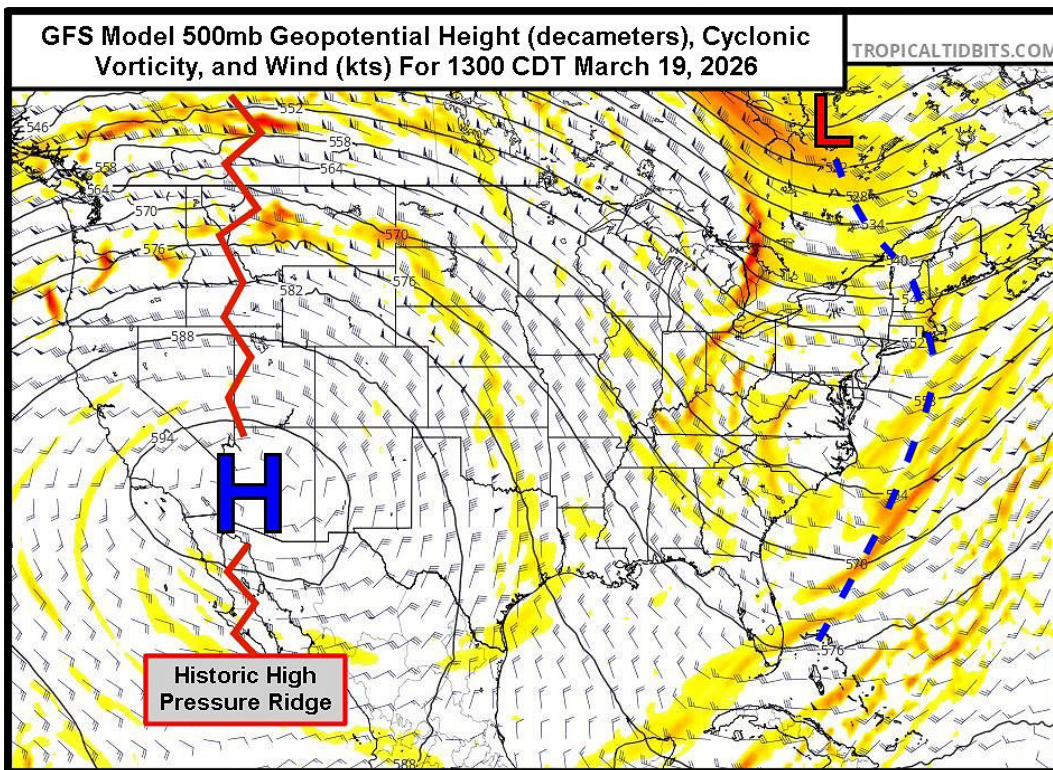


Historic March Warmth To Impact West U.S. Today - Saturday

By Brad Luchen and Drew Lerner

Kansas City, March 18 (World Weather Inc.) – *An impressive early season heatwave is anticipated in the western United States over the next few days as an unusually strong high-pressure ridge develops aloft over the region.* This high-pressure ridge is one of the strongest noted for this time of year and will have characteristics similar to that of a mid-summer event. That implies hundreds of record high temperatures are going to be set in the western United States and some cities in the southwest will possibly break their records for excessive heat so early in the season. Some of the temperatures will be the warmest recorded for the month of March and probably surpass old records for early season heat set in April as well. The excessive heat and record setting conditions may last for two to three days. *The extremely anomalous warmth will occur from California and the southwestern desert region into the northern Rocky Mountain region and portions of the northern Plains. Stress to livestock and winter crops is quite likely; including those in hard red winter wheat areas, most of West Texas and the northern Plains.* Cooler air will arrive Sunday with some additional anomalous warmth later next week.

The historic high-pressure ridge is strengthening today and is getting close to its peak strength, which is likely to occur Thursday into Friday over Arizona and southern California. The intensity of this ridge is very unusual for this time of year and reflects the intensity usually seen more during July.

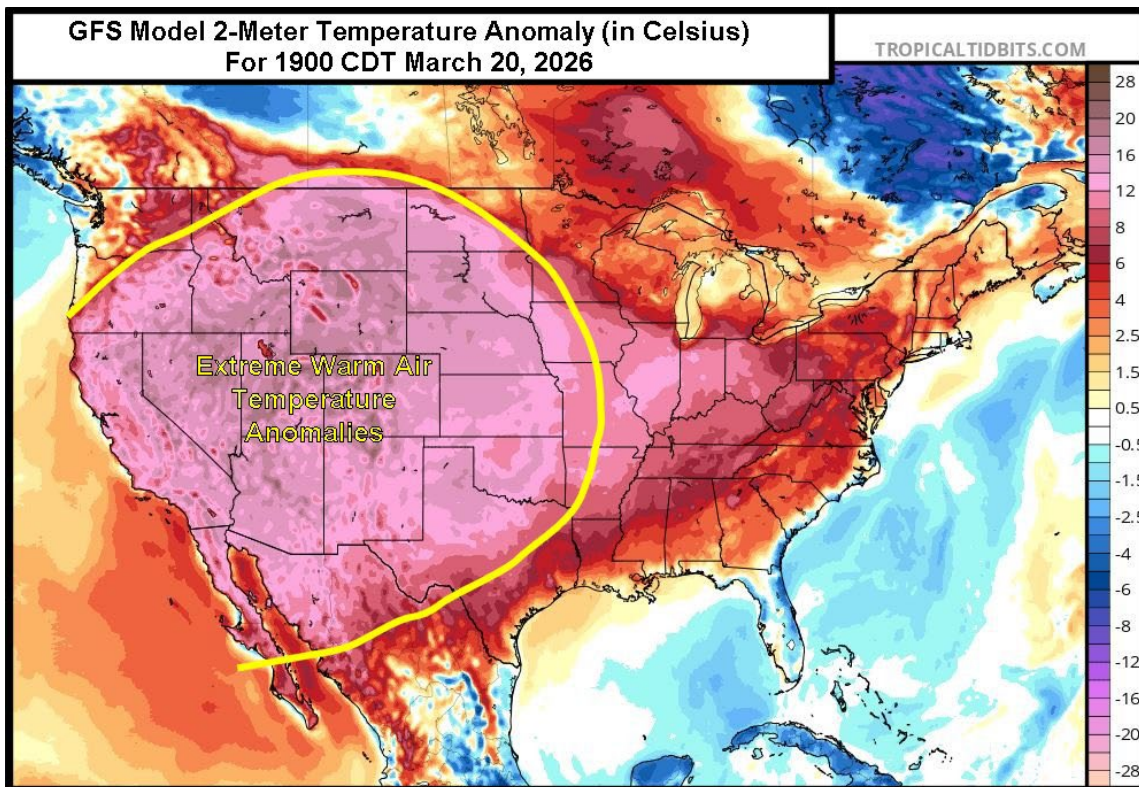


The greatest heat associated with the high-pressure ridge will occur in the far western United States over the next day or two; however, the ridge will shift to the east

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while weakening Friday into Saturday bringing some of its excessive heat to the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain region Friday and Saturday. Cooling is expected thereafter as a new cold front moves over the top of the ridge and through much of the Great Plains, Midwest and eastern parts of the United States.

Temperature anomalies, as a result of this ridge, will be nearly “off the charts” in some areas. The GFS model suggested temperature anomalies for Friday (shown below) may be 30-40 degrees Fahrenheit above mid-March norms. The unusual warmth will be present in at least a part of the western United States Thursday through Saturday and after that most of the extreme heat will abate. However, alternating bouts of warm and cool weather is expected in much of the contiguous United States during the balance of this month. None of those ongoing warmer weather days will be as anomalously hot as those of the next three days.



To better exemplify the significance of the anomalously hot weather let’s look at a couple of locations. Phoenix, Arizona is likely to reach 107 degrees Fahrenheit as a high both Friday and Saturday. The warmest Phoenix has ever been for any day in the month of March is 100 (set in 1988) and the warmest Phoenix has ever been for any day in the month of April is 105 (noted in 1989, 1992, and 2012).

Another example is Las Vegas, Nevada where the potential high for Thursday, Friday and Saturday is expected to be around 100 Fahrenheit. The warmest Las Vegas has ever been in the month of March is 93 (in 2022) and the warmest Las Vegas has ever been in the month of April is 99 (noted in 1943, 1946, 1981, 2000, 2012, 2013, and 2020).

The extreme heat will not stop in the southwestern United States. Areas from southwestern Oklahoma into a part of West Texas and southward to Edwards Plateau will reach into the upper 90s to over 100 degrees and the relative humidity will be quite low.

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That will lead to aggressive drying in the region where soil moisture is already restricted. In fact, much of the excessive heat and strong ridge building will occur over ground that is quite dry because poor winter precipitation.

Some of the driest areas in the west-central Plains will report highest temperatures Friday and Saturday in the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit. That will contrast with temperatures that were near zero Fahrenheit just two days ago. There has been some concern over the general health of winter wheat in the central and northwestern Plains because of extreme cold in late January and early February and that which occurred earlier this week. Winterkill probably did not occur in much of this region, but injury to the wheat crop is suspected. Wheat needs a wet and cool spring to induce new tillers in most damaged wheat fields. Instead, most of the beat-up wheat will be subjected to ongoing dryness and temperatures that are at least 30 degrees warmer than usual over the next few days. That will not provide the right environment for supporting improved crop conditions or production potential. Additional dry and warm weather is expected into the end of March, although it will not be as hot then as it will be Friday and Saturday.

Most of the excessive heat in the western United States will stay in the west. It will advance into the Great Plains, but the only other areas that may heat up for a while during the weekend will be in the Delta/Mid-South region and in a part of the southeastern states.

An active weather pattern providing alternating periods of warm and cool weather is predicted for many areas across the contiguous United States during the balance of March and early April. **The warmth will stimulate new wheat development and encourage new plant development which is fine as long as there are no additional bouts of extreme cold. World Weather, Inc. remains a little concerned about the potential for late season frost and freezes in late April and/or early May this year and that situation will need to be closely monitored.**

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