

The Weather Watcher of the Inland Northwest

www.weather.gov/Spokane



Simplified Winter Weather Products

The National Weather Service has simplified winter weather statements this season by consolidating many specific statements addressing snow, sleet, and blowing snow into Winter Storm Warnings or Winter Weather Advisories. Warnings for some of the harshest winter weather will be unchanged which include: Blizzard Warnings, Ice Storm Warnings, and Wind Chill Warnings. This change is to help users understand the main winter weather threat and avoid the rainbow of colors seen on the online clickable forecast map.

Winter Storm Watches are typically issued 12 to 48 hours in advance of life-threatening winter weather such as heavy snow, significant accumulations of sleet or freezing rain, reduced visibilities in blowing snow, or a combination of any of these elements. Heavy snow is generally defined as 4 inches or more in the valleys and 8 inches or more in the mountains. Winter Storm Warnings are issued for life threatening winter weather conditions as de-

fined in watches, but are posted when these conditions are occurring or are forecast to occur within 24 hours. Blizzard Warnings are issued for the combination of heavy snow, strong winds, reduce visibilities, and bitter cold. Ice Storm Warnings are issued for severe accumulations of ice due to freezing rain. Wind Chill Warnings are issued for wind chills of -20°F or colder.

Winter Weather Advisories are issued when significant winter weather conditions are occurring or are forecast to occur within the next 24 hours. Freezing Rain Advisories are issued for significant accumulations of freezing rain. Caution is advised under these situations, although the resulting winter weather is expected to be mainly a public nuisance, not life-threatening. ☀ *Kerry Jones*

that cause hazardous driving conditions are occurring or are forecast to occur within the

CoCoRaHS in Idaho

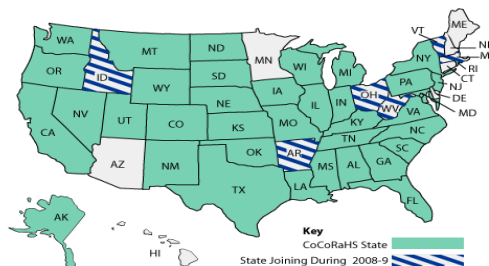
We are proud to announce that CoCoRaHS has spread to Idaho. Starting January 1, observers in Idaho will be able to send in their daily precipitation reports online. The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) is a grassroots volunteer program of backyard weather observers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, snow, and hail) in their local communities. There are 37 states currently in the program. Washington joined the network in June 2008. There are over 170 reports coming from the Evergreen state, of which 91 of them are from eastern Washington. The network continues to grown and we hope to see similar if not more reports coming from north Idaho.

It's easy to join the CoCoRaHS program, just go to <http://www.cocorahs.org>. You need to have a computer with an internet connection. As for weather equipment, an official four inch rain gauge is required, which you can order online. Registration for Idaho observers opens after December 15th. Training classes will be available this winter, either in-person

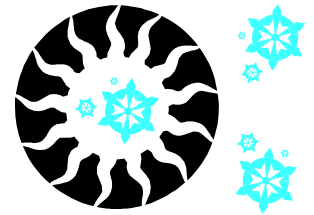
or as a remote tele-training session. If you sign-up for local training, you maybe eligible for a free rain gauge. Check the CoCoRaHS or the NWS Spokane web site for more details and the latest training schedule.

Weather spotters make great CoCoRaHS observers! All you need is the daily commitment to check your rain gauge. Let your friends,

Welcome to CoCoRaHS! - www.cocorahs.org



family, and neighbors know about this exciting new program and invite them to join. ☀ *Ellie Kelch and Robin Fox*



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Editor's Notes

The National Weather Service in Spokane would like to wish you a happy, safe and snowy holiday season! We appreciate all your reports, comments, and efforts, which in turn helps us serve you better.

We will be making a change to the newsletter distribution in Spring 2009. Since each newsletter issue is available online, we are going limit mailing paper copies. If you still want a paper copy mailed to you, please contact us and we will keep you on the mailing list.

For any questions or comments on the newsletter, you can reach Robin or Kerry at (509) 244-0110 extension 223 or email nws.spokane@noaa.gov.

The main purpose of this publication is to keep our readers informed about our services and programs, and to recognize those who help us with our mission, including weather spotters, co-op observers, media, and emergency management.

All articles are written by the NWS staff. A special thanks to Ron Miller, Kerry Jones, Ellie Kelch, and Robert Bonner for their help with the included articles.

Co-op Corner

Here is a reminder for those Cooperative Observers who maintain the Fisher/Porter rain gages. It is very important that when you change the tape on the gauge, that you draw a line across the top of the punch block to signify end of that month's recording. Next you should annotate the tape with your station number and the date/time you took the tape off in (PST or PDT). Leave off at least 18 to 24 inches of extra tape before tearing it off.

Then when restarting the tape for the upcoming month, you should leave 18 to 24 inches of extra tape before the first punch. If possible,

please try and get the start time within 15 minutes. Again, draw a line across the top of the Punch/Block and enter the date/time and your station number on the tape.

If the tapes are not annotated, it becomes very difficult for us to identify the station that the tape came from, and sometimes impossible. If you need a soft tip pen to mark the tape, please contact NWS Spokane and leave a message for Bob Bonner. We'll see you get the necessary pens. Thanks! ☼ *Robert Bonner*

Answer: On New Year's Day in 1918, the high temperature in Spokane reached 62° and Lewiston reached 59°.

Fall Weather Statistics

Wenatchee Water Plant	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Avg High Temp	78.9	62.6	47.7	63.1
Departure from Norm	+1.2	-1.1	+1.8	+0.6
Avg Low Temp	50.6	39.6	35.3	41.8
Departure from Norm	-0.6	-1.2	+3.1	+0.4
Total Precip	0.12	0.46	1.87	2.45
Departure from Norm	-0.28	-0.03	+0.51	+0.20
Total Snowfall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Departure from Norm	0.0	0.0	-2.4	-2.4
Lewiston Airport	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Avg High Temp	80.0	64.3	51.3	65.2
Departure from Norm	+3.3	+2.4	+4.5	+3.4
Avg Low Temp	51.0	41.0	37.5	43.2
Departure from Norm	+0.1	-0.2	+3.4	+1.2
Total Precip	0.75	0.39	0.90	2.04
Departure from Norm	-0.06	-0.57	-0.31	-0.94
Total Snowfall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Departure from Norm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spokane Airport	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Avg High Temp	74.2	58.8	44.6	59.2
Departure from Norm	+1.7	+0.3	+3.5	+1.8
Avg Low Temp	47.7	36.8	32.5	39.0
Departure from Norm	+1.8	+1.0	+3.8	+2.2
Total Precip	0.54	0.30	1.69	2.53
Departure from Norm	-0.22	-0.76	-0.55	-1.53
Total snowfall	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5
Departure from Norm	0.0	-0.3	-4.9	-5.2

Staff News



Hydro-meteorological Technician, Verne Ballard will officially leave federal service when he retires on Jan 2, 2009. Verne has worked in the Spokane office since October 1995. Before moving to Spokane, he started with the National Weather Service at the Los Angeles office and worked there for almost twelve years.

The National Weather Service was not his only career. Verne retired from the U.S. Navy after 20 years of service. While in the Navy, he was stationed in Hawaii, Guam, southern California, Whidbey Island, and northern Illinois. He sailed to exotic Pacific islands and was one of the elite group of "typhoon trackers" of the western Pacific, where he rode planes through the heart of immense storms to take weather measurements.

Verne looks forward to leaving shift work and wants to spend more time fishing and gardening. He and his family plan to stay in Spokane. He will also help his wife start a book-keeping home business. Good Luck Verne! ☼

Fall 2008 in Review

Beautiful autumn weather was experienced by residents of the Inland Northwest, making it one of the best times of year in this area. Generally, temperatures were on the mild side with lots of sunshine.

September got off to a chilly start. Low temperatures on the morning of the 1st were in the 30s and lower 40s in northeast Washington and the northern Panhandle, including 31° at Priest Lake and 28° at the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge near Cheney. Daytime temperatures gradually warmed back into the 70s and lower 80s. By the middle of the month, the mercury had risen to the upper 80s and lower 90s for a warm 5-day stretch. Lewiston recorded a high of 96° on the 19th. A number of locations in southeast Washington and the southern Panhandle set daily high temperature records. But as is typical for these warm spells in autumn, they usually precede a sharp cool-down. High temperatures on the 20th were markedly cooler, with most locations in the 60s and lower 70s, about 20° cooler than the previous day. The cold front responsible for this cool-down came up from Oregon and brought quite a bit of rain to the area, mainly over the Panhandle and extreme eastern Washington. Lewiston picked up 0.67" of rain while Kellogg received 0.58". Temperatures remained on the cool side before warming to about 10° above normal by the end of the month.

This new warm spell lasted into early **October**. The 1st was the warmest day with widespread readings in the 80s and a few 90s. Colville, LaCrosse, and Lewiston all tied or set daily high temperature records. But that was the last of summer warmth as light rain moved in and temperatures gradually dropped each day. After reaching the 80s on the 1st, most locations struggled to make it into the 50s on the 9th. Lewiston set record lows of 28° and 29° on the 11th and 12th. Nearby Pomeroy dropped all the way to 19° on the 12th. The remainder of the month featured some gorgeous fall weather. Chilly mornings gave way to sunny afternoons in the 50s and 60s. Rainfall was rather infrequent which resulted in a precipitation deficit for most sites in October.

November started off on a mission to make up for the relatively dry October. The first 12 days of November had rain (or snow) for most locations. Spokane had its first measurable snow of the season on the 6th, but it melted almost as quickly as it fell. Plain, WA picked up 2" while Boyds (northwest of Colville) and Malott (south of Omak) both received 1.5" of snow. This cold weather pattern was quickly replaced by a warm wet one as a "Pineapple Express" developed. Heavy rain fell in the Cascades and the Idaho Panhandle. Pullman received 1.57" of rain on the 12th. This not only set a record for the day, but it was also the 2nd wettest day ever for Pullman in November. Plain picked up an impressive 4.12" of rain in 24 hours. This was the wettest November day ever in Plain, breaking the old record of

3.78" which was set only 2 years earlier. The Stehekin River briefly reached flood stage.

But this event also spelled the end of the wet weather for the remainder of the month. Weak Pacific fronts continued to move through the Northwest every few days but they generally brought little in the way of precipitation. Between the fronts, the weather was mild without much fog. As the Thanksgiving holiday weekend approached, that pleasant weather pattern changed. A cold front on Tuesday the 25th brought just enough moisture to allow the Columbia Basin to sock in with fog and stratus. After a mostly gray Thanksgiving, a weak Pacific weather system brought a couple of inches of snow on Friday the 28th to many locations north and east of Spokane. But temperatures continued to warm and the fog and drizzle melted the snow as the month ended on a rather drippy note.

Overall, the Fall of 2008 was mild and dry in the Inland Northwest. Cold weather was hard to come by and many locations still hadn't seen any snowfall by early December. In fact, Missoula, MT did not have any measurable snowfall in October or November, which has happened only twice in the past 54 years. ☀ *Ronald Miller*



November Frost and Fog in Deep Creek Canyon - Spokane #184

Long Range Outlook

The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center forecasts that the winter and spring for the Inland Northwest has equal chances of below normal, normal, and above normal weather conditions, including temperature and precipitation. ☀

Remember your Winter Spotter Checklist

Snow:
2"+ valleys and 4"+ mountains

Strong Winds:
30 mph+ or damage

Reduced Visibility:
under a mile due to rain, dust, fog, snow, etc.

Any Flooding

Hail: pea size or larger

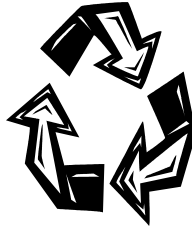
Heavy Rain:
Showery: 1/2" + in 1 hr
Steady Rain: 1"+ in 12 hrs
or 1.5"+ in 24 hrs

Any mixed precipitation

Travel Problems or Any Damage: due to severe or hazardous weather.

Go Green

The National Weather Service Spokane is promoting a *Go Green* campaign. Besides increasing our recycling efforts, we would also like to reduce the amount of unnecessary waste and cost.



One way is to limit the amount of printed and mailed newsletters. If you didn't already know, our newsletters are available on our web site <http://www.weather.gov/spokane>. We have been posting them on the Top News of our web page for years. You can find all past issues online as well.

So starting with the spring issue in March, we will STOP sending paper copies unless **you request a mailed newsletter**. We will be happy to send you a paper copy if you can not access an electronic copy. If you still would like a paper copy mailed to you, let us know by phone or email at nws.spokane@noaa.gov. ☀ Robin Fox & Kerry Jones

Online NWR Broadcasts

Streaming audio is available for many of the National Weather Radio (NWR) transmitters across the country, including the Spokane area. These streams are hosted by private companies, universities, media companies, and others, which are independent of the National Weather Service. This service allows you to listen to NWR through the internet on your computer.

Please remember, that you should NOT rely on the Internet audio to receive tone-alerted or EAS information on weather watches and warnings. Instead, you should have a dedicated NOAA Weather Radio receiver which will alert you 24 hours a day to hazards in your area. Go to <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/streamaudio.htm> for a list of the streaming audio sites. ☀ Robin Fox

Are You Prepared?

Before you start traveling...

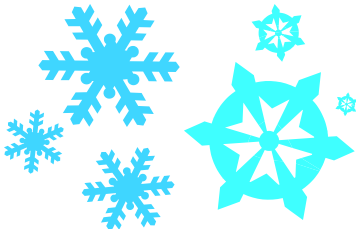
- Pack your winter survival kit in your vehicle.
- Check the latest forecast, NWS or other source.
- Check the road conditions by dialing 511 on your phone, <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/> or <http://511.idaho.gov/>
- Let someone know where you are going.

The Weather Watcher

Of the Inland Northwest



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Happy Holidays
from NWS Spokane

Trivia: In what year was the mildest New Year's Day observed?