

The Weather Watcher of the Inland Northwest

www.weather.gov/Spokane



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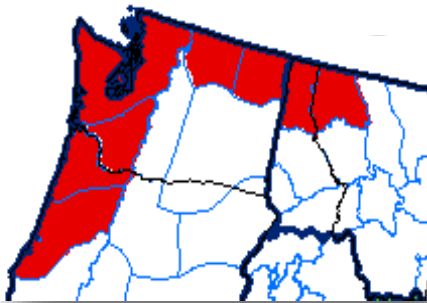
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Fire Season Outlook

The warm, dry and breezy weather this spring has helped the fire season make a slightly earlier arrival, especially for the grasslands of the Columbia Basin and Cascade valleys. For the mountains, anticipate fire season to develop by mid to late July from north central Washington into north Idaho.

The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that good chunk of western Washington and from north-central Washington into north Idaho is under a drought status with only a slight improvements expected through the summer. The three month outlook from the Climate Prediction Center suggests a warmer summer with near normal precipitation across much of the Inland Northwest.

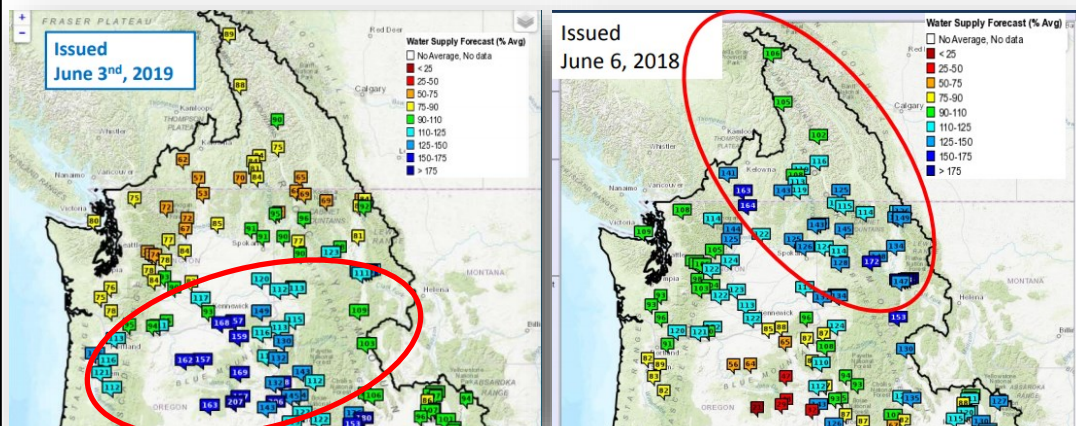
Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook July—September



It's no surprise that the Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook highlights an above normal risk for wildfires for western Washington and north-central Washington into north Idaho. Based on previous seasons and the long range forecasts, the 2019 predictions lean toward an average number of fire starts. As for acreage, the trend is for above average number of acres burned for the Columbia Basin, Cascades and Okanogan Highlands. Meanwhile the forecast is for normal to above normal acres burned for northeast Washington into north Idaho. For more fire details, see www.nifc.gov ☀️ Bob Tobin

Water Supply Comparison

This season's mountain snowpack ranged from 100-120% of normal across southeast Washington to 60-80% over north-central Washington. This reflected in a greater runoff and water supply across southeast Washington, while lower than normal runoff and water supply spanned across north-central Washington. This was a stark difference than what was experienced last year when an abundance of mountain snowpack and a cool spring kept water supply high across north-central Washington into north Idaho with drier conditions stretched from southeast Washington into Oregon. For more details, see www.nwrfc.noaa.gov



Editor's Notes

Thunderstorm season is underway across the Inland NW. There have been several days with rumbles of thunder & strikes of lightning, that led to heavy downpours, flooding, gusty winds and small hail. The best place to be during a thunderstorm is in a safe shelter, building or house. "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors."

What do you do if you are caught outside during a thunderstorm? Avoid open fields. Stay away from tall, isolated trees or flag poles. Don't seek shelter in a tent. Stay away from water or wet items. Water is a good conductor of electricity.

The summer solstice is on Friday, June 21 at 8:54 am PDT and kicks off the summer season. In Spokane, the day length is almost 16 hours this day!

We are always looking for new ideas, pictures & stories for our publication. Please submit your ideas to nws.spokane@noaa.gov.

This newsletter & past issues are available on the NWS Spokane web page.

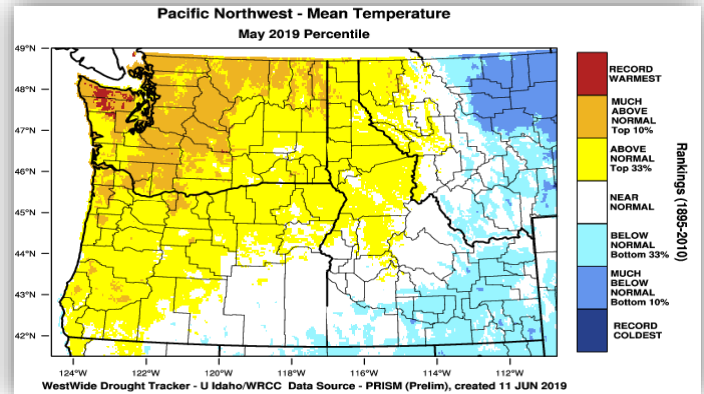
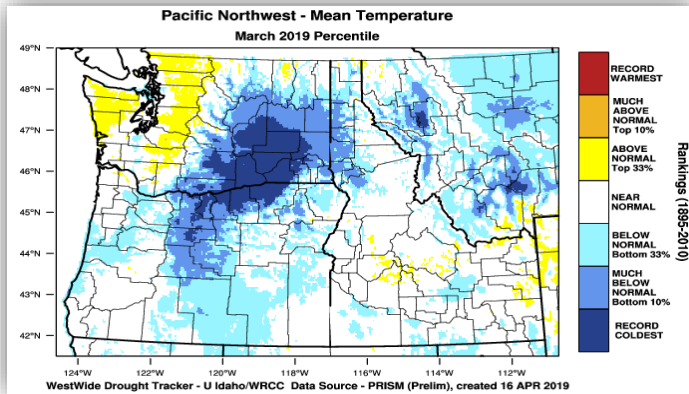
The main purpose of this publication is to keep our readers informed about NWS services & programs, and recognize those who help us with our mission, including weather spotters, observers, media, emergency managers, and local government agencies.

All articles are written by the NWS staff. A big thanks goes to Jeremy Wolf, Bob Tobin, and Andy Brown.

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Spring Temperatures Swings

March brought record cold across many places of the Columbia Basin; meanwhile May had much above normal temperatures. Quite a swing in the mean temperatures!

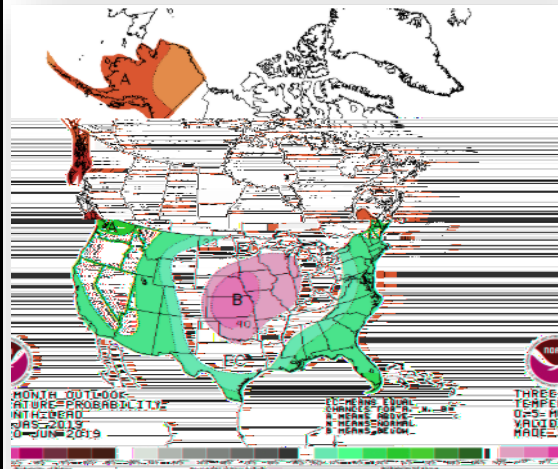


Spring Weather Statistics

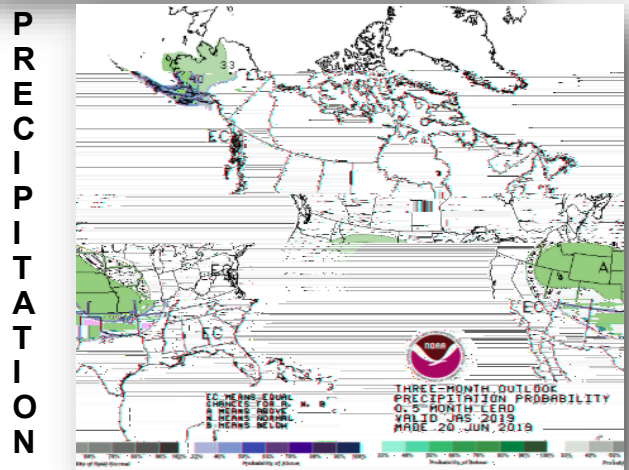
Wenatchee Water Plant	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Avg High Temp	47.2	64.6	75.6	62.5
Departure from Norm	-7.9	+0.4	+2.6	-1.6
Avg Low Temp	28.3	42.3	50.3	40.3
Departure from Norm	-6.0	+1.6	+1.5	-1.0
Total Precip	0.42	0.55	0.60	1.57
Departure from Norm	-0.19	+0.02	-0.09	-0.26
Total Snowfall	3.3	0.0	0.0	3.3
Departure from Norm	+2.9	0.0	0.0	+2.9
Lewiston Airport	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Avg High Temp	47.9	62.6	75.5	62.0
Departure from Norm	-7.0	+0.3	+4.6	-0.7
Avg Low Temp	28.5	43.6	49.9	40.7
Departure from Norm	-7.1	+3.3	+2.9	-0.3
Total Precip	0.89	2.26	0.80	3.95
Departure from Norm	-0.26	+0.94	-0.81	-0.13
Total Snowfall	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.7
Departure from Norm	+1.0	0.0	0.0	+1.0
Spokane Airport	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Avg High Temp	44.5	57.3	70.4	57.4
Departure from Norm	-4.4	+0.1	+4.0	-0.1
Avg Low Temp	24.6	38.7	48.4	37.2
Departure from Norm	-7.0	+1.9	+4.6	-0.2
Total Precip	0.71	1.47	1.35	3.53
Departure from Norm	-0.90	+0.19	-0.27	-0.98
Total snowfall	3.8	0.0	0.0	3.8
Departure from Norm	+0.3	-1.0	-0.1	-0.8

3 Month Outlook

The NWS Climate Prediction Center forecasts a warmer summer with near normal precipitation across the Inland NW.



TEMPERATURE



PRECIPITATION

ANSWER: Lightning can strikes more than 3 miles from a thunderstorm core. Bolts from the blue can strike 10-15 miles from a storm.

2019 Spring in Review

The first half of **March** brought more of what February brought with record cold temperatures for many. This allowed the deep low level snow pack to persist into the middle of the month with several locations setting multiple daily snow depth records even in the typical mild areas of the Columbia Basin, Wenatchee area, and Lewiston-Clarkston Valley. On the 2nd and 3rd another round of northeast winds brought drifting snow with more road closures on the Palouse and Upper Columbia Basin. Very cold temperatures followed with several locations well below 0°F and several daily and even monthly low temperature records broken from the 3rd through the 5th. The following is a table showing new monthly low temperature records.

Location	2019 coldest March temp	Previous record
Chewelah	-21°F	-10°F 3/3/1978
Porthill	-17°F (tied)	-17°F 3/5/1955
Moscow	-10°F	-5°F 3/4/1955
Pullman Airport	-9°F	-4°F 3/4/1955
La Crosse	-6°F	0°F 3/3/1989
Boundary Dam	-5°F	-2°F 3/3/1989
Wilbur	-4°F (tied)	-4°F 3/1/1922
Odessa	-1°F	4°F 3/3/1989
Coulee Dam	-1°F	0°F 3/4/1955
Chief Joseph Dam	-1°F	2°F 3/10/1951
Wenatchee Airport	4°F	6°F 3/4/1960

Not shown but worth an honorable mention include: -20°F Springdale, -16°F Priest Lake, -12°F Priest River, -11°F Republic and Prichard, and -8°F in Newport.

Besides the cold talk, a few snow events to mention as well. On the 6th a widespread 2-5" fell along the East Slopes of the Cascades as well as the Wenatchee and Omak areas. On the 12th and 13th heavy snow fell north and east of Spokane with 11" Elk, 8" Priest River, and 7" in Athol. The second half of March was very quiet weather wise with typical March weather. Warmer weather melted much of the low elevation snow, but gradually with minimal flooding.

April brought an unseasonably wet pattern from the 5th through the 9th. The Palouse was exceptionally wet with Moscow receiving 3.47" and Pullman 2.91". A burst of heavy rain between 3-7 PM on the 9th caused several creeks to come out of their banks with significant flooding in Pullman and Moscow. Evacuations occurred in Pullman with water from Missouri Flat Creek rushing onto Grande Avenue with significant damage to businesses. Significant flooding was also reported on Fourmile Creek and Rose Creek North of Pullman near Albion. Major flooding also

occurred on Paradise Creek in Moscow with preliminary data indicating the highest stage on record. Numerous homes on East D Street were inundated by flood waters. Flooding also occurred in the Kamiah area from Lawyers Creek. A large mudslide occurred on Highway 12 north of Kamiah closing the highway on the 9th and 10th. Other than the flooding, the remainder of the month was rather typical with periods of dry and sunny weather as well as cool, showery, and windy weather. A strong cold front on the 27th brought wind gusts to 40-50 MPH in several areas including Wenatchee, Coulee Dam, Moses Lake, Spokane, Pullman, and Lewiston.



May started on a very quiet note with a dry pattern for the first half of the month. The pattern changes for the 2nd half of the month with several rounds of showers and thunderstorm. A very wet storm hit downtown and portions of NW Spokane on the 16th causing significant flooding. Some rain gauges received between 0.70-0.90 inches of rain in 20-30 minutes. Standing water on I-90 backed up traffic for miles while flood waters entered several buildings including the historic Fox Theatre cancelling an indoor concert. TJ Meenach Bridge suffered damaged and closed after debris was swept onto the roadway. In north Spokane a couple cars were pulled out of a flooded roadway. Elsewhere on the 16th bands of heavy rain with a few embedded thunderstorms struck some locations in North Central Washington. Omak recorded its wettest day on record for the month of May with 1.32". Waterville recorded 1.50" of rain with 1.44" in Grand Coulee. A cool and rainy day followed on the 17th over Eastern Washington and north Idaho with highs only in the 50s. On the 24th a wet thunderstorm dumped 1.60" of rain in 75 minutes between Mead and Newman Lake leading to water and dirt on area roads. Another storm in Ford produced 1.12" of rain in 40 minutes. Finally, another heavy rain event hit North Central Washington on the 25th and 26th with 1.50-2.15" of rain around Loup Loup Pass and 1.11" in Brewster. Omak recorded a daily record rain of 0.57". This rain was much needed given the recent drought declarations. *Jeremy Wolf*

Remember your Summer Spotter Checklist

Tornado or Funnel Cloud

Hail: pea size or larger

Strong Winds:
30mph+ or damage

Reduced Visibility:
under a mile due to dust, smoke...

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

Any Flooding

Travel Problems or Damage:
due to severe/hazardous weather

Doppler Radar Outage

Starting June 24th, the Doppler radar at NWS Spokane will be down for approximately two weeks for an important upgrade. Technicians will refurbish and replace the pedestal, one of the most critical components of the radar, which is necessary for antenna rotation and positioning to capture data in all directions. The components are extremely heavy and will require the radome to be removed by crane and replaced when the work is completed. It's expected that the crane will be in position to remove the radome on June 28th.

The radar and pedestal were designed to last 25 years, and this radar has exceeded its lifespan. This activity is necessary to keep the radar functioning for another 20 years or more. The pedestal refurbishment is the third major project of the NEXRAD Service Life Extension Program, a series of upgrades that will keep our national radars viable into the 2030s.

While the radar is down, forecasters will be using additional tools to monitor the skies, including surrounding radars, weather satellite and various weather observations. *Andy Brown*



NWS Open House

Mark your calendars. The NWS Spokane will be hosting an Open House on **September 21st**. Stop for a visit; there'll be lots to see and do:

- Tours of the facility
- Fire weather booth
- Hydrology booth
- "Ask a Meteorologist"
- Kidz weather zone
- Weather balloon launch

Watch : Conditions are favorable for severe or hazardous weather around the watch area.
CAUTION—Watch the Sky!

Warning : Severe or hazardous weather is likely or is occurring in the warned area.
DANGER—ACT NOW!

The Weather Watcher

Of the Inland Northwest



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Trivia: How far can lightning strike?