

2014 Top 5 Weather Events

As 2014 comes to a close, it is time to take a look back at the Top 5 Weather Events of the year as voted on by the staff of the National Weather Service in Jackson, Ky. Below are the Top 5 Weather Events of 2014, in order of importance:

1. The coldest winter temperatures in 2 decades **(Click for More)**

An arctic cold front barreled across eastern Kentucky late Sunday, January 5th ushering in what would be the coldest temperatures and wind chills experienced in 20 years. Temperatures on Sunday afternoon warmed to near 60°F in many locations, but by the next afternoon the mercury was 50 to 60 degrees colder, dropping into the single digits. Temperatures by Tuesday morning, January 7th ranged from 2 below zero to 9 below zero in the valleys of eastern Kentucky, down to 17 below zero at the top of Black Mountain.

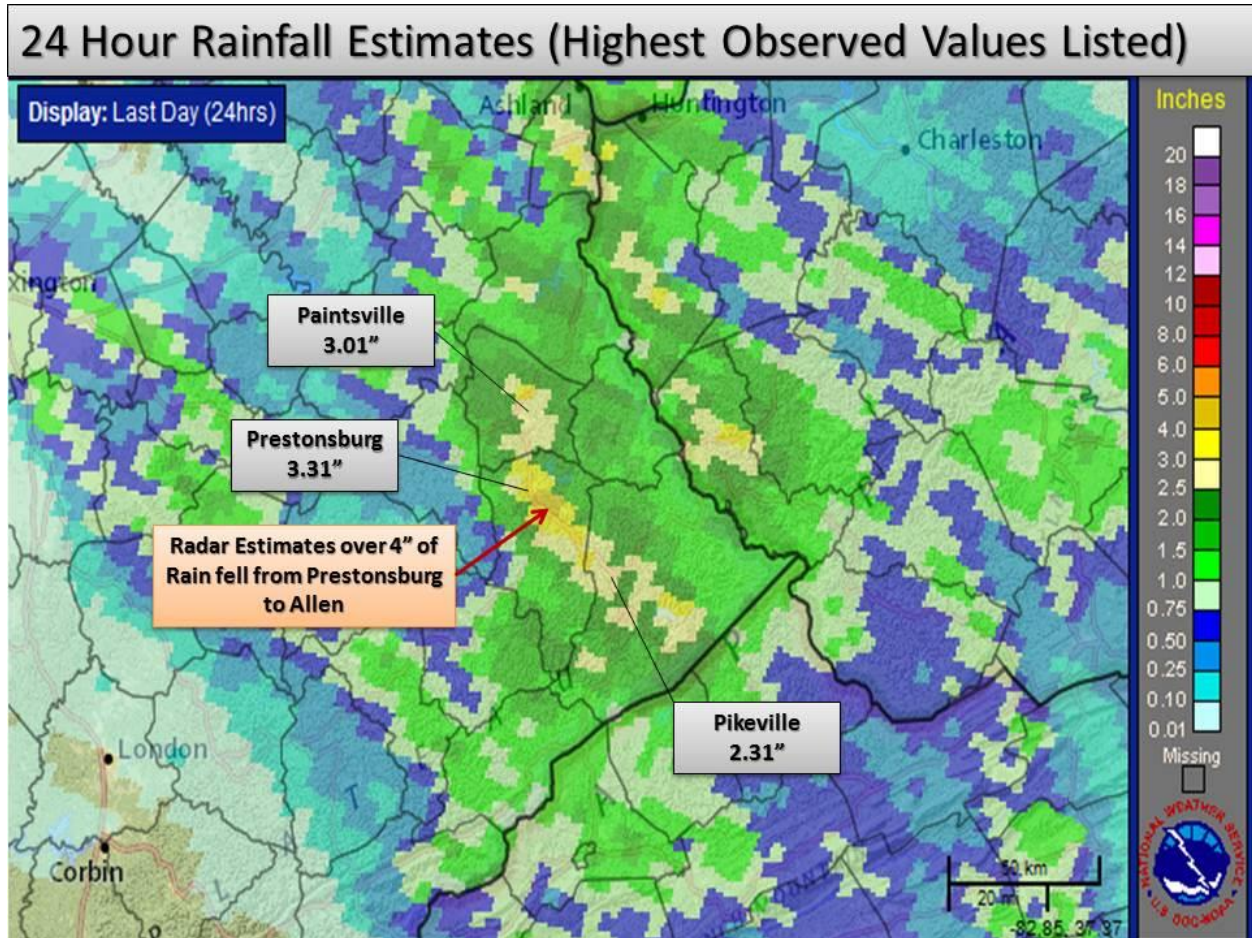
Gusty west to northwest winds combined with these temperatures to produce wind chills in the 15 to 30 below range for most locations, with the highest terrain along the Virginia border dropping even lower. Temperatures also fell below zero 2 more times during January: from the 22nd to the 24th and from the 28th through the 30th. Six new record lows were set at the Julian Carroll Airport in Jackson and 1 record low at the London Corbin Airport. The last time there was widespread below zero temperatures in eastern Kentucky was in the middle 1990s. An examination of historical records shows that major cold waves occurred more frequently from the late 1800s until the mid-1990s, with the recent long stretch without a major cold air outbreak being very unusual.

The North Fork of the Kentucky River near Jackson, KY was completely frozen over by January 27th. The following picture was taken looking downstream (north) from the Hays Depot Bridge just north of downtown Jackson:



[2. Flash Flooding on August 22nd \(Click for More\)](#)

Severe flash flooding occurred in parts of Johnson, Floyd and Pike Counties during the evening hours of August 22nd, with other nearby locations also experiencing flooding. Here's a look at how much rain fell in these locations with a few actual rain gauge readings indicated. In most instances, the bulk of the rainfall indicated on this map fell in 1 to 2 hours!



[3. Tornadoes on October 7th \(Click for More\)](#)

October is hardly severe weather month across eastern Kentucky. As a matter-of-fact, until this year, there had only been 4 confirmed tornadoes during the month of October for our area since 1934. **There were 2 confirmed tornadoes in Bath County on October 7th.**

The first tornado touched down in the Sharpsburg area at 4:35 p.m. EDT. The National Weather Service (NWS) in Jackson determined that it was an EF-1 tornado with estimated peak wind of 90 mph. The tornado had a path length of 0.6 miles and a path width of 50 yards. Three barns were damaged and there was sporadic damage to trees. No fatalities or injuries occurred during this event.



Path of tornado near Sharpsburg

The second tornado touched down in the Olympia Springs area at 4:53 p.m. EDT. The National Weather Service (NWS) in Jackson determined that it was an EF-1 tornado with estimated peak wind of 90 mph. The tornado had a path length of 0.3 miles and a path width of 35 yards. Damaged occurred to a boat trailer and boat, a camping trailer was blown onto a truck, numerous shingles were blown off a house, and there was sporadic damage to trees. No fatalities or injuries occurred during this event.



Path of tornado near Olympia Springs

There was 1 confirmed tornado in Pike County on October 7th. A tornado touched down in the Gulnare area at 10:44 p.m. EDT. The National Weather Service (NWS) in Jackson determined that it was an EF-1 tornado with estimated peak wind of 90 mph. The tornado had a path length of 0.1 miles and a path width of 130 yards. Several large trees were snapped and/or uprooted, a large section of a roof was peeled from a house, and 2 barn roofs were damaged. No fatalities or injuries occurred during this event.

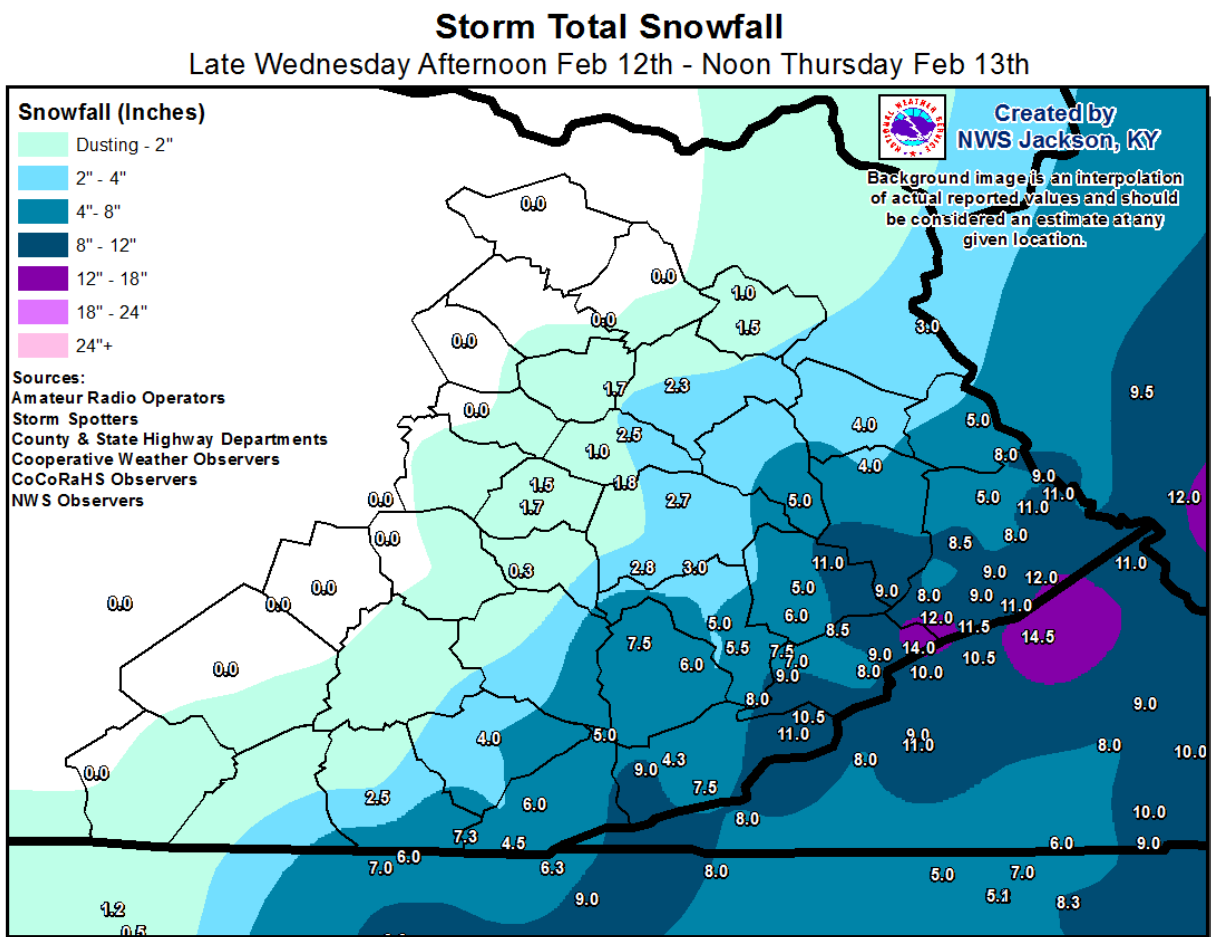


Path of tornado near Gulnare in Pike County

[4. Heavy snow of up to 14 inches blankets southeast Kentucky on February 12th and 13th \(Click for More\)](#)

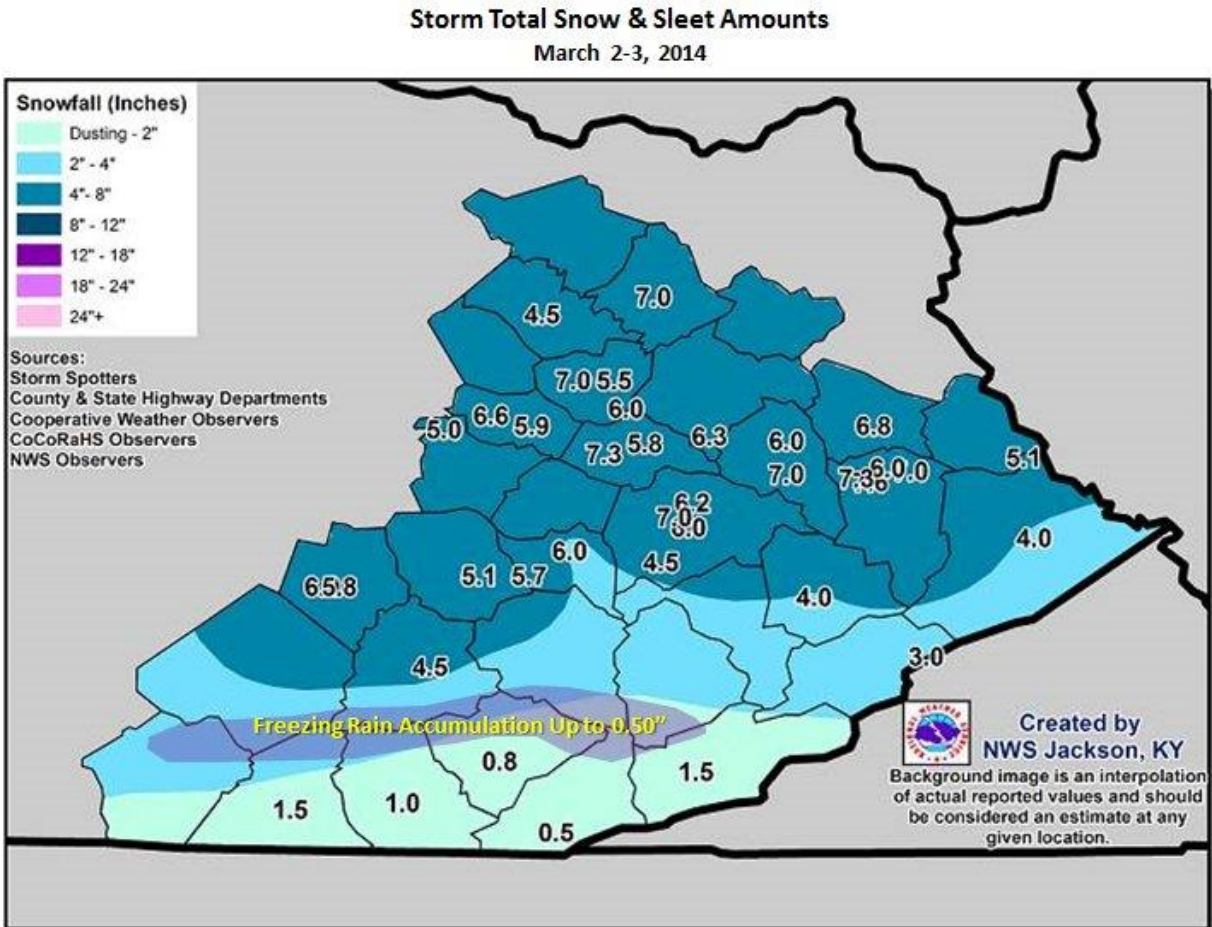
A powerful winter storm impacted the southern and eastern U.S. as low pressure moved from the Gulf of Mexico on Wednesday February 12th and up the East Coast through early Friday morning February 14th.

On the backside of this system, heavy snowfall affected much of east Tennessee, western Virginia, West Virginia and southeast Kentucky. Here locally, while the far northern and far western coal fields did not see a flake, locations near the Virginia border received large amounts of snow. In fact several locations in Letcher, Pike and Harlan counties saw more than ten inches of snow.



5. Winter Storm on March 2nd and 3rd (Click for More)

A cold front passed southeastward across eastern Kentucky late on Sunday. A shallow layer of very cold air infiltrated the area behind the cold front with temperatures dropping into the 20s and eventually teens behind this front. A few thousand feet above the ground however, temperatures were in the 40s Sunday evening. As a result, rain changed to freezing rain and sleet Sunday night from northwest to southeast Sunday night. Eventually, the warm layer aloft eroded and the sleet changed to a period of heavy snow for many areas. Periods of snow, some heavy at times, continued through Monday morning before tapering off during the afternoon hours.



Honorable Mentions

Although these events did not make the Top 5 list, they are worthy of being mentioned. These events are listed in no particular order:

***Severe Weather and Flooding on June 4th and 5th**

***Damaging Wind Event on June 10th**

***Severe Weather with Tornado and Soft Ball Size Hail on July 27th**

***Snow on April 15th, Making the 2013-2014 Winter Season the Longest Snow Season on Record at NWS Jackson**