

# The Weather Watcher Of the Inland Northwest

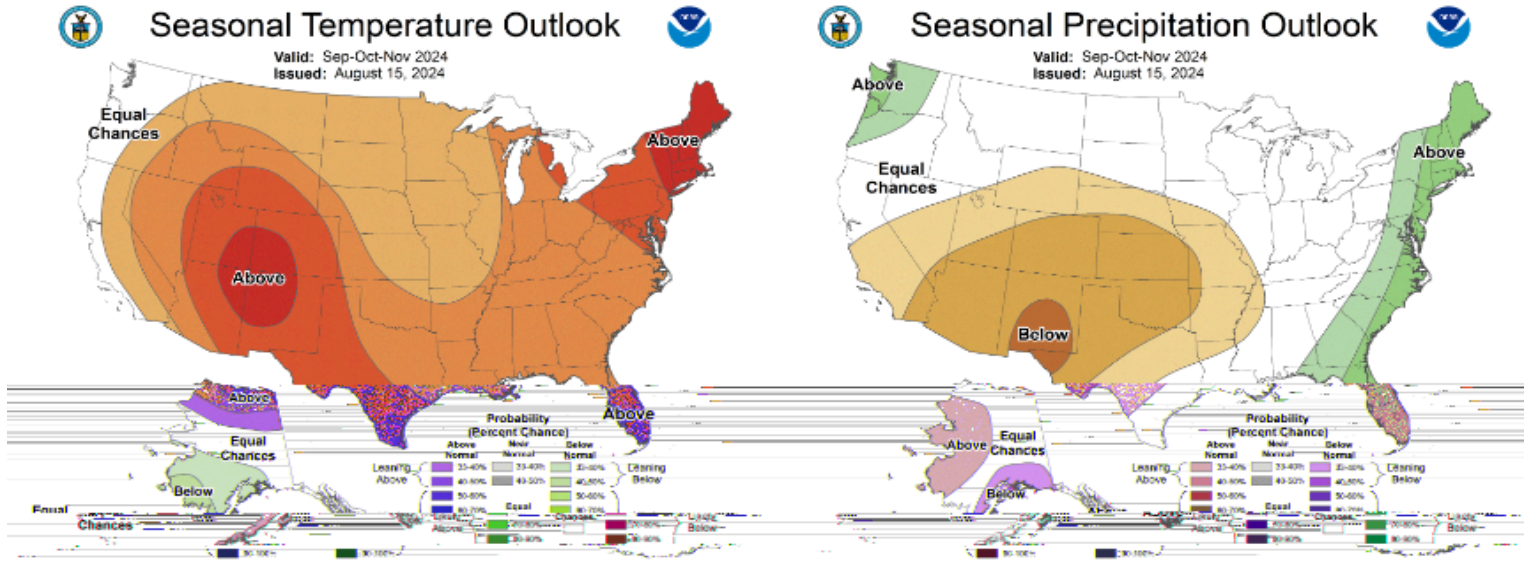
[www.weather.gov/Spokane](http://www.weather.gov/Spokane)



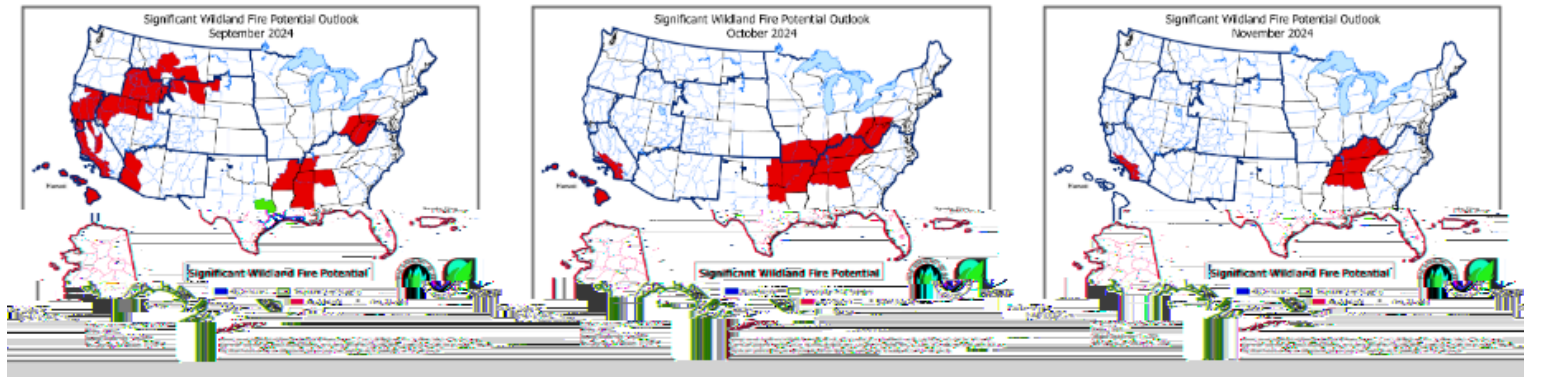
September 2024

## Fall Outlook 2024

The Climate Prediction Center [CPC Seasonal Outlook](#) for September-November 2024 is leaning toward equal chances to slightly above normal temperatures and equal chances to slightly above normal precipitation for the Inland NW.



As for fire season, the threat should be decreasing. The [National Interagency Coordination Center](#) suggests that the Wildland Fire Potential Outlook will be near normal for September- November 2024.

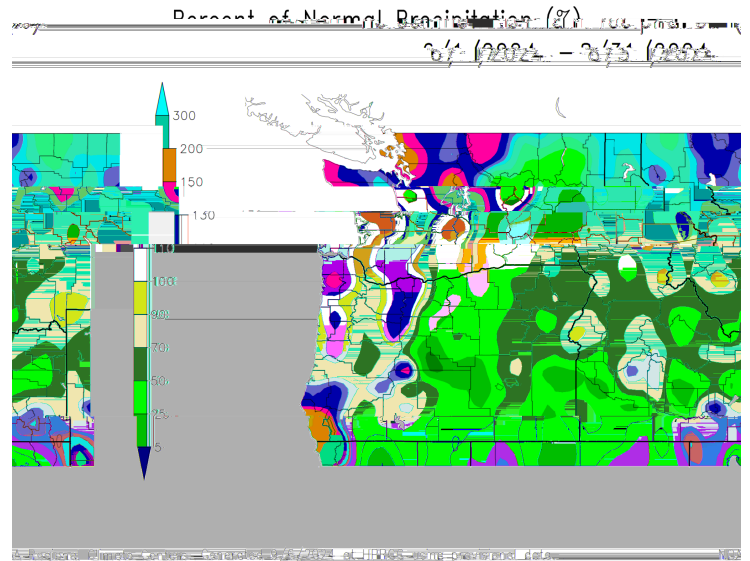
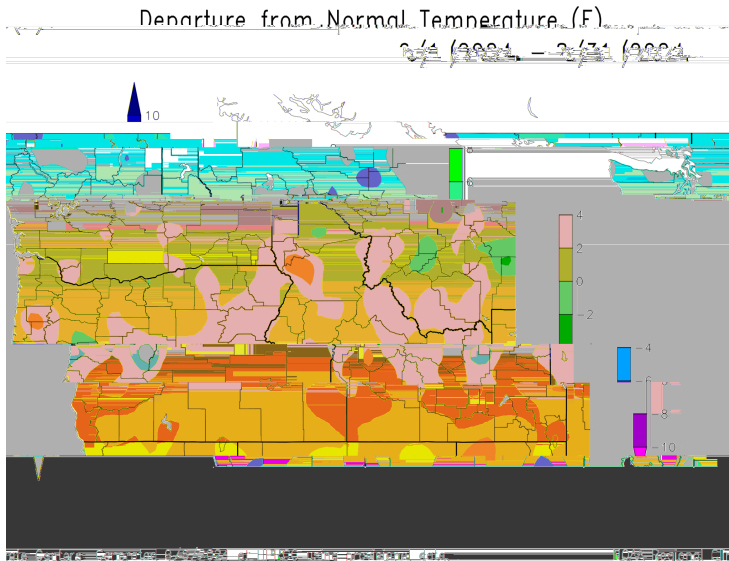


## ENSO Update - La Niña Watch

The latest Climate Prediction Center [CPC Discussions](#) states that ENSO-neutral is present and expected to continue in the near future, with La Niña favored to emerge during September-November (66% chance) and persist through the Northern Hemisphere winter 2024-25 (74% chance during November-January). Additional perspectives and analysis are also available in an [ENSO blog](#). ☀

# Summer 2024 in Review

It was a warmer and drier than normal summer for the Inland NW. For Spokane, the summer finished in 3rd place for the warmest summer, while Lewiston came in at 7th place. Portions of the Columbia Basin were exceptionally dry. Ephrata came in with 2nd driest, with only 0.07" of rain for the entire summer. Priest Rapids Dam received only a trace, also coming in as 2nd driest. Below are [Climate Maps](#) showing the Departure from Normal Temperature and the Percent of Normal Precipitation from June through August 2024.



Meteorological summer began looking like fall, as a very late season atmospheric river took aim at the region bringing rain and gusty winds on **June 2nd and 3rd**. Stevens Pass picked up over 3" of rain, Sagle and Priest River near 2", while Pullman picked up near 1". Dirty Face Mountain above Wenatchee gusted to 78 MPH, while Wenatchee, Pullman, and Lewiston gusted to near 50 MPH. Thunderstorms enhanced the winds even further around Ritzville damaging several trees at a campground. On the 11th, windy conditions occurred across the region, as well as a strong thunderstorm that tracked from Coulee City to north of Odessa. The storm produced dime to nickel sized hail. On the 15th, windy conditions occurred yet again with a strong cold front with gusts near 50 MPH in Ephrata and Kettle Falls. Gusts near 45 MPH were recorded in Rathdrum, Spokane Airport, and Washtucna. Colder temperatures followed with freezing temperatures in some spots, including 26°F in Wilbur, 30°F in Moscow, and 31°F in Chewelah and Davenport. The remainder of the month brought quieter weather, except over northeast Washington and the Idaho Panhandle with several rounds of showers and thunderstorms. On the 27th, storms in Colville produced heavy rain with 0.81" resulting in standing water on roads, with flooding of a business. On the 30th, thunderstorm winds knocked down a tree in the Millwood area of Spokane.

**July** brought the heat to the Inland NW, with a long duration heat wave from the 7th through the 22nd. Omak reached 100°F or warmer during this entire stretch, setting a new record for the longest stretch of consecutive days reaching the century mark. Lewiston reached 100°F or warmer for nearly this entire stretch as well, except on the 15th. In terms of the July average temperature, Mazama came in with the hottest July on record, while Winthrop



and Lewiston recorded the 3rd hottest July. Besides the heat, there were a couple thunderstorm events during the month as well. On the 17th, outflow winds from a thunderstorm contributed to a brief dust storm around Ritzville. On the 22nd, thunderstorms started several fires near Tonasket. On the 24th, thunderstorms brought abundant lightning from the Blue Mountains into the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley, Palouse, and Central Panhandle Mountains. Lightning started the Gwen Fire, which burned numerous structures in Julietta. The storms also knocked out power to approximately 600 residents in Kamiah with wind gusts in the area ranging from 45-55 MPH.

**August** started off where July left off with more triple digit heat on the 2nd. Lewiston reached a toasty 111°F, breaking a record for the date. But then the pattern changed bringing a relief from the heat for most of the month, along with several rounds of scattered showers and thunderstorms. Areas along the East Slopes of the Cascades, up near the Canadian border, and the Idaho Panhandle were the most frequent receivers of needed precipitation. On the 6th, a strong thunderstorm near Hunters toppled several trees onto Highway 25. On the 10th, gusty outflow winds from a thunderstorm damaged a mobile home roof near Deer Park, and knocked down numerous trees in Hauser. On the 11th, thunderstorms in Mazama brought heavy rain and a debris flow on the Cedar Creek Burn Scar. On the 17th, a stronger weather system brought more widespread thunderstorm activity to the region. Some storms were drier and produced new fires while others brought needed moderate rain. On the 23rd, slow moving thunderstorms produced heavy rains in Wenatchee that led to a flash flood with reports from the Chelan County dispatch office of water flowing out of manhole covers and flooding streets. On the 24th, another deep low pressure system tracked through Central Washington, with heavy rain in the Methow and Okanogan Valleys, setting several records. Winthrop received 1.78" of rain on the 24th, making it the wettest August day on record. At the Wenatchee Airport, the high temperature only reached 60°F which tied for the coldest August high temperature on record. Omak's high of 59°F was the coldest August high temperature since 1992. Finally, on the 27th, a strong cold front delivered windy conditions and blowing dust across the Columbia Basin. Peak wind gusts include 51 MPH at Douglas, 49 MPH Wenatchee Airport, 46 MPH for Lewiston and Spokane,, and 45 MPH in Ephrata. ☀️ *Jeremy Wolf*



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**Trivia Question: What is the average first day of the first snowfall in the Inland NW?**

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## Drought

Due to the heat and lack of rain over the last few months, drought expanded across much of eastern WA and allowed it to persist in north Idaho. The U.S. [Drought Monitor](#) depicts Abnormally Dry (D0) to Moderate Drought (D1) in most areas with pockets of Severe (D2) to Extreme (D4) Drought in the lee of the Cascades and the central ID Panhandle. The U.S [Seasonal Drought Outlook](#) indicates potential improvements in the coming months across WA while drought is expected to persist in north Idaho. [Drought Information Statements](#) are available for the Inland NW and describe the various drought impacts, including the lower yields from wheat crops, loss of pasture lands, and lower than normal streamflows. ☀️

# Report Drought Conditions

Remember, there are ways that you can help report any drought-related impacts in your area. It's called [Condition Monitoring Observer Reports \(CMOR\)](#). Scan the QR code to the left to learn more on sharing your drought conditions. Likewise CoCoRaHS can share drought reports as well!! ☀️



Summer Weather Stats				
Wenatchee Waterplant	JUN	JUL	AUG	Total
Average High temp	79.9	95.3	85.7*	87
Departure from normal	+0.3	+6.3	-0.7	+2.0
Average low temp	55.4	65.8	62.1*	61.1
Departure from normal	-0.4	+3.7	+1.1	+1.5
Total precipitation	Trace	0.00	0.39*	0.39
Departure from normal	-0.6	-0.22	+0.16	-0.66
Total snowfall	0	0	0	0
Departure from normal	0	0	0	0
<i>*Airport supplemented due to missing data</i>				
Lewiston, ID	JUN	JUL	AUG	Total
Average High temp	82.6	97.2	90.8	90.2
Departure from normal	+3.6	+6.4	+0.7	+3.6
Average low temp	55.3	65	61.8	60.7
Departure from normal	+1.3	+4.1	+1.5	+2.3
Total precipitation	0.66	0.07	0.44	1.17
Departure from normal	-0.59	-0.4	-0.07	-1.06
Total snowfall	0	0	0	0
Departure from normal	0	0	0	0
Spokane, WA	JUN	JUL	AUG	Total
Average High temp	76.8	92.6	84.9	84.8
Departure from normal	+3.1	+8.2	+1.1	+4.1
Average low temp	51.8	63.8	58.6	58.1
Departure from normal	+1.0	+6.2	+1.9	+3.0
Total precipitation	0.85	0.01	0.26	1.12
Departure from normal	-0.32	-0.41	-0.21	-0.94
Total snowfall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Departure from normal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

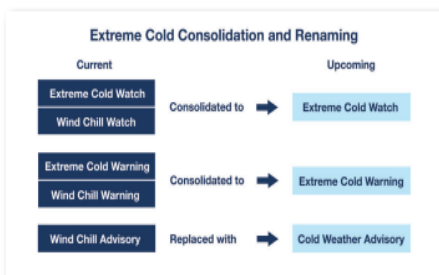
## Fire Weather Review

Fire season 2024 got off to a slow start with the wet and cool late Spring weather. Although when the July heat arrived, fuels cured quickly. Passing storms with abundant lightning in addition to unfortunate human causes led to numerous fire starts across the Inland NW. A few fires expanded and will still be a concern in the months and years ahead due to the threats of post-fire flooding and debris flows. These large fires include: the Pioneer along Lake Chelan and Stehekin, Swawilla on the Colville Reservation, Gwen in Nez Perce county, and Cougar Creek in Asotin county and account for over 130,000 acres burned in the region. NWS Spokane provides [daily fire weather updates](#) to its partners through fire season.

Although fire conditions will be slowing across the Inland NW in September, parts of Oregon and southern Idaho remain active and areas of smoke may be a concern for the following weeks. For the latest fire information, see the [National Fire News](#) from the NIFC web site. ☀️



### Nationwide Implementation in Fall 2024 - On or about October 1, 2024



## Cold weather products

The NWS is simplifying its suite of [cold weather products](#) to improve messaging of these hazards, which will include the terms Wind Chills and Freeze hazards. Anticipate to hear more on Extreme Cold Watches, Warnings, and Advisories during the cold season. ☀️

# Staff Updates

There are several staff updates to share! **Laurie Nisbet** and **Steven VanHorn** were both promoted to Lead Meteorologists at NWS Spokane in August 2024. Originally from Spokane, Laurie first joined the NWS and started in Eureka, CA. Then she moved to NWS Missoula in 2002 as a Meteorologist before arriving in Spokane, WA in 2005. Steven began his NWS career at NWS Los Angeles / Oxnard, CA before coming to Spokane as a Meteorologist in 2009. Together, they have decades of experience of the weather and hazards of the Inland NW!



**Kelly Butler** will be the new Science Operations Officer at NWS Spokane. Kelly is currently a Meteorologist at NWS Wichita. She earned a double major in Applied Math and Atmospheric Science at Lyndon State College, then attended Ohio University for her Masters. Kelly joined the National Weather Service in 2018

**Alex Cooke** has been a summer virtual volunteer for NWS Spokane. While residing in Ohio, he assisted the NWS Spokane by providing daily briefings and lending a virtual hand during thunderstorm events. He also worked on a fire weather study for the office. He is finishing up his Meteorologist degree at Mississippi State and hopes to find a job with the National Weather Service. Congratulations and best of luck to Laurie, Steven, Kelly, and Alex! ☀️

<b>NWS OTX</b>	
Meteorologist In Charge	Andy Brown
Warning Coordination Meteorologist	Charlotte Dewey
Science Operations Officer	Kelly Butler
Administrative Assistant	Jodi Miller
Information Technology Officer	Todd Carter
Service Hydrologist	Robin Fox
Observation Program Leader	Ken Daniel
Lead Forecasters	Greg Koch Steve Bodnar Jeremy Wolf Laurie Nisbet Steven VanHorn
Meteorologists	Jon Fox Rocco Pelatti Miranda Coté Joey Clevenger Valerie Thaler Krista Carrothers Dan Butler Rachael Fewkes
Electronic Systems Analyst	Mike Henry
Electronic Tech	Christopher Huckins Kyle Dauk
Facilities Tech	Joshua Miller



## Weather Spotter & Observer Corner

Another round of Weather Spotter and Observer training will be scheduled for October and will focus on cold season hazards. Keep an eye on the NWS web page for the updated training calendar. Remember, we do offer recorded and online training options on the NWS [Spotter Resources](#) page. If you are interested to see where your storm reports go, check out this [Local Storm Report page](#). ☀️

**Trivia Answer:** The average (mean) first snowfall varies by location and elevation. Included the earliest dates too!

The snowfall is for a Trace or more.



City	Mean first snowfall (T+)	Earliest in Recent Memory
Spokane	November 13	September 28, 2019
Lewiston	December 3	November 8, 2020
Wenatchee	December 2	October 29, 1991
Mazama	November 5	October 9, 1997
Priest River	November 10	September 29, 1971
Moscow	November 16	October 9, 2019

# Fall Safety messaging

**dense fog**

Fog can be hazardous to drivers, mariners, and aviators and contributes to thousands of travel accidents every year. Visibility often changes quickly in fog.

**safety tips**

- Slow down
- Use your low-beam headlights
- Leave plenty of distance between you and other vehicles

**“Sneaky” Winter Hazards**

The winter season brings many weather events that can “sneak” up on you. These are weather hazards that cause big impacts and make travel difficult without making big news.

weather.gov

As the seasons change to fall, it’s a great time to prepare for the additional weather hazards, including fog, dust, wildfire smoke, and even the first snow of the season. It’s good to remind all that preparing for emergencies and disasters can keep them, their families and their communities safe.

Preparing your home, family, and vehicle is also important. Talking about bad things that could happen like a disaster or emergency isn’t always easy. We may think we’re protecting the people we love by avoiding these conversations, but it’s important to start taking steps to get ready and stay safe. [Make a plan](#). Plan an [Emergency Kit](#). There are many resources available including the FEMA [ready.gov](#) web page.

**DON'T DRIVE Through Dust Storms**

- Pull off the road as far as possible
- Stop and turn off all lights
- Set the emergency brake
- Take your foot off the brake, make sure taillights aren't illuminated

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## Basic Emergency Kit

- Water (1 gallon per person/day)
- Food (non-perishable)
- Battery Powered/NOAA Wx Radio
- Flashlight & Batteries
- Warm clothes (hat/gloves/jacket/etc)
- Blankets
- First Aid Kit
- Whistle
- Moist towelettes
- Garbage bags
- Wrench or pliers
- Manual can opener
- Pocket knife
- Local paper maps
- Cell phone & charger
- Soap/ Hand Sanitizer
- Any medications
- Pet food and supplies
- Cash Money
- Important documents

Remember your Autumn Spotter Checklist
<b>First Snow of the Season!!!</b>
<b>Reduced Visibility:</b> < 1 mile due to dust, smoke, fog...
<b>Strong Winds:</b> 30mph+ or wind damage
<b>Hail:</b> pea size or larger
<b>Tornado or Funnel Cloud</b>
<b>Heavy Rain:</b> Showery: 1/2" + in 1hr Steady: 1"+ in 12hr/1.5"+ in 24hr
<b>Snow:</b> 2"+ valleys & 4"+ mountains
<b>Any Mixed Precipitation</b>
<b>Any Flooding</b>
<b>Travel Problems or Damage:</b> due to severe/hazardous weather

**first snow**

The first snow of the year can often cause major problems on the road as people adjust to the poor driving conditions.

**safety tips**

- Slow down
- Don't use cruise control
- Leave plenty of distance between you and other vehicles

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