



# **Southwest Weather Bulletin**

**Autumn/Winter 2014-2015 Edition**

**National Weather Service El Paso-Santa Teresa**

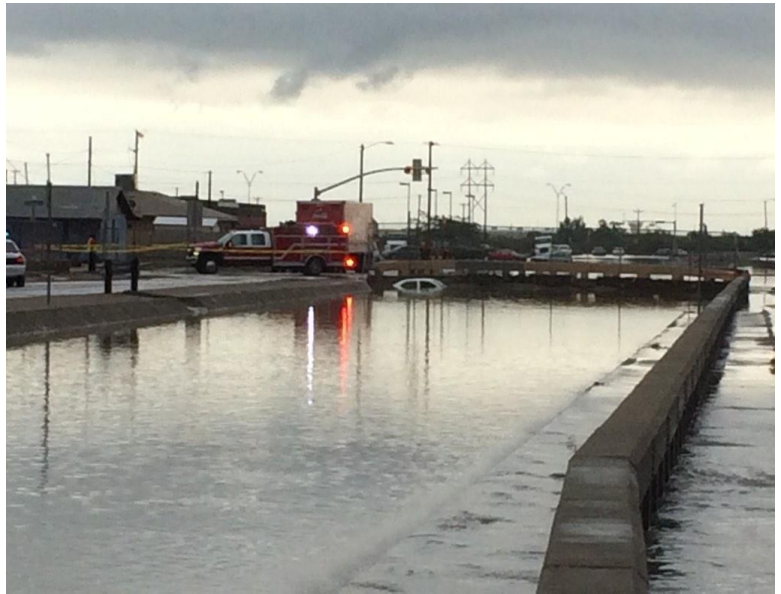


## **Summer and Early Autumn Torrential Rains Flood the Borderland**

Westerly winds and high pressure brought hot mostly dry and occasionally windy weather to southern New Mexico and west Texas during the late spring and early summer prolonging the severe drought conditions across the region. Dry thunderstorms produced a severe dust storm which caused a tragic traffic accident with 7 fatalities in May while dry lightning initiated a major wildfire near Silver City. June 2014 was the fifth hottest on record for El Paso with record setting high temperatures but little rain falling across most areas.

Increasing moisture flowed into the region in July and August with showers and thunderstorms becoming more widespread and intense, especially when fronts or upper level disturbances also moved into New Mexico and west Texas. In addition to heavy rains and more widespread flooding the storms occasionally induced strong downdraft winds with speeds of 60 mph or greater.

The heaviest rains and most severe damage occurred in September, due in part to the moisture from Pacific Hurricane Odile streaming into Arizona, New Mexico and far western Texas. Consequently devastating



A woman drowned in El Paso after heavy rains inundated her car on September 22. (KFOX TV)

floods struck much of the Borderland including the El Paso, Las Cruces and Deming areas. The heavy rains damaged homes, and washed out or flooded many roads with numerous water rescues required. Unfortunately a woman drowned in El Paso on September 22 when her car was submerged by floodwaters. The summer of 2014 floods may have been as extreme as the historic floods of 2006 and 2013 for much of the region.



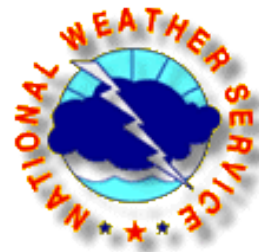
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**A severe dust storm over southwestern New Mexico caused a tragic and massive traffic pile-up on Interstate 10 near Lordsburg which killed 7 people. (KRQE TV)**

## **Seasonal Weather Highlights**

**May 7:** A windy day across southern New Mexico and west Texas with gusts around 50 mph over much of the region.

**May 11:** Very windy with gusts from 50 to 60 mph across much of the lowlands and gusts around 70 mph over mountain areas.

**May 23:** Dry thunderstorms generated strong downburst winds over southwestern New Mexico with gusts near 60 mph around Lordsburg. The winds produced an extreme localized dust storm across Interstate 10 over Hidalgo County near the Arizona border. Tragically the low visibilities contributed to a massive traffic accident involving cars and semi-trucks which killed 7 people.

**June 2014:** A hot dry month for most of southern New Mexico and west Texas and the fifth hottest June for El Paso. The average high temperature for the month was 101 degrees at El Paso. Little or no rain fell over most of the region with the exception of southern Hudspeth County. By the end of the month Elephant Butte Lake was only 12 percent full.



**Lightning from a dry thunderstorm started the Signal Wildfire over Grant County NM which burned almost 5000 acres. (KOAT TV)**



**Lightning over El Paso TX on May 23. (John Barnes)**

**June 13:** Severe thunderstorms produced wind gusts of 70 mph at Santa Teresa with wind gusts near 60 mph at Radium Springs.

**June 23:** Evening thunderstorms dumped torrential rains over southeast Hudspeth County with 2.1 inches measured. The rains severely flooded Quitman Canyon.

**June 30:** Thunderstorm winds gusted to near 60 mph at Truth or Consequences causing minor damage.

**July 1:** Severe and heavy rain producing thunderstorms hit the region during the late afternoon and evening. Winds gusted around 60 mph across portions of El Paso, Las Cruces and White Sands Missile Range. The high winds damaged roofs in Chaparral. In addition over an inch of rain flooded the Picacho Hills section of Las Cruces with hail up to an inch in diameter falling over the city. Further north an inch of rain fell at Truth or Consequences flooding some streets. To the west winds gusted to near 60 mph at Hurley while an inch of rain fell in 30 minutes at Rock Hound State Park.

**July 8:** Heavy rains fell at Little Walnut Village in Grant County where 1.3 inches of rain were measured.

**July 11.** Over inch of rain fell at Rodeo NM.

**July 13:** An inch of rain fell in 20 minutes at Tularosa.



**On July 28 heavy rains flooded the community of Hill just north of Las Cruces. (Robin Zielinski/ Las Cruces Sun News)**

**July 14:** Thunderstorms dumped 3 inches of rain at Antelope Wells in Hidalgo County.

**July 15:** Thunderstorms dropped almost 2 inches of rain at Mayhill with an inch of rain measured over northeast El Paso.

**July 16.** Between an inch and 1.5 inches of rain were reported around Las Cruces.

**July 17:** Severe thunderstorm winds blew down trees and power lines and damaged roofs at Alamogordo.

**July 21:** Thunderstorms produced over an inch of rain across sections of El Paso.



**Heavy rains flooded portions of Sunland Park NM on July 22. ( KTSM TV)**



**Heavy rains fell around Las Cruces on July 29.**

**July 28:** Heavy rains flooded the community of Hill just north of Las Cruces. Buildings and property were damaged including the historic St. Mary's at Hill Anglican Church. Water was over 2 feet deep in some areas.

**July 29:** Over an inch of rain fell around Hatch NM. Highway 52 also flooded near Cuchillo. Further west an inch of rain fell at San Lorenzo causing street flooding.

**July 30-31:** Severe late evening and early morning thunderstorms dropped 2 to 3 inches of rain around Orogrande NM with water over 2 feet deep flooding roads. The storms also produced wind gusts over 60 mph.

**August 1:** Early morning showers and thunderstorms dumped very heavy rains across portions of Dona Ana and El Paso Counties. 2 to 3 inches of rain fell around Las Cruces with almost 2 inches of rain falling over northeast El Paso. The morning rains caused mudslides around Las Cruces. Further north 1 to 2 inches of rain were reported around Cloudcroft and Tularosa.

During the afternoon and evening another round of showers and thunderstorms struck the Borderland. Over 2 inches of rain fell over the Alamogordo area flooding almost 30 homes and damaging at least 10 vehicles. Extensive street flooding was also reported over portions of El Paso. Further west thunderstorms dropped a further 2 to 3 inches of rain around Silver City and Tyrone while almost 2 inches of rain fell over Hidalgo County near Rodeo.

**August 2-3:** Evening and early morning rains again hit Grant County with around an inch of rain reported across the Silver City vicinity.

**August 4:** Torrential rains fell over Luna County with almost 3 inches measured at Columbus while 1 to 2 inches fell around Deming. 2 homes along Highway 11 near Columbus were evacuated due to flooding. Arroyos overflowed and flooded Highway 9 just west of Columbus. Further west over an inch of rain was reported at Buckhorn while an inch of rain and small hail fell at Cloverdale.



**On July 30 strong thunderstorms moved across the Las Cruces vicinity. (Carlos Javier Sanchez/ Las Cruces Sun News)**



**August 1 heavy rains flooded portions of Alamogordo NM. (John Baer/Alamogordo Daily News)**



**August 1 flooding at Alamogordo. (Aimee Driver/KOAT TV)**



**Strong thunderstorms occurred over southern Dona Ana and western El Paso Counties on August 9. (NWS Santa Teresa)**

**August 7:** Almost 3 inches of rain fell in El Paso County at Hueco Tanks while 2 inch rainfalls were reported over the Dean Walker Ranch in Hudspeth County.

**August 9:** Thunderstorm outflow winds gusted to almost 60 mph at Truth or Consequences causing minor damage. An inch of rain also fell around Cloudcroft.

**August 10:** Heavy rains flooded streets in Las Cruces. 1.6 inches of rain also fell at Santa Teresa while an inch fell around portions of El Paso causing street flooding. Thunderstorm winds also gusted to almost 60 mph at Santa Teresa.

**August 12:** Almost 2 inches of rain fell over northeast El Paso flooding streets around portions of Interstate 10.

**August 14:** Heavy rains fell over Sierra County with 2.3 inches measured at Kingston. Numerous roads were reported flooded.

**August 16:** 2 inches of rain fell near Silver City.

**August 17:** Winds blew down 2 trees which damaged a vehicle at Santa Clara in Grant County.



**Evening thunderstorms developed over El Paso on August 16. (James Reidland)**



**Heavy rains flooded streets near Animas NM on August 17. ( Lance Tripoli/NWS)**

**August 24:** Over an inch of rain fell at Hachita in Grant County with streets flooded.

**August 26:** Over 2 inches of rain fell in 80 minutes at Upham in Sierra County washing out the south road to the Spaceport. In Dona Ana County heavy rains flooded several homes near Hatch.

**August 27:** Evening showers and thunderstorms dropped 2 inches of rain over northern El Paso.

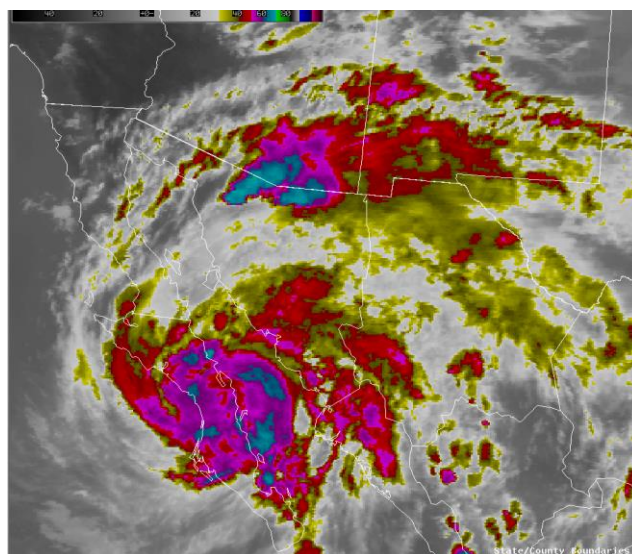


**Heavy rains washed out Highway 152 in Sierra County on September 12.  
(The Herald of Truth or Consequences)**

**September 4:** Early evening slow moving showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rains over northern Otero County with 3 inches falling just north of Alamogordo while almost 2 inches of rain fell around Cloudcroft. Elsewhere almost 3 inches of rain were reported southeast of Deming with over an inch of rain measured near Las Cruces.

**September 12:** Heavy rains and flooding washed away portions of Highway 152 with mudslides and large trees also covering the road. Highway 27 was also closed due to flooding. To the east nearly 2 inches of rain flooded areas near Tularosa.

**September 16-19:** Abundant moisture from Hurricane Odile flowed into southern New Mexico and western Texas generating widespread heavy rains which flooded much of the area. Around 2 to 4 inches of rain fell over Dona Ana County from Santa Teresa north to Las Cruces with 3 to 5 inches occurring in the Deming area, 4 inches around Antelope Wells and Rodeo and 3 to 4 inches around El Paso and Cornudas. El Paso Fire Department responded to 135 weather related incidents including the rescue of 2 people after floodwaters swept their car off the road. Elsewhere there were widespread water rescues, flooding and road closures in the El Paso area. Heavy rains also flooded roads around Deming and Cloverdale.



**September 15 infrared satellite image showing Hurricane Odile over Baja.**



**Heavy rains flooded La Union NM on September 17.**



**Torrential rains and floodwaters washed this SUV off of a road near Deming on September 16.**



**Evening heavy rains flooded sections of El Paso on September 17. (Nichole Gomez)**



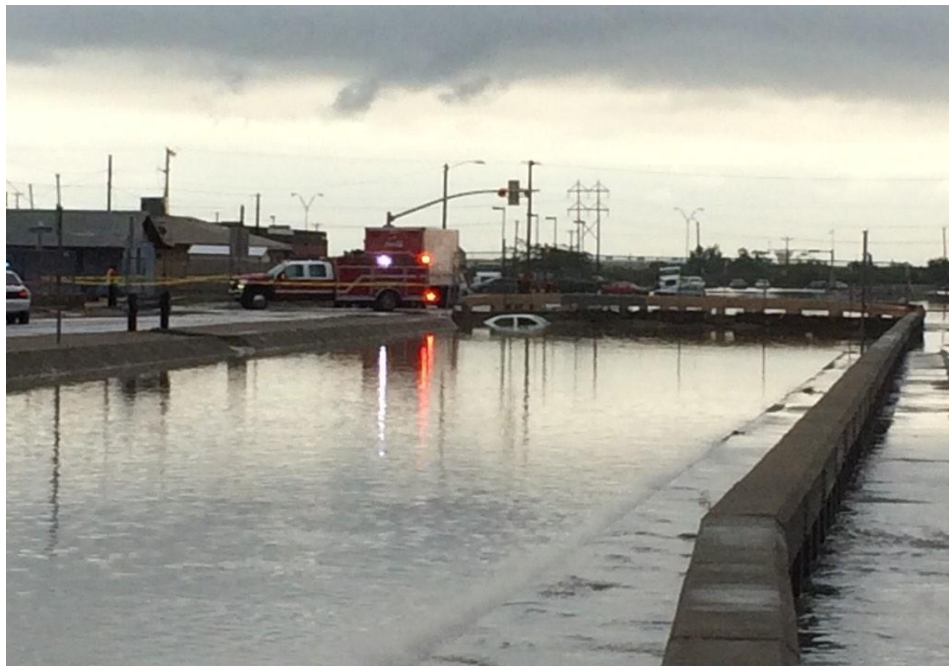
**Flooding at Anthony NM on September 17. (KFOX TV)**



**Overnight torrential rains and attendant flooding on September 17-18 submerged this vehicle in El Paso. (Luke Lydon)**



**Eastwood Park El Paso on the morning of September 18. (Victor Calzada/El Paso Times )**



**During the morning of September 22 flash floods swept this car off the road in east El Paso with the high waters drowning the driver, a 64 year old woman. (KFOX TV)**

**September 22-23: East winds blew very moist unstable air into southern New Mexico and west Texas while a weak upper disturbance approached the region. Thus showers and isolated thunderstorms deluged much of the Borderland from the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Between 5 AM and 8 AM on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, extremely heavy rains inundated portions of east El Paso with 3 to almost 7 inches of rain falling in the northeast, most within a 2 hour period. Severe flooding occurred with vehicles swept away and numerous water rescues performed. Tragically a woman drowned after high waters submerged her car. The flooding also forced evacuations from homes and resulted in school closures. To the west the morning rains caused Bear Creek to overflow and flood Highway 11 near Cliff. The floodwaters also washed a car off the road but the driver was rescued.**

**During the late afternoon and early evening heaviest rains shifted north around Las Cruces. The rains flooded a group of homes just north of Las Cruces seriously damaging property. Streets also flooded over sections of Las Cruces as well.**

**During the late evening and early morning around 2 inches of rain fell across portions of Sierra County flooding downtown Truth or Consequences and putting area roads under water.**



**Flooding over northeast El Paso on September 22. (Monica Cortez KTSM TV)**







**September 22 heavy rains and flooding severely damaged portions of northeast El Paso.**



**Heavy rains damaged homes and property near Las Cruces on September 22. (John Fausett/NWS)**



**Thunderstorm dropped flooding rains around Las Cruces on September 22. (Jeff Passner)**

**September 24: Almost 2 inches of rain fell around Cloudcroft and High Rolls in northeast Otero County. As a result portions of Highway 82 were closed due to rockslides and flooding. At La Luz a road floods after La Luz creek overflowed.**



**On September 24 heavy rains flooded areas around High Rolls NM. (John Baer/Alamogordo Daily News)**



**The August 8 Supermoon rises over west El Paso. (John Fausett/NWS)**

**Spotters...Please call the National Weather Service If You Observe:**

**Tornado or Funnel Cloud...Report Time, Location and Movement**

**Hail...1/2 Inch or Larger**

**Damaging Winds...Damage To Buildings, Motor Vehicles, Trees, Power Lines  
And Other Structures**

**Flash Flooding...Flooding Of Streets and Buildings , Or If Rivers, Streams And  
Arroyos Flood Or Overflow**

**Heavy Rains...1/2 Inch of Rain In Less Than 30 Minutes Or At Least 1 Inch Of  
Rain In Less Than 2 Hours**

**Blowing Dust...Whenever Blowing Dust Reduces The Visibility To Less Than 2 Miles.**

**Snow Amounts Greater Than An Inch**