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Sage Winds

National Weather Service - Boise, Idaho

www.weather.gov/boise

SERVING NWS SKYWARN SPOTTERS,
CO-OP OBSERVERS & COCORAHS OBSERVERS

The Snowpack Cometh!

(And Other Literary References)

It was an interesting January, to say the least. As my coworker put it, "January 2012 in Boise was a tale of two halves." (I think he prides himself as the Charles Dickens of our office.) When analyzed separately, these halves (January 1st through 15th and 16th through 31st, respectively) were like night and day; Jekyll and Hyde.

The first half was among the four driest January periods on record—all with no measurable precipitation. The last time Boise had a first half of January this dry was 1897. 1897!

The second half, on the other hand, was the fourth wettest on record with 2.72 inches of liquid precipitation recorded at the airport. Not since 1970, have we seen this time

frame as wet.

When

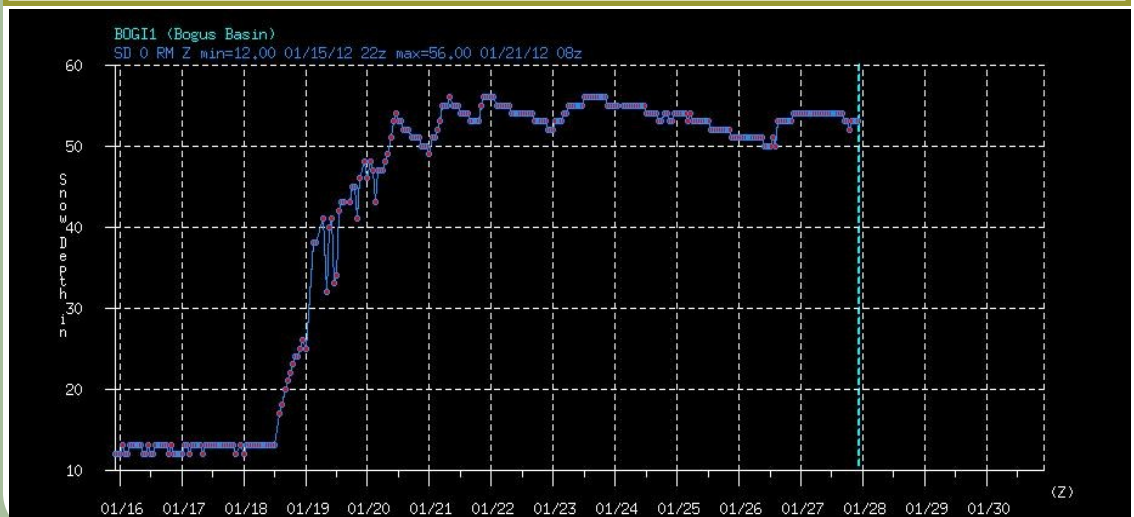
put together, these two halves still made for a month with above average precipitation. In fact, it was the most monthly precipitation Boise's seen since December of 2010. It will also go down as the fourth wettest January in Jerome and the 12th wettest in Burns, Oregon.

To see more January climate specifics for Boise, including daily data, [click here](#).

(Oh! And a mighty big thanks goes out to Charles Dickens, aka Josh Smith, and Dave Groenert for their collection and summarization of this data.)



The image below is the snow depth data from the Bogus Basin SnoTel observing site. Note the rapid gains in snow depth during the week of January 18th through 23rd.



24-HR SPOTTER HOTLINE: 1-800-882-1428

Water Supply Forecasting 101

Q: What is a water supply forecast?

A water supply forecast is a prediction of stream-flow volume at one particular stream point during a specified season—typically, spring and early summer. Water supply forecasts are used to determine an upcoming surplus (or shortage) of water for land use, irrigation, etc.

Q: How is a water supply forecast made?

In the Intermountain West, water supply is almost exclusively dependent on the cool season snowpack. Therefore, snowpack measurements are critical to understanding the next season's water supply. The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and National Weather Service work in conjunction collecting snowpack data and translating this information (via statistical models) into a water supply forecast...which is then used by both public and private entities.

Q: Where and how are snowpack measurements made?

Snowpack data are collected from the

NRCS' many SnoTel sites and snow courses across the West. A snow course is a permanent site where manual measurements of snow depth and snow water equivalent are taken by trained hydrologists. For more on water supply forecasting:

[NRCS' Water Supply Forecasting Primer](#)

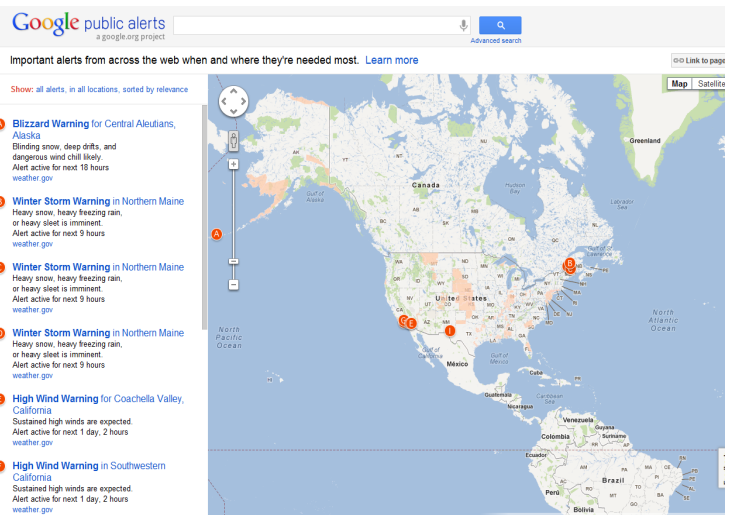
Below is an image from January 31st, in which NWS Hydrologist, Troy Lindquist, (left) and NRCS Water Supply Specialist, Ron Abramovich, (right) take snow measurements at the snow course near Mores Creek Summit.



Google Adds Emergency Alerts

On January 25th, Google unveiled a new feature of Google Maps—Google Public Alerts. Now, when searching via Google Maps, relevant public safety information will be highlighted and overlaid, with alert details listed in a left-side column. (See image at right.)

These alerts include (but are not limited to) NWS' Watches, Warnings, and Advisories, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) alerts. If more information is sought about an alert in your area, one can click on the specific alert to retrieve the "alert text" from the originating authority. An example



(Continued on page 3)

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of this is seen in the image at right, where someone has retrieved the original text from a NWS Flood Warning for northern Indiana.

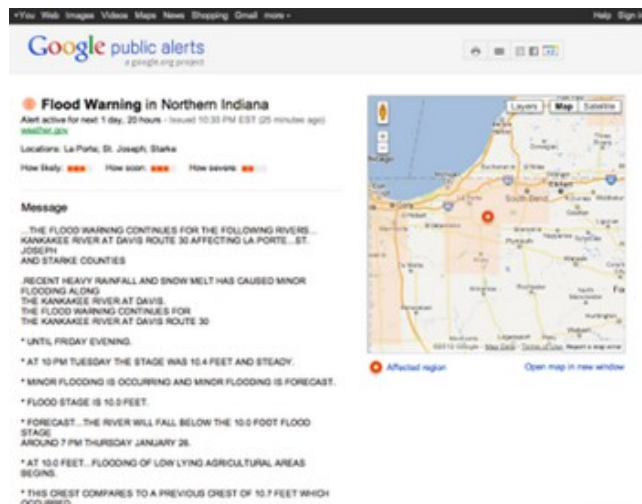
To see current Google Public Alerts:

<http://www.google.org/publicalerts>

For more information about

Google Public Alerts:

<http://blog.google.org/2012/01/public-alerts-now-on-google-maps.html>



Weather In The News

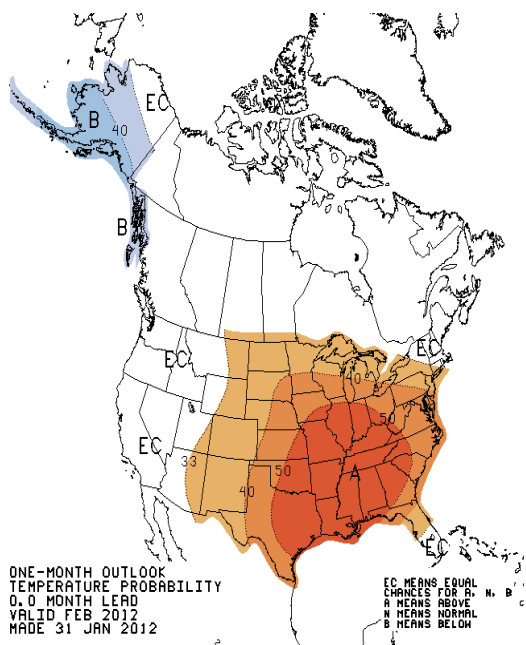


[Top 10 U.S. Climate & Weather Events of 2011—NOAA Climate Services](#)

[Heavy Snow Blankest Anchorage, More Coming—Alaska Dispatch](#)

[Heavy Snow Hits Colorado—Yahoo News](#)

February Outlook



Temperature Outlook <<

Precipitation Outlook >>

