



# Sage Winds

Serving National Weather Service Spotters and Cooperative Observers

Lightning over the city of Boise

## eSpotter is Here!

In this age of electronic communications, we would like to offer you a brand new way of reporting significant weather conditions. Welcome to eSpotter!

eSpotter allows you to report significant weather conditions online by filling out a blank electronic report sheet (Figure 2). The report is then securely transferred into our internal system where we can check it in real-time. This greatly differs from email reports which we may not see for multiple days. This program was developed to enhance and increase timely and accurate online spotter reports and communication between the spotters and the local office.

Reporting via the spotter hotline is always available 24/7/365, but now eSpotter is a great alternative. If you wish to use this new technology, you can request an account on [eSpotter.weather.gov](http://eSpotter.weather.gov) (Figure1). Once you request an account, an email will be sent to the office for approval. Only current spotters can be approved for eSpotter. Once approved you will be given a login and can submit spotter reports using the same criteria as always. For a refresher on what those criteria are, see the last page of this newsletter.

Volume 1, Issue 1

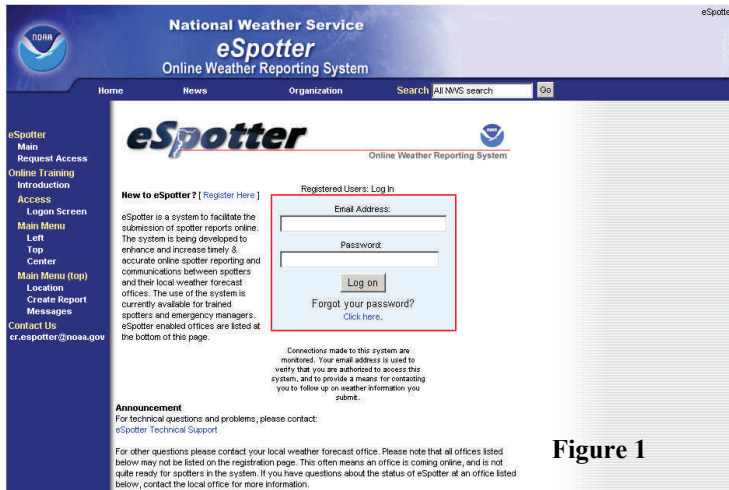


Figure 1

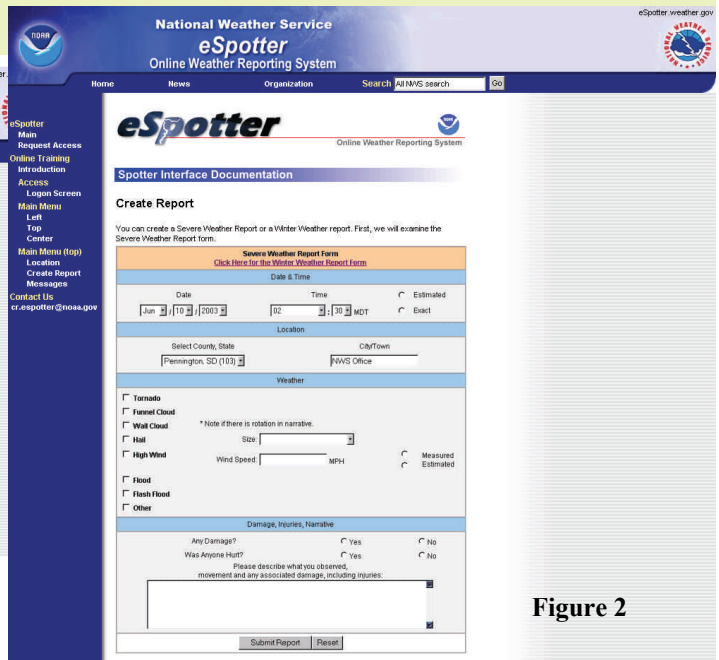


Figure 2

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## Your New Sage Winds

Sage Winds will be shorter and issued on a more frequent basis! Thank you to everyone who have provided us with updated contact information and an email address. We greatly appreciate all that you do and felt that a quick newsletter once a month

would provide a better service compared to longer newsletters twice a year to keep you informed on the latest weather information and office happenings. We are trying to limit all correspondence to email format to save time, money, and trees.

As always, all newsletters will be available on our website ([weather.gov/boise](http://weather.gov/boise)) to view using Adobe Acrobat. If you have any comments about this new format, feel free to email me at: [Dawn.Fishler@noaa.gov](mailto:Dawn.Fishler@noaa.gov)

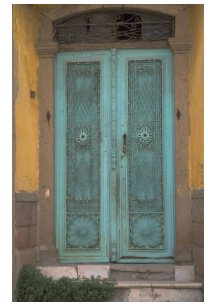
## If June Seemed Wetter Than Normal, You Were Right

Throughout southeast Oregon and southwest Idaho many of you have noticed most of June was cool with plenty of rain. But just how much rain fell? Many locations saw 300 to 600 percent of normal rainfall. In fact, some locations set all-time records for wettest June. Multiple flash floods were reported across southeast Oregon and southwest Idaho as well. The convective nature of these storms led to some very interesting rainfall patterns. One prime example was the differ-

ence in precipitation totals between the Boise airport automated observing site and the manual observations taken at the Boise NWS office. These sites are approximately 2 mile apart. The airport received a total of 2.63 inches for the month of June while the office had only 1.54 inches. That's more than an inch difference over only two miles! Other location in the valley such as Garden City and Eagle received over 3 inches for the month. These storms were definitely hit and

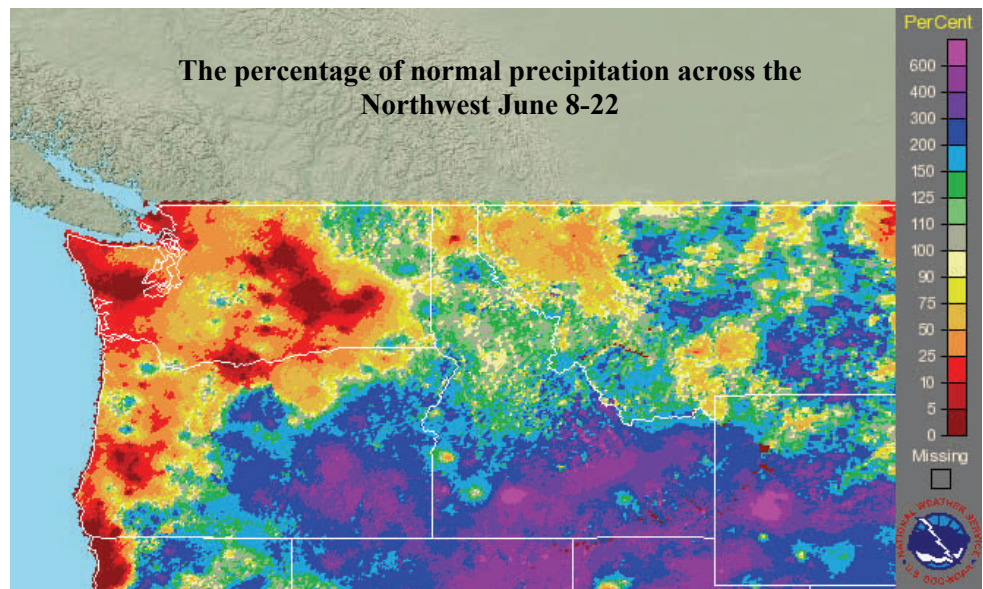
miss, but as you can tell from the graphic below, most places were hit hard. Some locations in Owyhee and Twin Falls counties had upwards of 5 inches of rain for the month!

Thank you for all of your spotter reports during this active pattern! Many reports either lead to a warning being issued, or helped to verify a warning already in place. Your actions helped to save lives and property, which helped us to fulfill our mission. Keep up the excellent work!



Caption describing picture or graphic.

**Some locations Oregon and Idaho had around 500 percent of normal precipitation during the two week period of June 8-22!**



## Lightning Safety

Lightning strikes approximately 400 people per year, killing on average 58 people per year, more than tornadoes or hurricanes! These tragedies are easily avoidable when the proper precautions are taken. Use the simple 30/30 rule. If you can hear thunder within 30 seconds of seeing a flash of lightning, you are close enough to be struck and need to head indoors immediately. Wait 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder before returning outdoors again. Remember that lightning will always take the channel that offers the path of least resistance and can strike up to 20 miles outside of the parent thunderstorm. There is no safe place outdoors when lightning is in the area, but if you do get caught outside follow these steps:

- \*Get out of the water if in a lake, ocean, river, etc.
- \*Do not be the tallest object
- \*Do not stand near isolated trees, towers, or utility poles
- \*Stay away from metal conductors such as fences or wires
- \*Spread out if you are with a group of people

Always check the forecast for the likelihood of thunderstorms online at [weather.gov/boise](http://weather.gov/boise). Lightning safety is everyone's responsibility. For additional information visit: [www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov)

**When Thunder Roars, Head Indoors!**

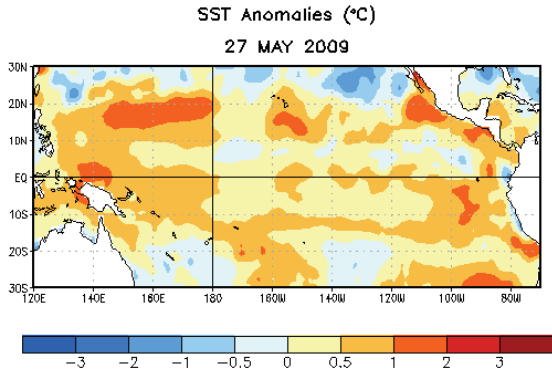


### El Niño Watch In Effect

An El Niño watch means that conditions are favorable for a

transition from neutral ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation) to an El Niño pattern. Sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific have been steadily warming for the past 5 months. This along with the equatorial region wind patterns are indicative of a developing El Niño. In addition, model forecasts are showing this change as well. What does this mean for our area? The effects during June-August would be wetter than normal

conditions through much of the intermountain west, as we have already seen for the month of June. The effects this winter would be warmer than average temperatures and therefore less snowfall in the lower elevations. This could be similar to what was observed the winter of 2006-2007. See images below for the regional impacts of El Niño.



### Storm Prediction Center (SPC) Severe Weather Climatology

Have you ever wondered just how many tornadoes southwest Idaho and southeast Oregon average each year? How about the strongest tornado ever observed in the area? Maybe severe wind or hail is more your interest.

You can find all this and more at the following website:

<http://www.spc.noaa.gov/climo/online/rda/CBX.html>

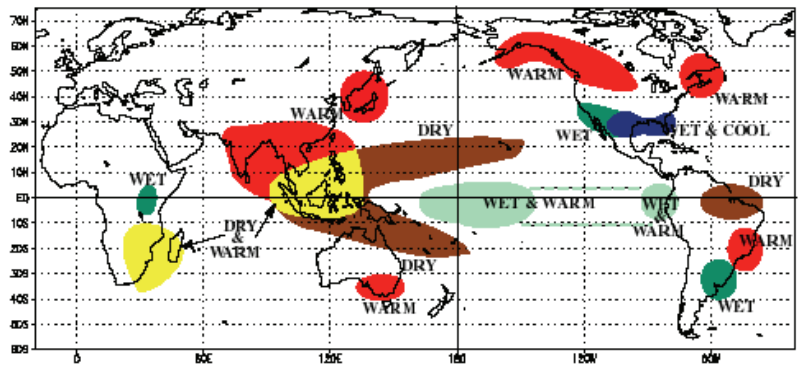
Many of these reports come from spotters like you! This is one of the important places your ground truth reports may end up. Remember that your report may become part of a permanent national database, so please always report according to the criteria listed on the last page of this newsletter.

### A change to hail severe hail criteria took place June 1, 2009!

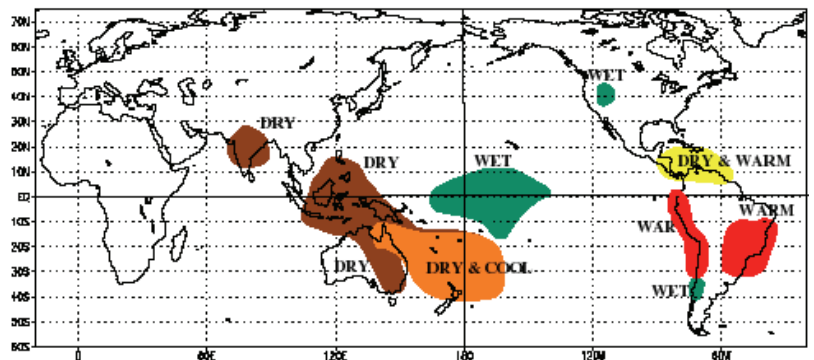
Penny-sized hail (0.75 inch in diameter) used to be considered severe, but as of June 1, one inch size hail in diameter (quarter-sized) took effect. So, now a Severe Thunderstorm Warning will only be issued or verified with quarter-sized hail. The change started four seasons ago in Kansas, which acted as a test-bed for this new standard. After a 4-season test there was an overwhelmingly positive response to this change and so it was put into effect throughout the National Weather Service. Storms producing 3/4-7/8 inch hail, with below severe winds (less than 58 mph) will now be covered using a Severe Weather Advisory under the “SPSBOI” header. Please remember to tell us the largest hail stone you see when reporting.

Below: El Niño influences across the globe during the winter and summer

#### WARM EPISODE RELATIONSHIPS DECEMBER - FEBRUARY

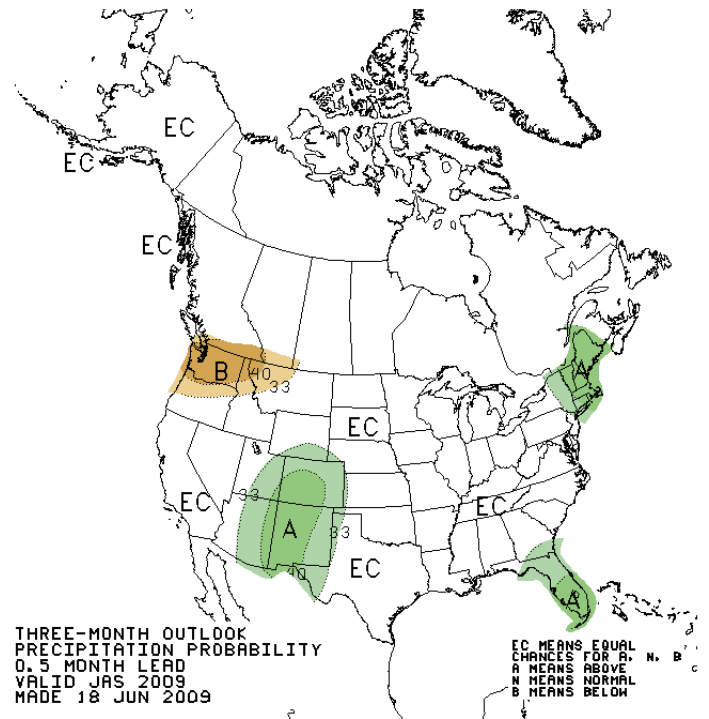
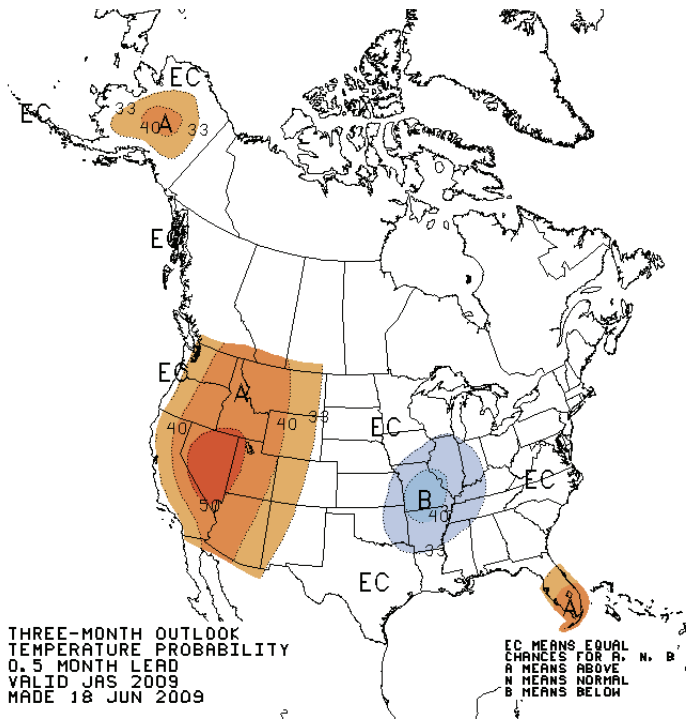


#### WARM EPISODE RELATIONSHIPS JUNE - AUGUST





# Summer Outlook: July, August, and September 2009



**The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook for this summer (made June 18, 2009) across southeast Oregon and southwest Idaho indicates a better than average chance of above normal temperatures and equal chances of having above or below normal precipitation .**

## Reporting Criteria

**\*\*\*Please Always Report!\*\*\***

### SkyWarn Spotter Reporting Criteria

Call us when you observe:

- **Tornado**— All tornadoes
- **Funnel Cloud**— All funnel clouds, watch for rotation
- **Hail**— 1/2 inch in diameter and larger (1" hail is considered severe)
- **Near Continuous Lightning**
- **Winds**— All winds greater than 35 MPH (58 mph wind is considered severe)
- **Heavy Rain**—Falling at a rate of 1" per hour or greater (1/2" in 30 minutes) , or more than 1" in a day.
- **Freezing Rain**—Any measurable freezing rain
- **Heavy snow**—1" per hour or greater, or storm total 4" or more, or snow causing road closures.
- **Flooding**— Any water flowing where it normally doesn't or rivers flowing above their banks.
- **Low Visibility**— Visibility less than 1/4 mile for any reason
- **Weather Related Damage, Death, or Injury**— If weather causes damage, death, or injury, let us know.

**Please always keep your information up-to-date! If you move, change phone numbers or your email address, let us know by either calling the spotter hotline, or emailing me at: [Dawn.Fishler@noaa.gov](mailto:Dawn.Fishler@noaa.gov)**