



## Quick Look at the Potential Pattern Change in the Western US Next Week

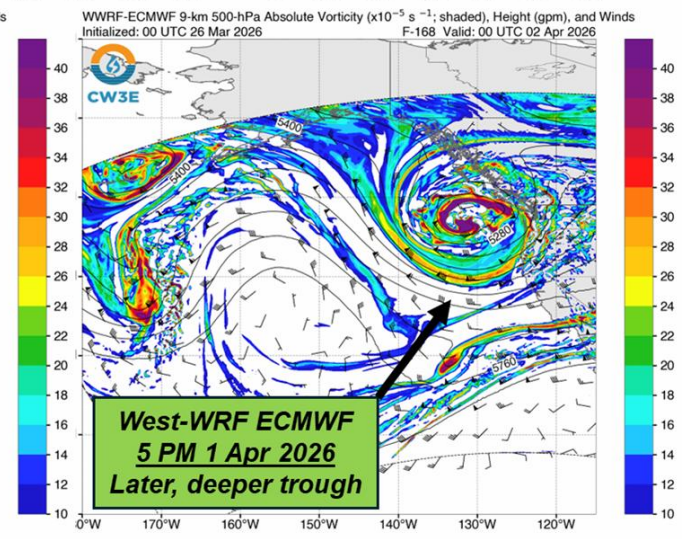
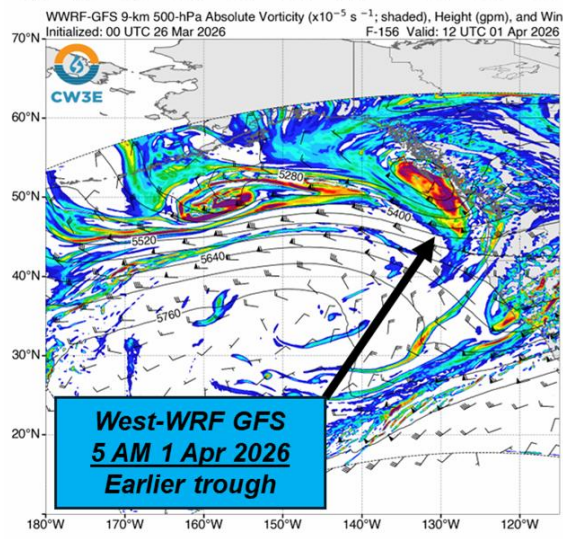
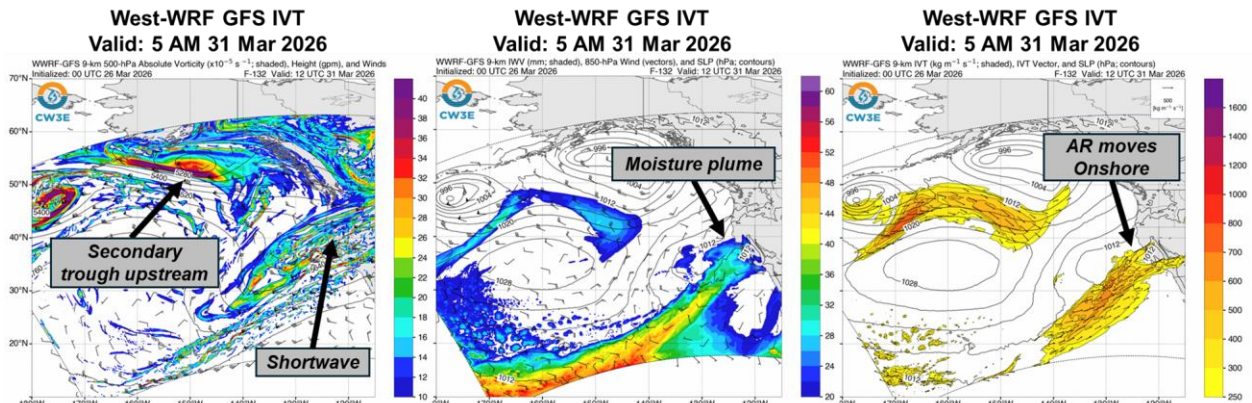
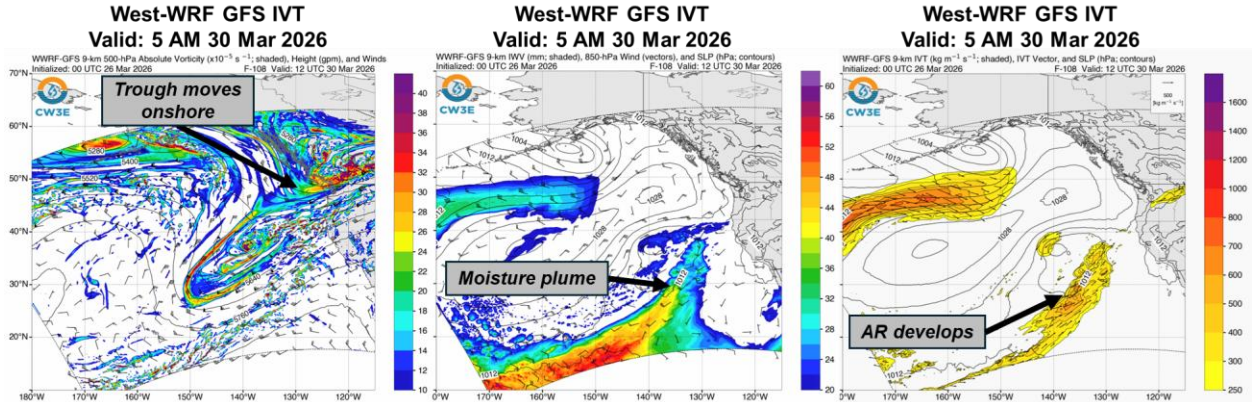
*Updated: 26 March 2026*

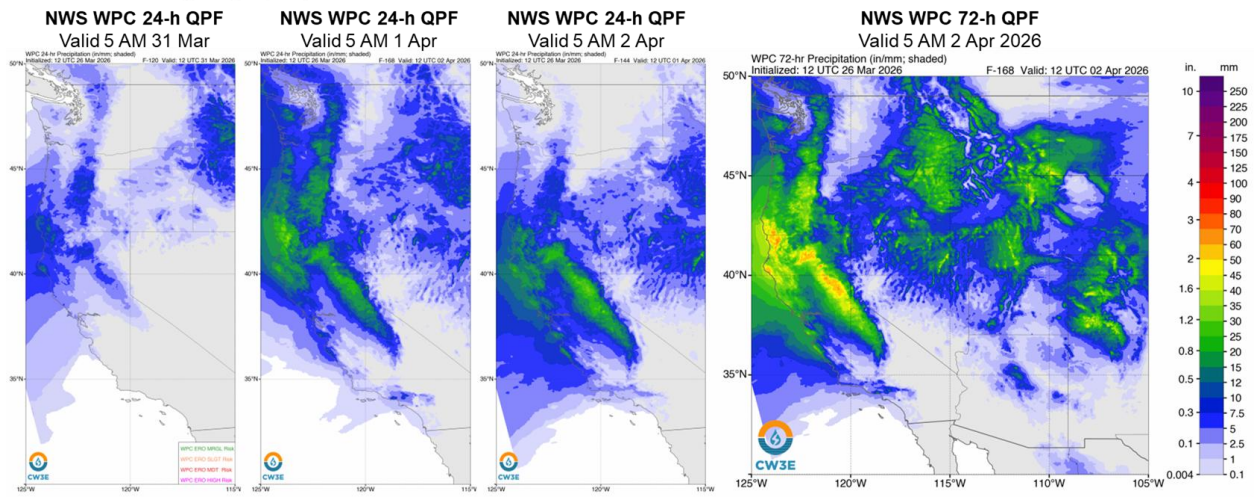
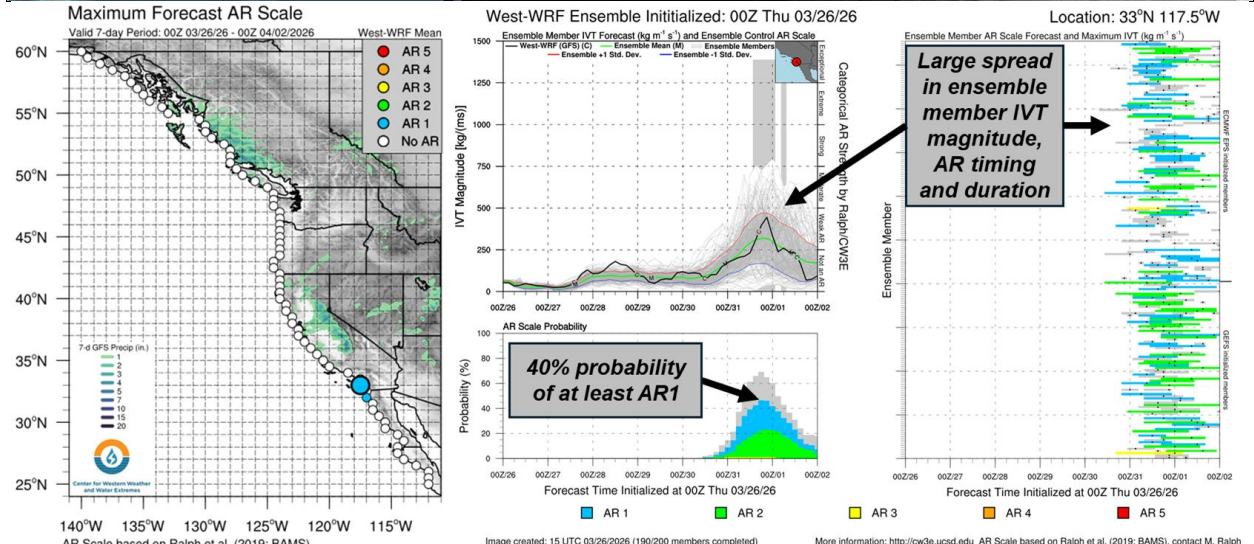
Confidence is increasing that a pattern shift will occur next week over the Western US, resulting in cooler and wetter conditions, although uncertainty remains as to the exact storm impacts.

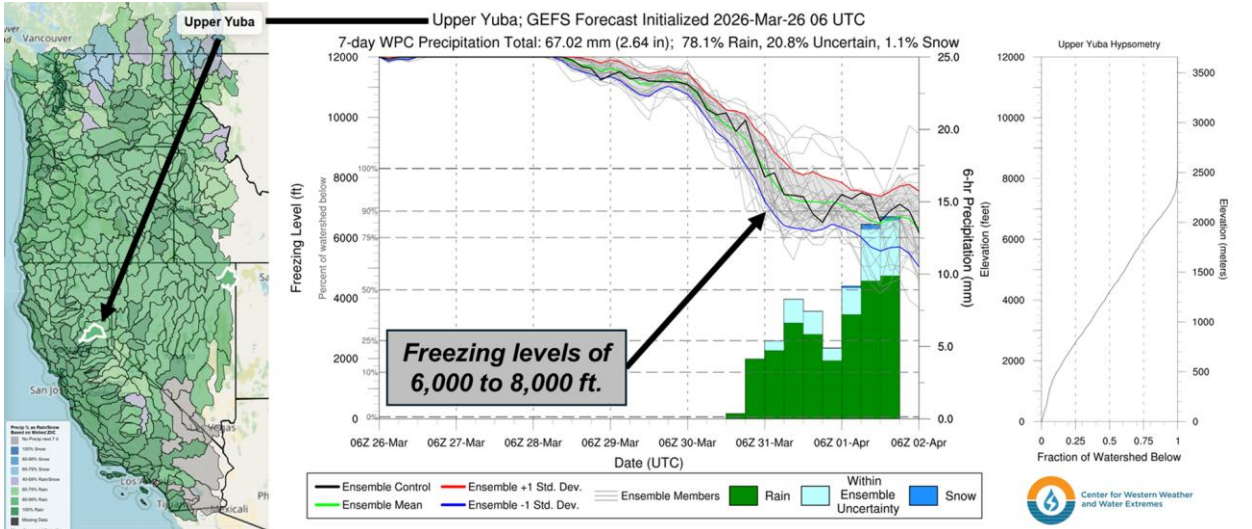
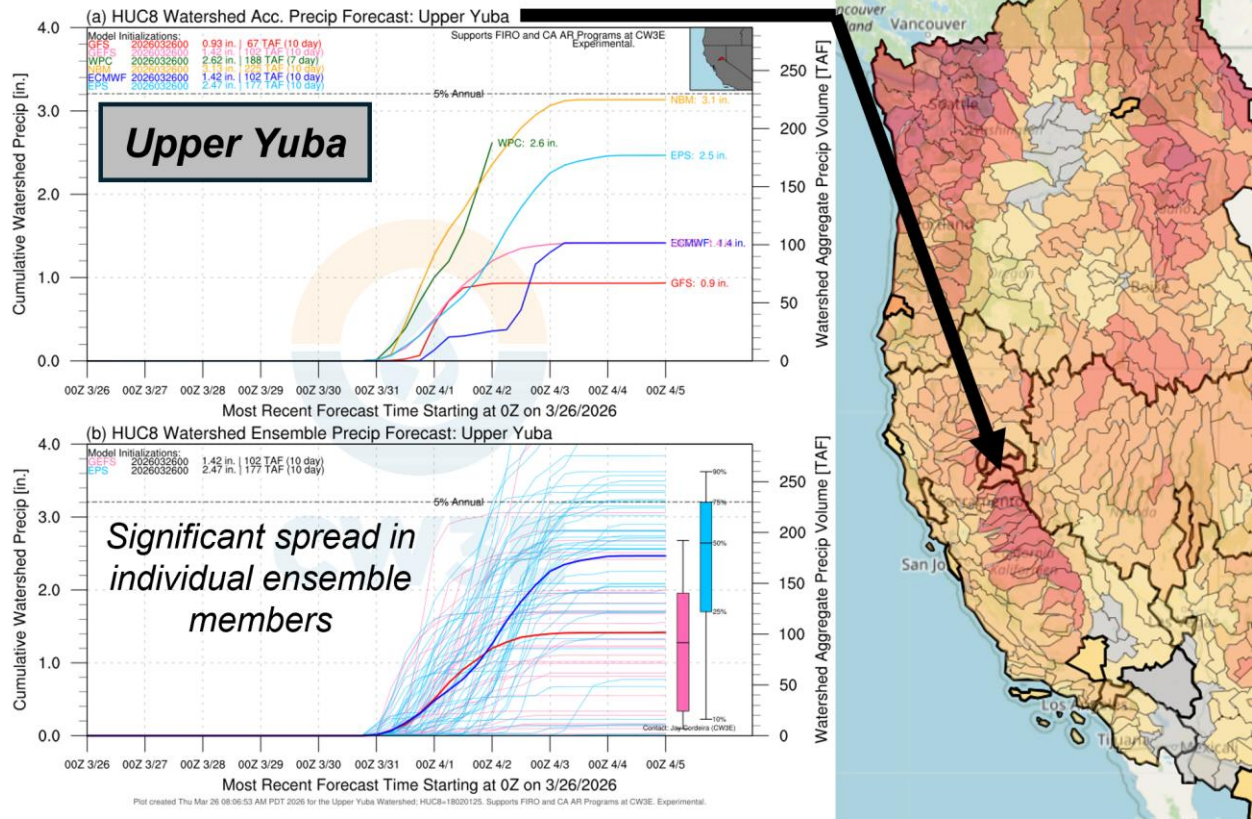
### Forecast Highlights:

- An eastward shift in the persistent ridge that has been situated over the Western US for the past few weeks and broad troughing over the Northeast Pacific is forecast to facilitate a shift from hot & dry conditions to more seasonable cool & wet conditions over the Western US early next week.
- An initial trough is forecast to move onshore between Mon 30 Mar and Tue 31 Mar, interacting with low-level moisture to facilitate precipitation in coastal Oregon and Northern California, the southern Cascades, and northern Sierra Nevada.
- A weak atmospheric river (AR) is forecast to develop to the east of Hawaii on Mon 30 Mar in association with a mid-level trough and corridor of elevated water vapor. This AR is forecast to shift eastward and bring additional moisture towards the US West Coast and weak AR conditions to coastal California between late Mon 30 Mar and Wed 1 Apr.
- CW3E's West-WRF ensemble AR Scale tools are indicating the highest probability of AR conditions over Central and Southern California, with ~40% of members forecasting at least AR 1 conditions (based on the Ralph et al. 2019 AR Scale) in coastal San Diego County.
- There is still significant uncertainty in the forecast evolution of this pattern. The GFS-driven West-WRF is forecasting a quicker and more northerly track for the most impactful trough during this period, as compared to the ECMWF-driven West-WRF which brings the trough onshore later and further south leading to a later precipitation window and heavier precipitation over California.
- The National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center (WPC) is forecasting 3-day precipitation totals of 2–3 inches over the Coastal Ranges in southern Oregon & Northern California, the Klamath Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, with 1–2 inches forecast over northern coastal Oregon, the southern Cascades, and Central California for the 72-hour period ending at 5 AM Thu 2 Apr.
- The 10-day ensemble mean precipitation forecast (ending 5 PM Sat 4 Apr) over the Upper Yuba watershed is higher in the EPS (~2.5 in.) as compared to the GEFS (~1.4 in.) with significant spread of the ensemble members in both models. Additionally, ~25% of EPS members are forecasting at least 5% of normal annual precip in the Upper Yuba
- Freezing levels over the northern Sierra Nevada are forecast to lower to between 6,000–8,000 feet as this system moves over the region on Tue 31 March, facilitating snowfall for the region that is currently experiencing well below normal seasonal snowpack.

**Stay alert to official NWS forecasts, watches, and warnings at [weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)**







**Additional Considerations:**  
 Visit <https://www.weather.gov/> for point specific forecasts.  
 In-depth AR forecasts products can be found here:  
<http://cw3e.ucsd.edu/iwv-and-ivt-forecasts/>

Update by S. Bartlett  
 smbartlett@ucsd.edu