

# Satellite animation shows February return of the Pineapple Express

February 4 2015, by Rob Gutro

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The "Pineapple Express" has set up again and is bringing wet weather to the U.S. Pacific Northwest. An animation of satellite imagery from NOAA's GOES-West satellite from Feb. 1 to Feb. 4, 2015 captured the movement of a stream of clouds associated with moisture that is expected to bring rain and snow to the region over the next several days.

The "Pineapple Express" occurs when warm air and lots of moisture are transported from the Central Pacific, near Hawaii, to the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

A wide-field movie by NOAA's GOES-West satellite shows the Pineapple Express' stream of clouds and moisture moving into the Pacific Northwest. The video was created by NASA/NOAA's GOES Project at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.

"Good news for Northern California and the Pacific Northwest," said Bill Patzert, climatologist for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. "Beginning Wednesday, a series of storms pumped up by a moisture-laden 'Pineapple Express' system surging out of the warm tropical Pacific will deliver some small relief to rain and snow starved California. Though not a drought buster, we Californians are hoping this might be a preview of coming attractions for February and March. We are in the fourth quarter of our winter rain season and need a 'hail mary' to beat this drought down," Patzert said.

On Feb.4 NOAA's National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center

(NPC) in College Park, Maryland issued a short range forecast discussion about the Pineapple Express. NPC noted: A weather system that's tapping into abundant moisture in the Pacific will bring moderate to heavy rainfall to the Pacific Northwest beginning Wednesday. The rain will spread into northern California on Thursday and is expected to continue through the weekend. Some areas could see in excess of 10 inches of rain through early Saturday.

The Pineapple Express is expected to affect areas from northwest California into coastal Oregon and Washington State. NPC noted that the "Express" is expected to produce mostly light to moderate rainfall totals for the coastal Pacific Northwest on Feb. 4, with much heavier totals expected the following two days.

GOES satellites provide the kind of continuous monitoring necessary for intensive data analysis. Geostationary describes an orbit in which a satellite is always in the same position with respect to the rotating Earth. This allows GOES to hover continuously over one position on Earth's surface, appearing stationary. As a result, GOES provide a constant vigil for the atmospheric "triggers" for severe weather conditions such as tornadoes, flash floods, hail storms and hurricanes.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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