



FIRST ALERT

Missing monsoon

By Erin Jordan

A special report, filmed on location at Biosphere 2: Today marks the start of Monsoon 2012. Things like temperatures, dew point, and rainfall are recorded from June 15 to September 30 by the Tucson National Weather Service.

Check out the Tucson News Now Monsoon page for an interactive radar where you can follow the monsoon action. Also on that page you can watch the monsoon special "Missing Monsoon: Are Summer Storms Slipping Away?". It's all about how the Arizona drought can impact our storms. Plus there are plenty of links to help you stay safe when the storms hit and even video that breaks down how and why the storms form in the sky this time of year.

Unfortunately the set-up needed for good widespread soaking downpours in the Southwest generally doesn't generally get into place until the beginning of July. But this weekend a hint of the monsoon appears over Arizona.

This afternoon a few storms may build over the White Mountains. Then on Saturday from Tucson to Nogales and east into Cochise County storm clouds will build over the mountains mid-day. Those storms will move north and north-northeast off the mountains. Some people will see rain and even hear thunder! I am not forecasting a lot of storms but even a few will be welcome with such the dry weather for the start of June. In fact much of the state remains in Severe to Extreme Drought. Tucson's official rainfall for the year is approaching 2.5" below average with only 0.68" of rain falling at the airport since the start of 2012.

But as monsoon moisture begins pushing into Arizona it often clashes with the dry desert air creating severe storms that can produce damaging winds and lots of lightning. If no rain follows some of the lightning strikes, wildfires can start and blow out of control quickly. That's going to be a danger through the weekend, especially closer to the New Mexico and international border.

A few spotty storms could pop up again on Sunday with the best chance of action south near Nogales and east into Cochise County. But on Sunday high pressure moves right over Southeast Arizona. This squashes the storm chances and drives up the temperatures next week.

For complete video, see <http://www.tucsonnewsnow.com/category/240196/new-video-landing-page?clipid=7398883&autostart=true>

