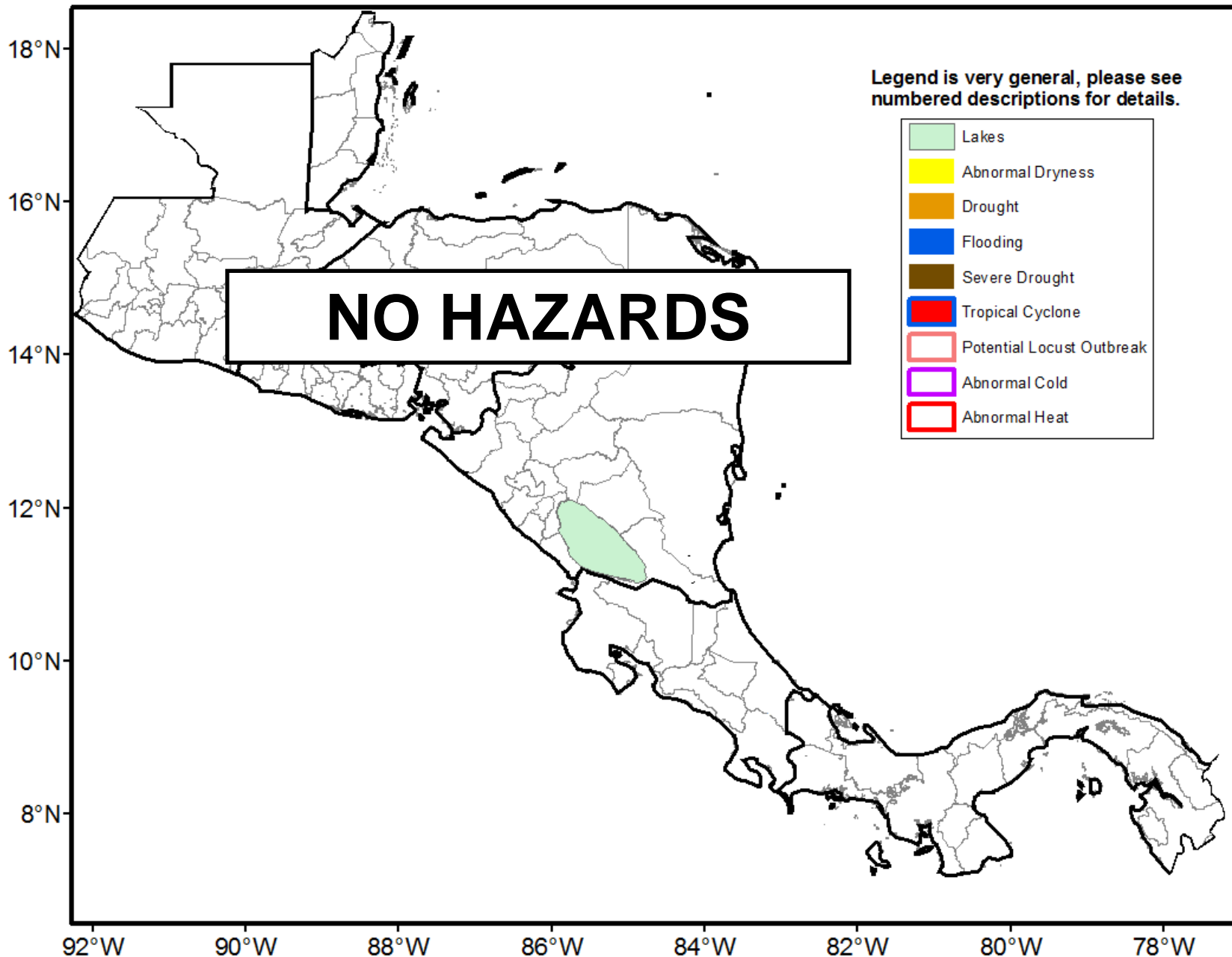




Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook March 8 – 14, 2018

Little to no rainfall received over the region during early March.



The forecast drier weather during the next week may elevate the risks for forest fires over many local areas of Central America.

As forecast in late February, a sharp decrease in rainfall was observed over Central America during the last week; with little to no rainfall accumulations registered according satellite rainfall estimates and rain gauges. Despite the lack of rainfall, early March moisture anomalies have generally been near average, indicating a climatological low point as seasonal rainfall is normally quite inactive prior to the onset of Primera season. During the later stages of the Apante season, 30-day rainfall anomalies have remained positive over portions of northern Guatemala, with neutral to slightly below average conditions continue across many interior departments and Atlantic facing departments of Central America. Since early December of 2017, positive moisture conditions continue to prevail throughout northern Guatemala, northern Honduras, eastern Nicaragua, northern Costa Rica and Panama, with some local areas registering 200 percent of normal precipitation. Much of the above-average Apante conditions were associated with significant rains accumulated during January. Remotely sensed vegetation health indices also reflect favorably, with little evidence of ground degradation despite the current lull in rainfall activity during February and March. However, drier weather and minimum soil moisture conditions still maintains an elevated risk for forest fires over many local areas.

During the next week, an increase in rainfall is forecast along the Atlantic coastlines of Central America with the highest amounts expected offshore across the southern Caribbean. Surface temperatures are forecast to be cooler than normal, however, there remains little risk for frost as minimum nighttime temperatures are expected to remain above 5 degrees Celsius in the higher elevations of Guatemala and Honduras.

