Climate recap, March-May 2013
*An upside-down May was the outlier of spring 2013. The month started out warm and dry, but ended cool and wet. The stormy close to the month helped boost long-term precipitation deficits from the prolonged drier than normal period at the beginning of the calendar year.

Precipitation
Spring was generally drier than normal across the southern tier of the Pacific Northwest, especially in eastern Oregon and southern Idaho, where drought and fire activity are a concern heading into summer.

Western Washington and the Northern Idaho Panhandle were wetter than normal in Spring, driven mostly by an active weather pattern at the end of May. The Columbia River Gorge, and Yakima Valley were among the wettest anomalies in the region in May. Yakima, WA and Portland, OR both recorded their third wettest May on record.

Temperature
Averaged over the season and across the region, temperature departures from normal were minimal. The warmest temperatures of the season were recorded in early and mid-May. Daytime temperatures in the three-state region topped 90°F in mid-May.

Pacific NW Impacts, March-May 2013

Agriculture
*Washington cherry growers expect smaller yield this year due to cool and windy weather during pollination. Growers lost early-blooming crop due to cracking from rain in May (USDA Crop Bulletin)

*Oregon strawberries arrived earlier than last year thanks to warm and dry weather, but rain in late spring is causing rot in some varieties (OSU Extension)

*Irrigation is being used in the Snake River Plain to assist with crop emergence prior to the main growing season due to limited spring precipitation.

Water Resources
*Severe drought conditions currently exist in eastern Oregon and western Idaho. Moderate drought conditions are occurring in southern and eastern Oregon and Idaho. Drought is expected to persist or intensify across Oregon and Idaho into the summer.

PNW Counties with a formal drought declaration:
- **Idaho**: Blaine, Butte, Clark, Fremont, and Lincoln Counties
- **Oregon**: Klamath County

*Reservoir levels are lower than average across most of eastern Oregon and southern Idaho and levels are far below last year.

*Snowpack melted out quickly in southern Oregon and southern Idaho, but a robust snowpack persisted in the Washington Cascades and Northern Idaho, reducing fire danger and drought concerns. Snowpack levels increased through May in the northern Columbia River Basin.

Recreation/Economy
*Owing to low snowpack, the North Entrance road of Crater Lake National Park (OR) opened on May 17, 2013. This is almost a month earlier than last year. Low snow helped save on snow removal costs which were expected to be impacted by Federal sequestration (Klamath Falls Herald and News)
Regional Outlook for Summer 2013

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center outlook shows higher probability of below average precipitation across the entire region except for southeastern Idaho. The odds for drier than normal are slightly greater over eastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and central/northern Idaho.

Eastern Oregon, southeastern Washington, and all of Idaho except for the tip of the Panhandle have greater odds of above average temperatures. Southeastern Idaho has increased odds for warmer than average temperatures. In the other parts of the region, there is equal chances of either above, below, or average temperatures (33% each).

The above average temperature and below average precipitation intersects areas that have current or developing drought conditions. NOAA's water supply forecast tracks closely with areas where precipitation was much below normal for the past 3 months, namely eastern Oregon and southern Idaho.

Fire season outlook

July and August/September Fire Season Outlooks issued by National Interagency Fire Council

Fire season was projected to start early in the season, due to the abnormally dry start to the year. Several small wildfires burned across the region (Washington and Oregon) during the warm weather in mid-May. The active weather pattern and associated showers at the end of the month helped to abate the concern about an early fire season.

The National Interagency Fire Council projects that much of the region will have above average wildfire activity this summer (red on above map). Last summer was an active wildfire season in the PNW, with Idaho and Oregon leading the US in acres burned respectively. Large fires burned well into October of 2012.

Moving into summer, the fire season is projected to be above normal in Oregon except for the very north coast; southern Washington and southwestern Idaho in July.

In August and September, the increased chance of wildfire covers all of Oregon, the very southwestern portion of Washington and all of Central Idaho.

While the showery weather helped push off the start of the season, the rains did little to dampen fuels. Rapidly depleting snowpack in Oregon and Idaho means lessened soil moisture and greater fire risk.