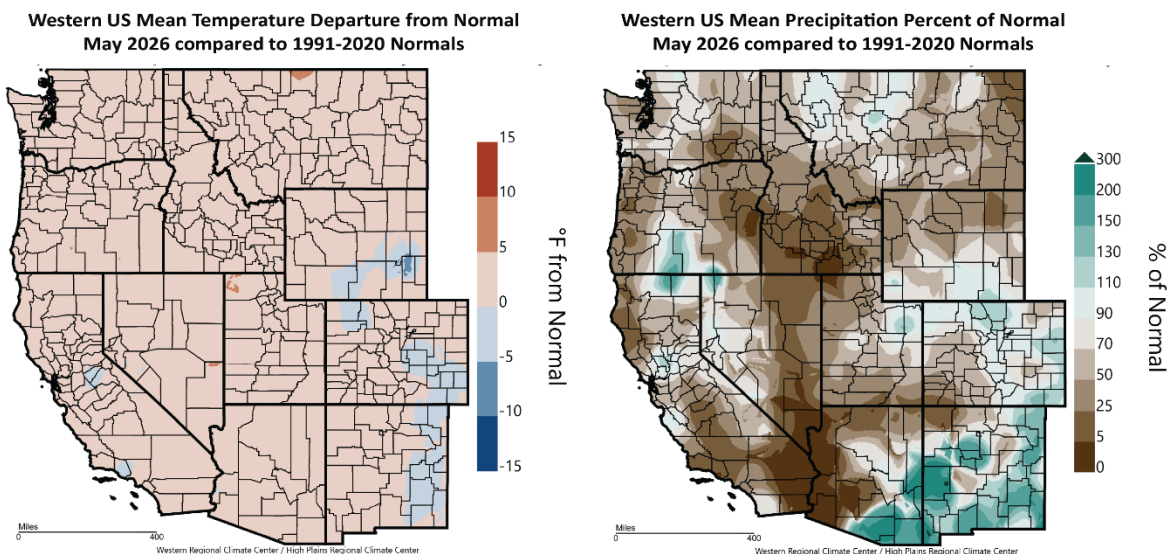


Figure 1 – Western US May 2026 temperature departure from normal (left) and percent of normal precipitation (right; images from Western Regional Climate Center and High Plains Regional Climate Center, 2025)

¹ Note that all references to normal or averages in this report are to the 1991-2020 climate normal for each weather/climate parameter unless stated otherwise. See this website (<https://www.climateofwine.com/climate-normals>) for more information on climate normal.

May was mostly dry across the western US, with southern California, the Great Basin, and portions of the Rockies seeing less than 25% of average precipitation. Isolated areas in central to northern California, south-central Oregon, and western Montana saw 110 to nearly 300% of average rainfall, while areas of the southwest in Arizona, New Mexico, and eastern Colorado saw some early monsoon moisture with 150-300% of normal precipitation (Figure 1). Strong regional variations in precipitation during May occurred across the country, with the northern and central Plains and Great Lakes seeing below 50% of normal precipitation. A welcome change in the storm track brought substantial precipitation amounts (150-300% or more) to the south and Ohio River Valley, which needed moisture to lower drought concerns.

The first five months of the year have seen temperatures over the western US running largely between 1 to nearly 10 degrees above average (Figure 2). The southwest and most of the Rockies have seen the warmest conditions so far this year, while western Oregon and Washington have seen temperatures 1-2 degrees above average. The rest of the country continues to experience largely warmer than average temperatures from the first of the year, running 1-3 degrees above average from Texas and the Mississippi River Valley north and eastward. The northern Great Lakes and portions of New England have seen closer to average or slightly cooler year to date conditions (not shown).

Year to date precipitation over the west remains mostly drier than normal start to the year (Figure 2), although isolated areas in the inland PNW, northern Rockies, and southern Arizona and New Mexico have been wetter than normal. Year to date drier than average conditions are also found in the central to northern Plains, the southeast, and Florida (not shown). Portions of Texas, the Gulf Coast, the Ohio River valley, and Great Lakes have experienced roughly 150-300% of average precipitation.

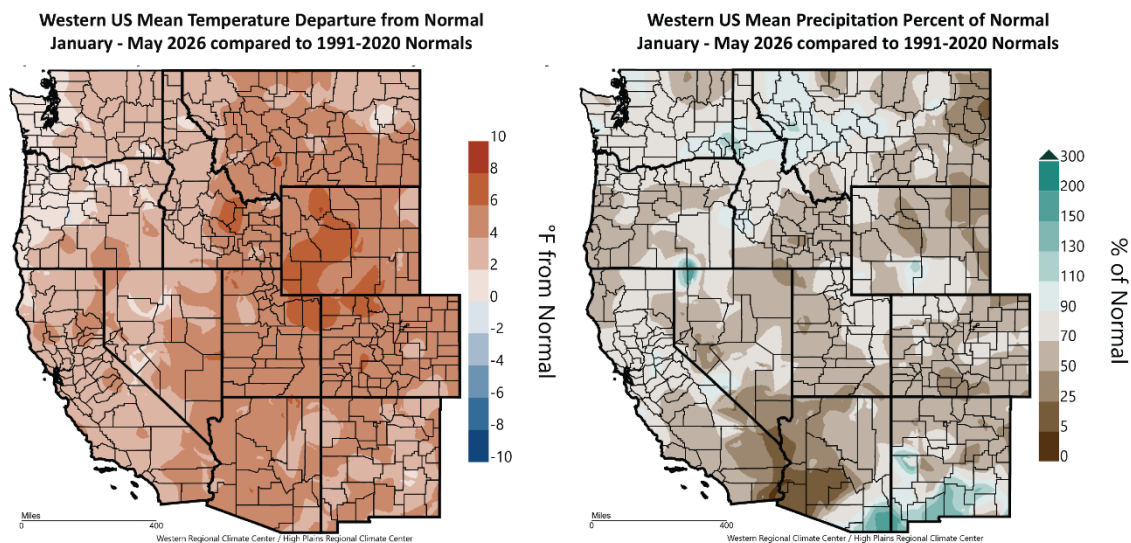


Figure 2 – Western US year-to-date (January 1 through May 31, 2026) temperature departure from normal (left) and percent of normal precipitation (right; images from Western Regional Climate Center and High Plains Regional Climate Center, 2025).

Heat Accumulation:

Growing degree-days (GDDs) over the western US show most areas experiencing above average accumulation (Figure 3). Southern Oregon southward throughout most of California and into the southwest are running 300-500 GDD above average, while the majority of the PNW wine regions are 100-200 GDD above average (Figure 3). Converting the mapped data in Figure 3 to days ahead or days behind normal finds California and Arizona mostly 20-30 days ahead, while the PNW is 5-15 days ahead of normal accumulation amounts (not shown).

Heat accumulation (GDD) amounts at four locations that I have tracked for many years in wine regions in Oregon show the above average amounts mapped in Figure 3. Comparing May 2026 to the averages from the 1981-2010 and 1991-2020 climate normals for the month of May shows that they are 36-93% and 8-68% above average, respectively (Figure 4). McMinnville is showing the greatest departures from the long term averages. These locations are all currently tracking either slightly above or slightly below the same as the 2015 vintage, one of the warmest years in Oregon. These locations also range from 1% (Medford), 2% (Roseburg), 14% (Milton-Freewater), to 25% (McMinnville) above the same period in 2025.

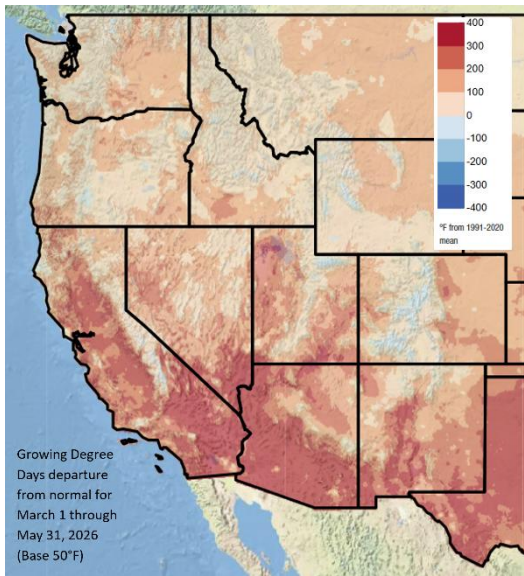


Figure 3 – Western US March through May 2026 growing degree-days (image from Climate Impacts Research Consortium, University of Idaho).

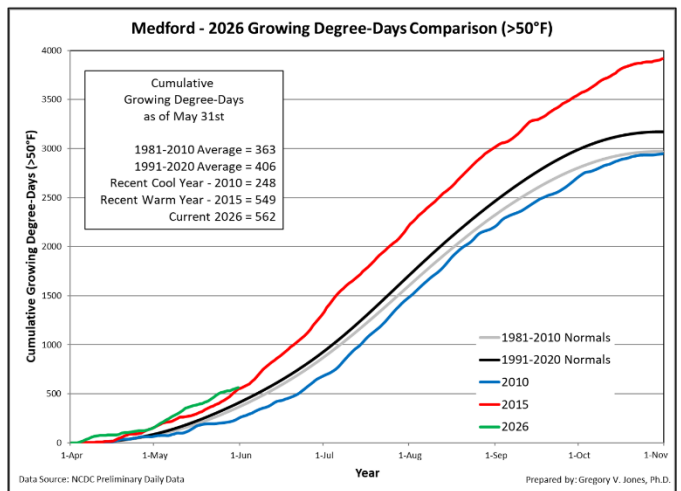
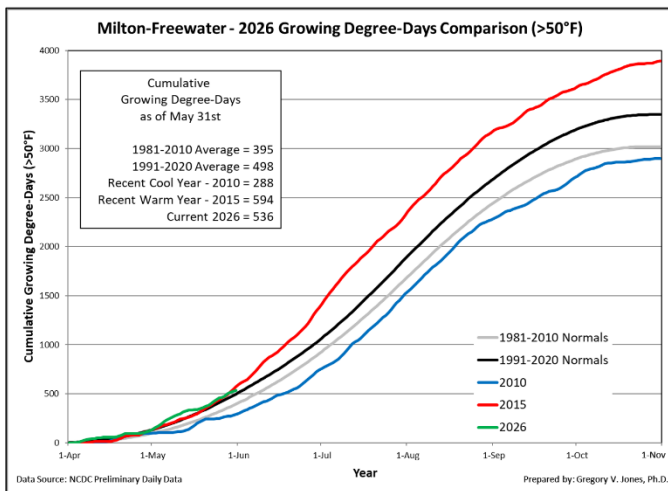
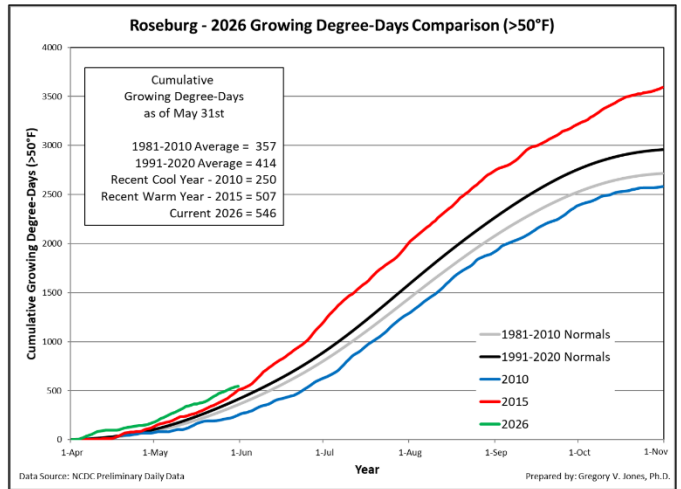
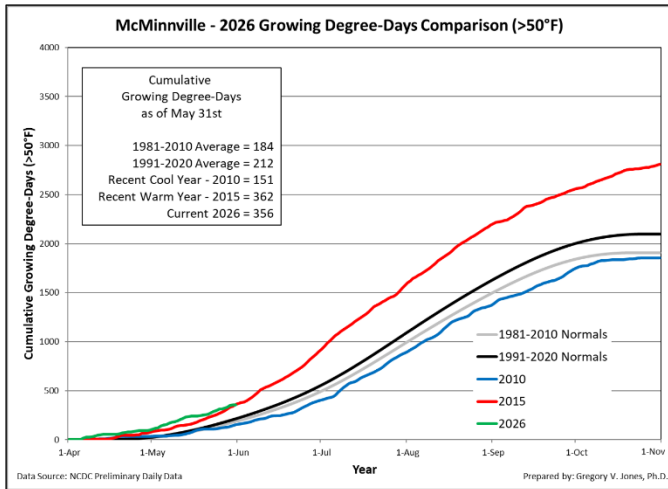


Figure 4 – Cumulative growing degree-days (base 50°F, no upper cut-off) for McMinnville, Roseburg, Milton-Freewater, and Medford, Oregon. Comparisons between the current year (2026) and a recent cool year (2010), a recent warm year (2015), and both the 1981-2010 and 1991-2020 climate normals are shown (NCDC preliminary daily data).

Drought Watch:

While the end of May drought map looks very similar to the overall pattern seen at the end of April, some areas saw improvements to less severe categories (Figure 5). The overall drought footprint for the continental US inched upward slightly to 77%, with the most extreme drought categories dropping to just under 42%. Mostly dry conditions in May over the western US kept the overall drought footprint close to 91%, with the most extreme categories rising slightly to over 51% of the west. By state, Oregon's drought footprint remained close to 96% of the state, with the extreme drought categories (severe, extreme, and exceptional) rising to over 36%. In Washington, near average precipitation in May kept the state at just over 65% in drought, with a slight rise in the most extreme categories of drought to 4%. May saw mostly dry conditions in the mountains of northern Idaho and western Montana, keeping the regions as one of the driest in the northwest. Montana had enough rain to drop the overall drought footprint from 94% to 87%; however, the extreme categories increased to close to 41% of the state. Not much change in Idaho, as its overall drought footprint remained close to 100% of the state, with the most extreme drought categories increasing again in May to nearly 55%. California continues to be the state in the west with the smallest drought footprint, staying just above 60%, with no area moving into the more extreme categories of drought at month's end (Figure 5).

While May did not bring much change to the overall drought pattern in the US, the seasonal drought outlook (Figure 5; right panel) continues to point to the west likely getting worse, while portions of the east are likely to improve. For those likely to improve, it includes much of Texas, the Gulf Coast, and portions of the southeast. However, the Piedmont and Appalachian mountains into the mid-Atlantic are likely to see drought persist. Much of the western US and the central to southern Plains are forecast to remain in drought. For the West Coast states, central to northern California, most of Oregon, and significant portions of Washington, Idaho, and Montana are likely to see drought conditions develop further as we head into our period of seasonal drought. If this forecast holds, then the West will likely see one of its largest footprints for drought since the monitor came out (Figure 5; right panel).

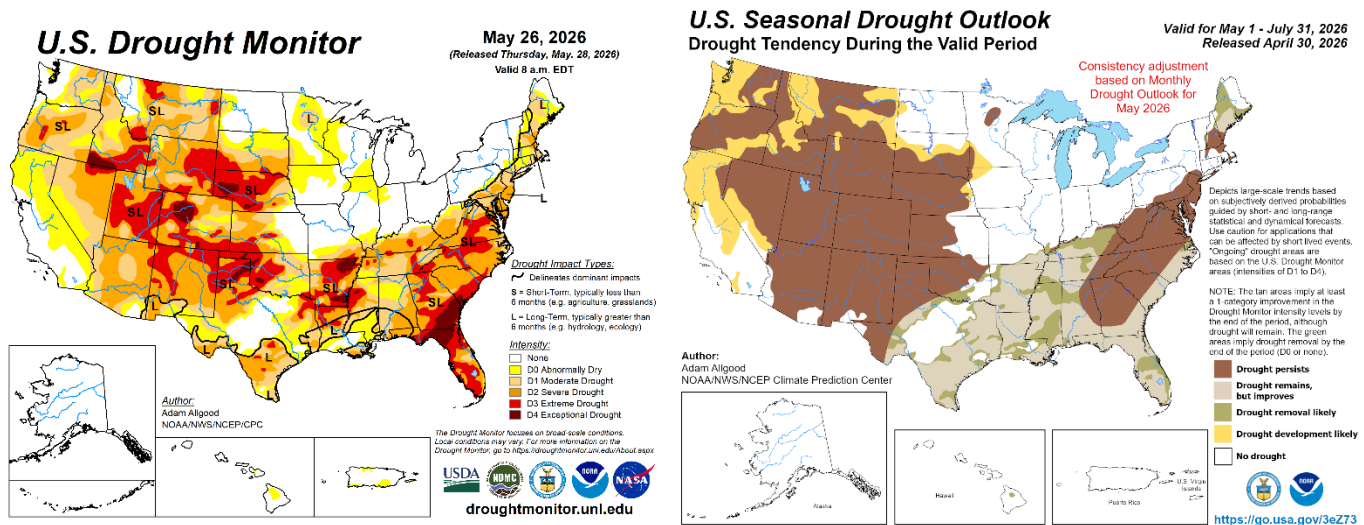


Figure 5 – Current US Drought Monitor and seasonal drought outlook.

ENSO Watch:

Quite a bit of buzz in the science community and in the media about the developing El Niño. Over the past month, ENSO-neutral conditions continued in the east-central equatorial Pacific Ocean, as evidenced by the near average to slightly warmer than average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) (Figure 6). With the continued warming, the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) has issued an El Niña Watch in their alert system. Tropical Pacific atmospheric conditions have also developed anomalies that are consistent with the move to full ENSO-neutral. Ocean and atmosphere conditions and models continue to show El Niño likely to emerge soon (82% chance during the May-July period) and remain in place through the Northern Hemisphere winter 2026-27 (96% chance during December through February). While many forecasters are leaning toward this event being a top five El Niño of all time, there is still substantial uncertainty in the peak strength of this El Niño. If the ocean and atmosphere continue to couple during the summer, there is a better chance that this event will be a strong El Niño; only time will tell. It is also important to note that stronger El Niño events do not guarantee strong impacts; they can only make certain aspects of regional effects more likely. There already

appears to be some influence on the western US, with flow into the southwest and Texas hinting at a more active monsoon season.

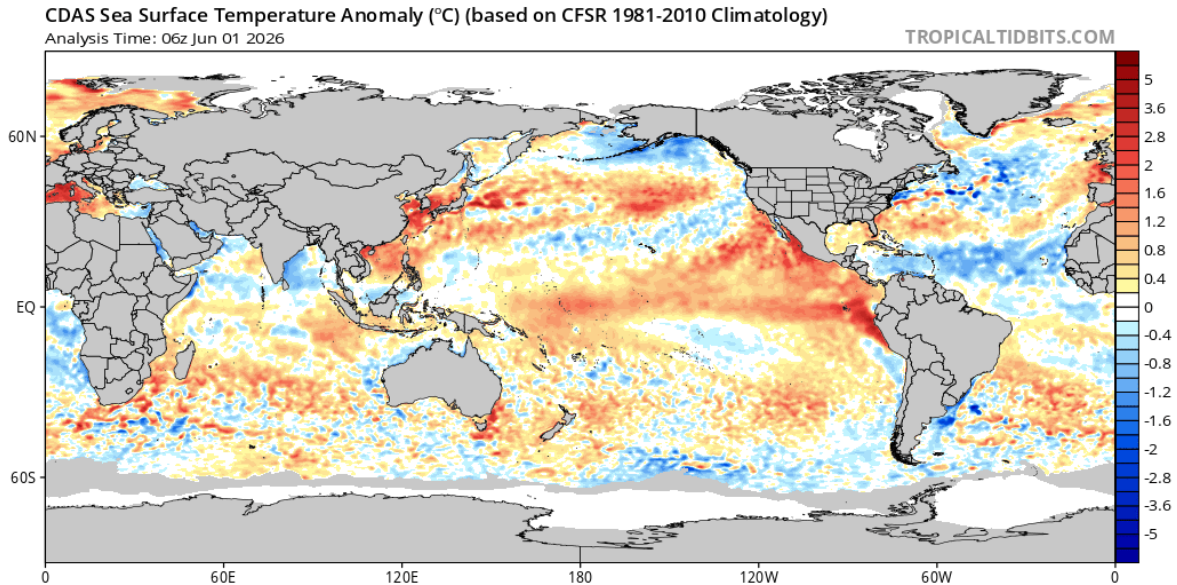


Figure 6 – Global sea surface temperatures (°C) for the period ending June 1, 2026 (image from Tropicaltibits.com).

North Pacific Watch:

There is also quite a lot of discussion going on with SSTs over the North Pacific. A broad area of the North Pacific basin remains warmer than average; however, the Gulf of Alaska and portions of the western North American coast from Alaska south to central California have shown some cooling (Figure 6). The area of cooler than average SSTs in the Gulf of Alaska has not changed much since last month, but forecasters are watching it closely. If this area stays on the cool side, some of the El Niño effects could be muted; if it leans to the warmer side, then the El Niño effects could be amplified (see the 90-day forecast below). Currently, the PDO is still showing negative phase anomalies and will likely continue for the foreseeable future, but its effect tends to lessen heading into the boreal summer, then picks back up in the fall and the transition to winter, which is right along with the timing of the developing El Niño.

Forecast Periods:

Next 5 Days: First few days of the month likely to be quite warm, especially in the PNW, but more seasonal south into California. An active jet stream over the North Pacific will bring a large area of low pressure across the PNW. Temperatures will cool into next weekend with precipitation likely for areas from northwestern Oregon into Washington. Unless this system drops further south along the coast, I wouldn't expect much precipitation further south.

6-10 Day (valid June 7-11): The system coming into the PNW will tamp down temperatures to near normal into next weekend with precipitation chances mostly in northwest Oregon, western Washington, and into the northern Cascades. The majority of the rest of the western US is forecast to see near normal to warmer than average temperatures with near normal to below normal precipitation. Across the country, the highest forecast confidence for above-normal temperatures is centered in the Plains, Great Lakes, and further south into the heartland. Above normal precipitation is also favored over most of the eastern US.

8-14 Day (valid June 9-15): The vast majority of the country is forecast to see a warmer mid-month period, with the highest forecast confidence for above-normal temperatures centered over the west, especially in the Great Basin. Near normal to below normal precipitation is forecast for the west and into the Plains and Great Lakes, with above normal precipitation forecast from New Mexico, across Texas, the South, and northward along the eastern states.

30 Day (valid June 1-30): The temperature outlook for June has much of the western US and northern tier of states expected to experience a warmer than average month (Figure 7). The highest forecast confidence for above-normal temperatures is for the northern Great Basin and Rockies. Equal chances of below, near, or above-normal temperatures

are forecast for southern states from eastern New Mexico across to the mid-Atlantic, where a more variable temperature pattern is expected this summer. In terms of precipitation, the PNW and across the northern Rockies are forecast as likely to be drier than average, while most of the rest of the western US has equal chances of being slightly above to slightly below in June. A wetter than average month is most likely in portions of the southwest, where early season monsoon flow may develop, and across Texas and the Gulf Coast region, which will continue alleviating drought concerns (Figure 5). The rest of the east is forecast for equal chances of above to below normal precipitation for the month, except the Great Lakes, which have higher confidence for below average precipitation in June (Figure 7).

90 Day (valid June-July-August): Heading into summer, the seasonal outlook through August continues to indicate a likely warmer than average continental US (Figure 7). The highest forecast confidence for above-normal temperatures over the next three months is centered over the PNW but extends across most of the western US, across the southwest, southeast, and the eastern seaboard. Equal chances of below, near, or above-normal temperatures are forecast for the Midwest and Great Lakes, where a more variable temperature pattern is expected this summer. For precipitation, there is high confidence in below average amounts in the PNW, northern Plains, and the Texas Gulf Coast region. The exception is the southwest and New England, where above average precipitation is favored (Figure 7). For the rest of the country, a more variable summer is likely with equal chances of below, near, or above-normal precipitation during the summer.

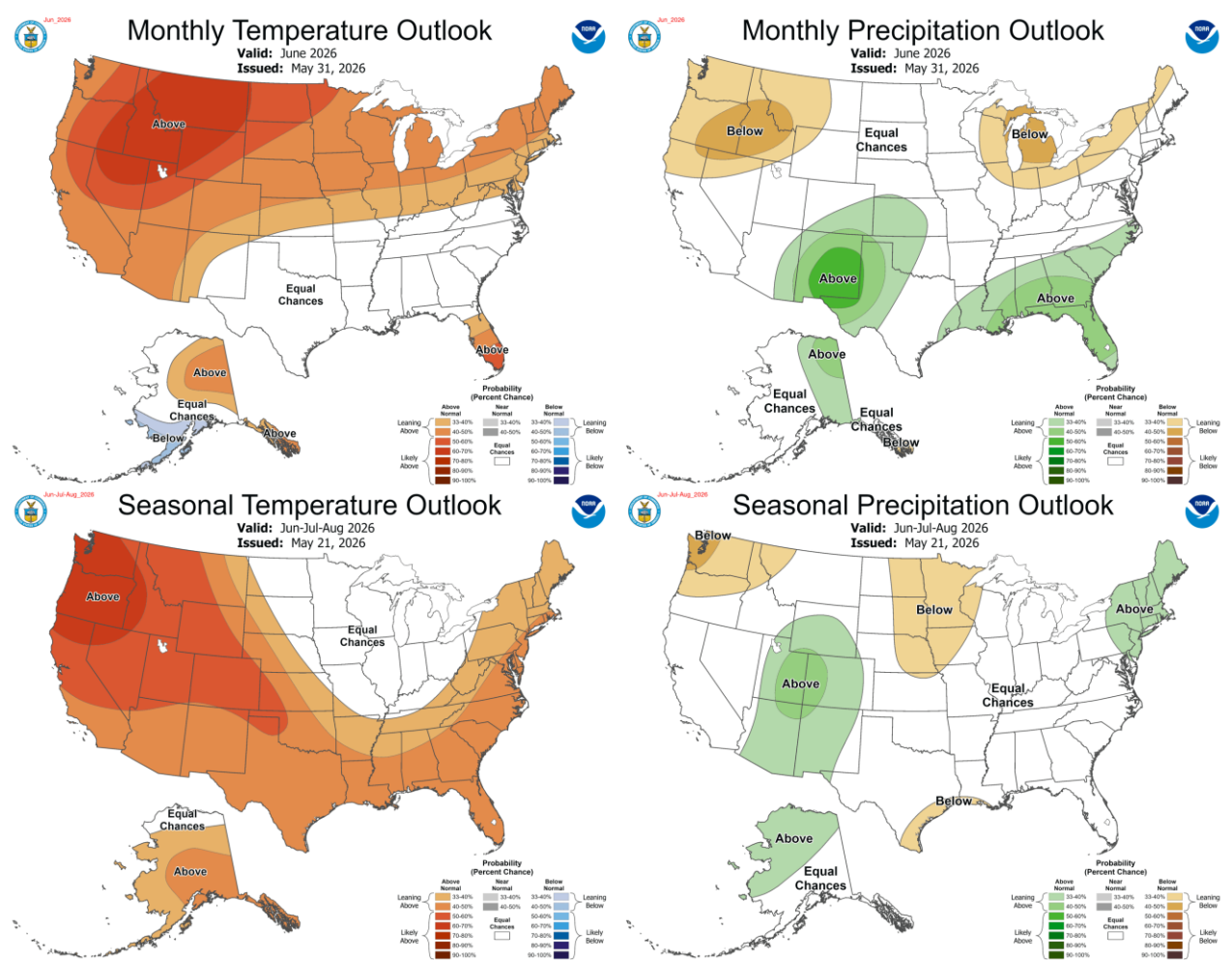


Figure 7 – Temperature (left panel) and precipitation (right panel) outlooks for the month of June (top panel) and June, July, and August (bottom panel) (Climate Prediction Center, climate.gov).

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