

The Bandera PROPHET

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This season's forecast: Drought with a chance of flash floods

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The Bandera Prophet

The layman may describe Texas' extreme weather pattern as schizophrenic - a winter coat in the morning gets shed for a tank top by mid-afternoon. Blue skies can give way to ominous clouds instantly, and in the Hill Country, a dry river basin can be flooded within hours.

According to Westward Environmental, Inc. Modeling Team Leader and Meteorologist Dave Knollhoff, CCM, part of that can be explained by weather phases known as El Niño and La Niña. The pesky couple makes up the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle, which describes the changes in temperature between the ocean and atmosphere.

Knollhoff said El Niño hung around the Hill Country during the first half of 2019, bringing more rain than normal. In the summer he disappeared over the Pacific, shifting the weather to ENSO Neutral.

"And then July comes, the taps turned off and the rain stopped," Knollhoff said, adding the rain that has fallen over the last several days was an anomaly.

He said the neutral weather pattern will persist until either El Niño or La Niña returns.

"There are no indicators that a wet pattern will return. Right now, we're in the 'I don't know' pattern," Knollhoff said. "You just never know what you're going to get between El Niño and La Niña."

Predicting a dryer and warmer conclusion to winter than average, Knollhoff said he expects more of what has happened in the last six months.

"I could be wrong. I hope I'm wrong," he said. "Spring is coming, so we could have some more rainfall."

The drought status according to the Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District is moderate. Medina Lake is 76 percent full as of today, according to the Texas Water Development Board Water Data.