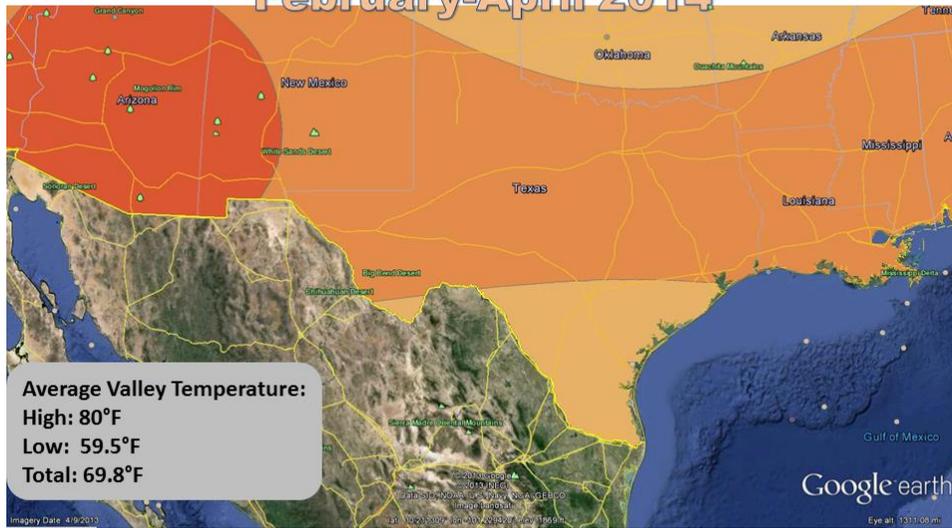


Warm and Dry?

Will Helpful Rains of November and December Be a Memory by April 2014?

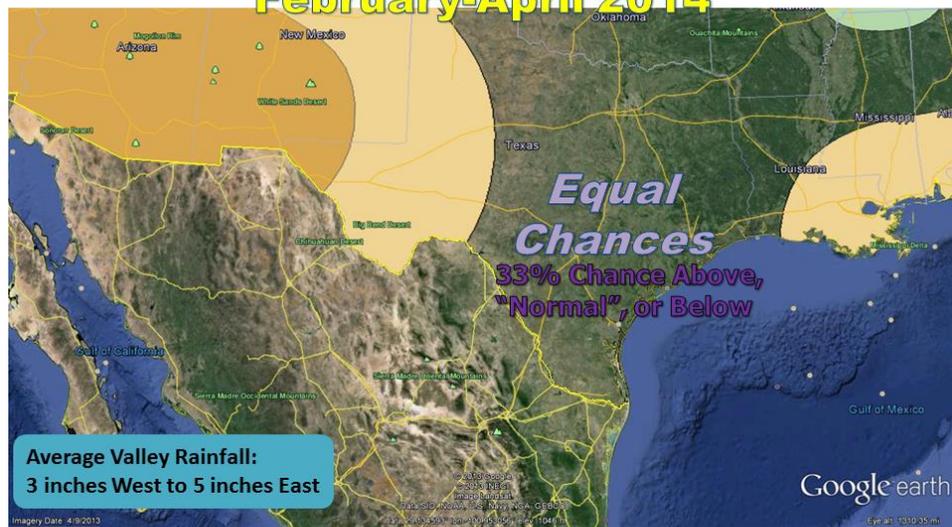
Temperature Outlook February-April 2014



Legend

- 50-59% Chance Above Average
- 40-49% Chance Above Average
- 33-39% Chance Above Average

Rainfall Outlook February-April 2014



Legend

- 40-49% Chance Below Average
- 33-39% Chance Below Average
- 33-39% Chance Above Average

The important forecast for the Rio Grande Valley and South Texas Brush Country growing and livestock season (February through April) is in, and trends continue to favor a fourth consecutive warm and generally dry period. For most of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, February 2014 will likely begin with only pockets of “moderate” drought conditions and most of the area just slightly drier than normal. This starting point is a notable improvement; for some areas, including eastern Hidalgo and most of Cameron County, soil moisture hasn’t been this “rich” at the start of the growing season since February 2010. Unfortunately, welcome rain

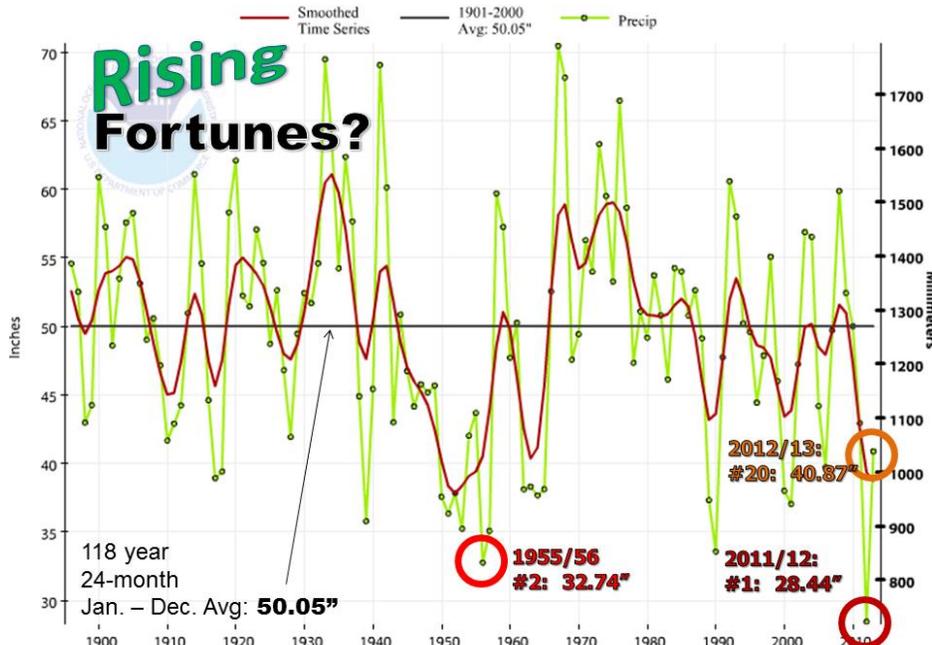
provided by favorable weather patterns from [September](#) through December 2013 may well be taken away by March 2014. Seasonal climate models and the development, at last, of an [atmospheric pattern](#) conducive to dry fronts and low daytime humidity in mid-January 2014 has increased confidence in a dry end to winter (January and February). If recent late winters and early springs are any guide, March will likely continue the trend; as the pattern begins lifting north, warm air will return as fronts will have increasingly limited impact.

Though confidence has increased in a dry end to winter, certainty in the potential return of serious drought remains in doubt. Should the atmospheric pattern continue to bring dry air from the lees of the Sierra Madre Oriental through the Rockies, the return of drought to the Valley will become near certain. Should the pattern deviate a hair by lifting toward the nation's midsection and a subtropical stream of moisture develop from the eastern Pacific and migrate toward northern Mexico and the tip of Texas, a series of light to moderate rain events could reappear, as they did to close December. Stay tuned.

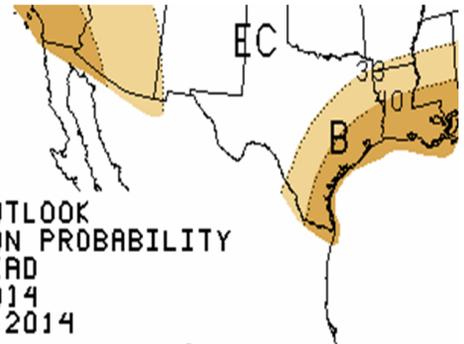
Where We've Been

The autumn 2013 rains *finally* put a dent in the prolonged dryness of Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. For the highest concentration of people and agribusiness (Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy), the 24 month rainfall from January 2012 through December 2013 increased by more than 12 inches (below) over the record low from January 2011 through December 2012. While coming in 20th is an improvement, there is still more water to be recovered; 20th still ranks near the top fifth driest 24 month January-December periods (out of 118).

Texas, Climate Division 10, Precipitation, 24-Month Period Ending in December



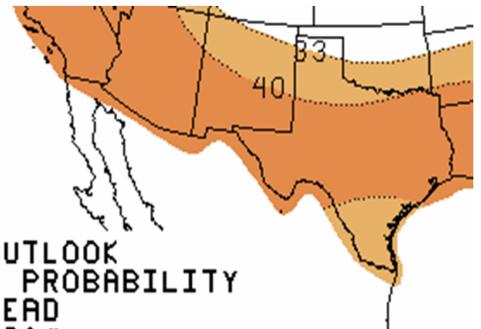
Rainfall Outlook February 2014



Average Valley Rainfall: 0.7 to 1.5 inches

Legend
 40-49% Chance Below Average
 33-39% Chance Below Average
 EC = Equal Chances 33% Each Below, "Normal", Above

Temperature Outlook February 2014



Average Valley Temperature:
 High: 74.3°F
 Low: 53.9°F
 Total: 64.1°F

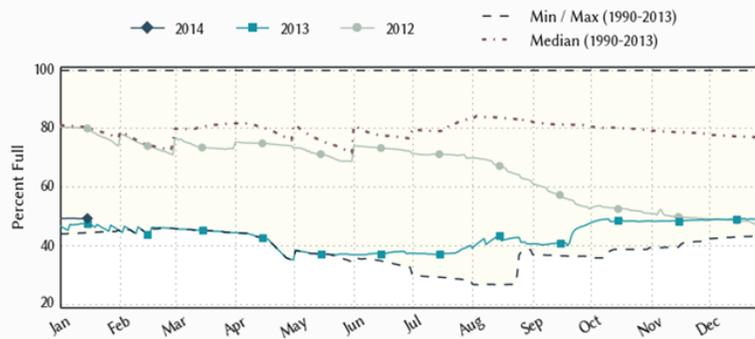
Legend
 40-49% Chance Above Average
 33-39% Chance Above Average

Falcon Reservoir is 36.8% full as of 2014-01-17



	Date	Percent Full	Water Level (ft)	Height Above Conservation Pool (ft)	Reservoir Storage (acre-ft)	Conservation Storage (acre-ft)
Today	2014-01-17	36.8	275.62	-25.48	1,014,277	570,913
Yesterday	2014-01-16	36.7	275.56	-25.54	1,011,369	569,276
2 days ago	2014-01-15	36.6	275.57	-25.53	1,011,891	568,183
1 week ago	2014-01-10	36.3	275.37	-25.73	1,002,789	563,072
1 month ago	2013-12-17	35.1	274.60	-26.50	967,937	543,814
3 months ago	2013-10-17	33.2	272.21	-28.89	863,907	514,468
6 months ago	2013-07-17	25.7	264.62	-36.48	589,610	397,974
1 year ago	2013-01-17	31.2	266.14	-34.96	639,539	483,961

Amistad Reservoir is 49.2% full as of 2014-01-17



	Date	Percent Full	Water Level (ft)	Height Above Conservation Pool (ft)	Reservoir Storage (acre-ft)	Conservation Storage (acre-ft)
Today	2014-01-17	49.2	1,081.52	-35.48	1,503,688	905,140
Yesterday	2014-01-16	49.1	1,081.51	-35.49	1,503,021	904,739
2 days ago	2014-01-15	49.2	1,081.49	-35.51	1,502,330	905,793
1 week ago	2014-01-10	49.1	1,081.39	-35.61	1,498,667	903,584
1 month ago	2013-12-17	49.0	1,080.95	-36.05	1,482,582	902,655
3 months ago	2013-10-17	48.6	1,079.45	-37.55	1,429,581	894,417
6 months ago	2013-07-17	37.2	1,058.01	-58.99	833,420	684,479
1 year ago	2013-01-17	47.0	1,077.32	-39.68	1,357,266	864,373

Above: Reservoir levels at Falcon (top) and Amistad (bottom) International Reservoirs, January 17, 2014. Note the improvement at Falcon since January 2013 – just under 175% of reservoir storage. Levels at Amistad were just a shade above 2013 values.

Despite the increase in local soil moisture and increased water availability, many local cities and towns were still under water restrictions. Check with your local public utility or elected officials for conditions in your community throughout this spring.

Be Firewise!

Across much of Texas, drought improvement instigated by late summer and early autumn rainfall has increased the acreage of fine fuels (such as grasses and brush) that could become a conduit for rapid to explosive wildfire spread, should fires begin later this spring. Many of these fuels have “cured” through a combination of winter dormancy, freezes, and recent breezy to windy drying fronts. While the Rio Grande Valley is only minimally cured – many fine fuels still have some green given the deep soil moisture – ranchlands north of the Valley have become more cured due to a combination of lower soil moisture, lower humidity on more days, and up to three minor freezes (December 16, 24; January 3). Now is the time to consider methods to remove at least some of the potential fuels. These could include mowing on humid days, more frequent grazing, and brush clearing.

Ranchers, farmers, and others should follow these safety tips, especially on breezy to windy days with low humidity:

- Park vehicles on dirt or paved roads, not in high grass. Hot undercarriages can spark a fire.
- Avoid using welding or grinding equipment in high grass or brush
- Dispose of cigarettes in fire safe receptacles

The Texas Forest Service has issued a [spring fire weather outlook](#), which contains helpful information for you to plan. Remember, [only you can prevent wildfires](#).