

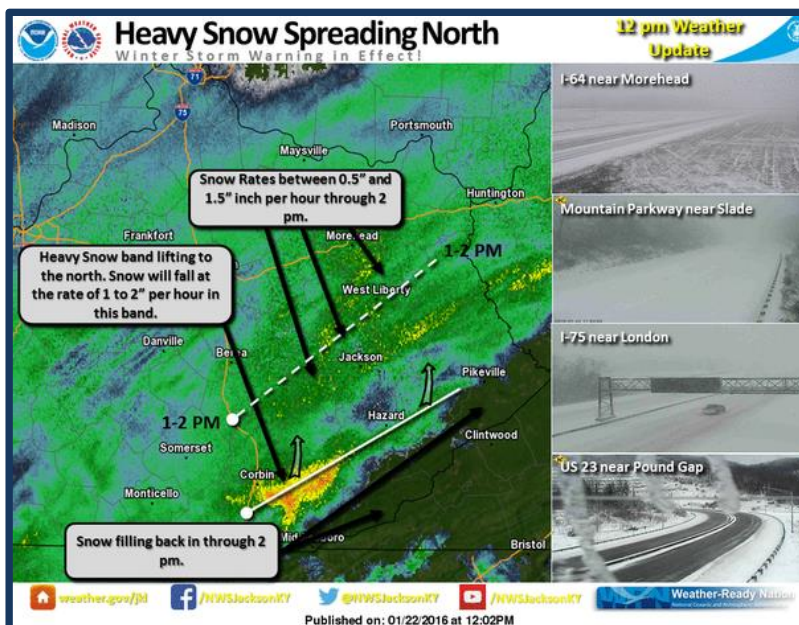
2016 Top 5 Weather Events

As 2016 comes to a close, the staff of the National Weather Service (NWS) Office in Jackson wanted to share what we consider to be the Top 5 Weather Events of the year. The Top 5 Weather Events of the year, as voted on by the NWS Staff are as follows:

[1. Snowstorm on January 22nd-23rd, 2016 \(Click for More\)](#)



A paralyzing winter storm dumped up to 20 inches of snow across parts of eastern Kentucky from the early morning hours of Friday January 22nd through the day on Saturday January 23rd. The snow accumulated at a rate of 2 inches per hour at times. The snowfall produced by the storm was the heaviest to fall across eastern Kentucky since the Blizzard of March 1993.



[2. Drought, Wildfires, and Warm Conditions in November 2016 \(Click for More\)](#)



An abnormally dry start to the autumn season in September and October continued through the majority of November. Rainfall deficits of 4-6 inches during this timeframe sparked the introduction of severe drought across almost all of eastern Kentucky by the second and third weeks in November. Extreme drought also developed across much of the Cumberland Valley toward the end of November as the 4th driest fall on record was recorded at both Jackson and London. Additionally, the Fall of 2016 was the warmest on record across eastern Kentucky.

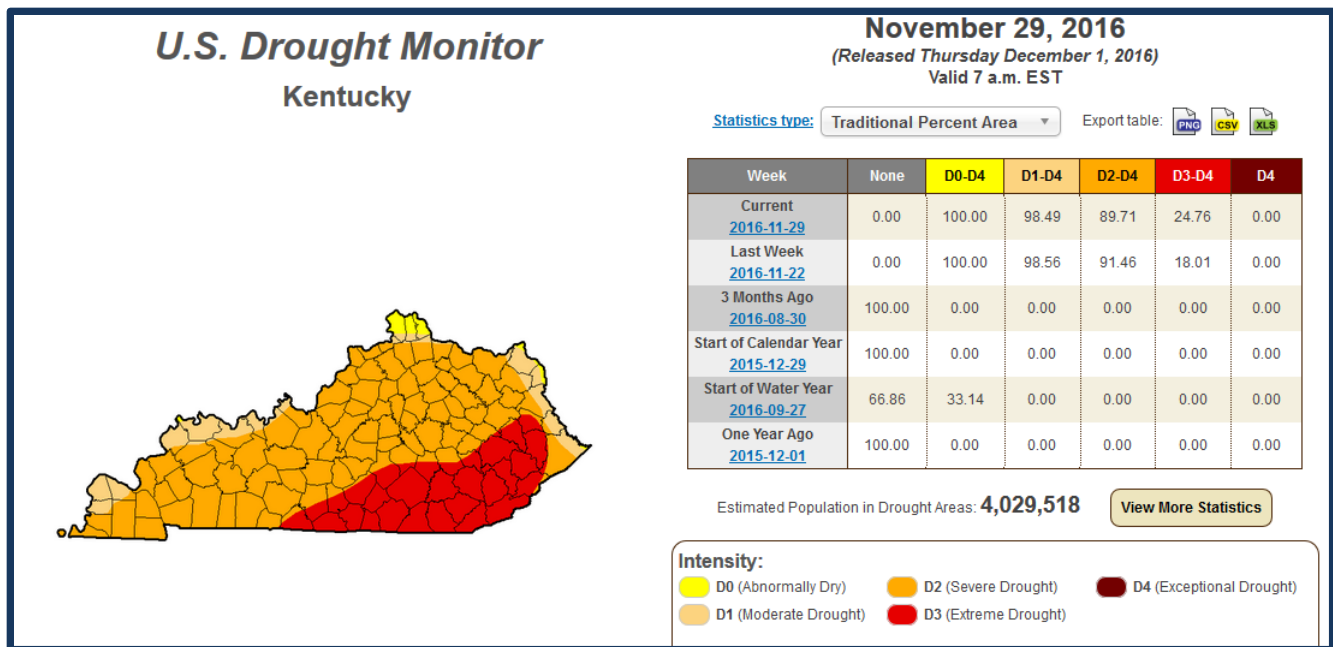
Early impacts ranged from farm ponds drying up and low stream flows in southern Kentucky, to a few cities such as Salyersville mentioning possible water supply issues without significant rainfall by the end of November. Several farmers also mentioned the early consumption of hay by cattle, possibly leading to a shortage into the winter.

Wildfire activity began to rapidly increase across eastern Kentucky, especially southeastern Kentucky, by late October. The Kentucky State Emergency Operations Center was activated on November 3rd as at least 5 wildfires flared up across Harlan County, while 3 schools in Pike County were forced to close due to dense smoke. A state of emergency was later declared by the governor on the 3rd after meeting with the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

Impacts from as many as 41 wildfires at any one time became numerous rather quickly as nearly 500 personnel from the Kentucky Division of Forestry, Kentucky Fire Commission, Natural Resource Conservation Services, the Kentucky National Guard, and American Red Cross were deployed to southeastern Kentucky to assist local fire departments in fighting wildland fires. Crews battled the flames from both the ground and air as the Kentucky National Guard mobilized six UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters equipped with 600-gallon buckets and two LUH-72 Lakotas, dumping nearly 2 million gallons of water over approximately 50,000 acres.

One fire in Harlan County was responsible for consuming 7,400 acres on Pine Mountain. Kentucky Highway 1679 (Little Shepherds Trail) in Harlan County was closed to all traffic, except emergency vehicles, from Swap to the entrance of Kingdom Come State Park, while a portion of the Red River Gorge in the Daniel Boone National Forest was closed for several days along Tunnel Ridge Road north of Mountain Parkway. Numerous other roadways were closed as burned trees toppled over and smoke produced reduced visibilities. On the morning of November 16th, near-zero visibilities developed on Mountain Parkway just east of the Slade exit as smoke became extremely dense at ground level. A 12 car pileup resulted, injuring approximately 20 people and causing one fatality as a man stepped out of his coal truck to help others. Mountain Parkway was closed for over 10 hours between exits 22 and 40. One home was burned down in Knott County, while smoke and flames endangered several additional homes near Putney and Cumberland in Harlan County. Sadly, one firefighter passed away after being injured battling a late October brushfire near Beverly in Bell County. The city of Jackson and the National Weather Service office were also impacted by nearby wildfires and smoke, including the Eagles Nest Fire.

Burn bans were eventually issued for all 33 counties in eastern Kentucky, helping the state of Kentucky receive a Fire Management Assistance Grant from FEMA Region IV to support continuing fire operations in southeastern Kentucky. These continued until November 28th when the Kentucky Division of Forestry, National Guard, and Kentucky Fire Commission were demobilized as increasing moisture filtered into eastern Kentucky prior to resulting in widespread rainfall amounts of 1-4 inches.



[3. Tornado and Damaging Winds on July 4, 2016 \(Click for More\)](#)

Showers and thunderstorms crossed eastern Kentucky on July 4th. One particular cluster of storms created a swath of wind damage across eastern Kentucky and spawned one tornado near Brodhead, Kentucky in Rockcastle County.



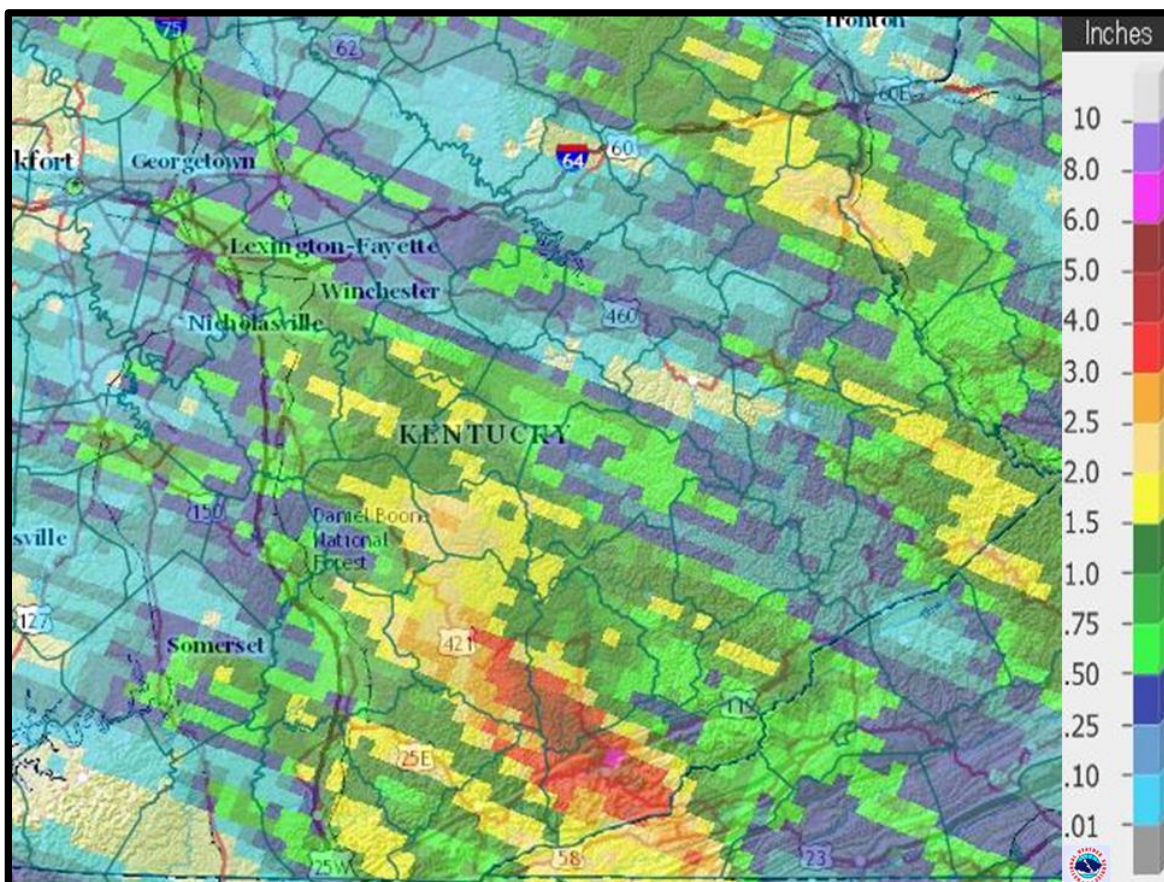
Car flipped by Brodhead Tornado

[4. Flash Flood in Harlan, Leslie and Bell Counties on June 21st \(Click for More\)](#)

A line of strong to severe thunderstorms developed during the early afternoon on Tuesday, June 21st, along and south of the Ohio River, moving into eastern Kentucky during the mid-afternoon hours. Sporadic wind damage occurred across Estill County as well as Morgan and Bell Counties. Much more significant impacts developed during the evening hours as a training line of storms set up across eastern Bell, southern Leslie, and Harlan Counties. This led to widespread flash flooding, especially across Harlan County. Several other homes and roads were also impacted across Leslie and Bell Counties.

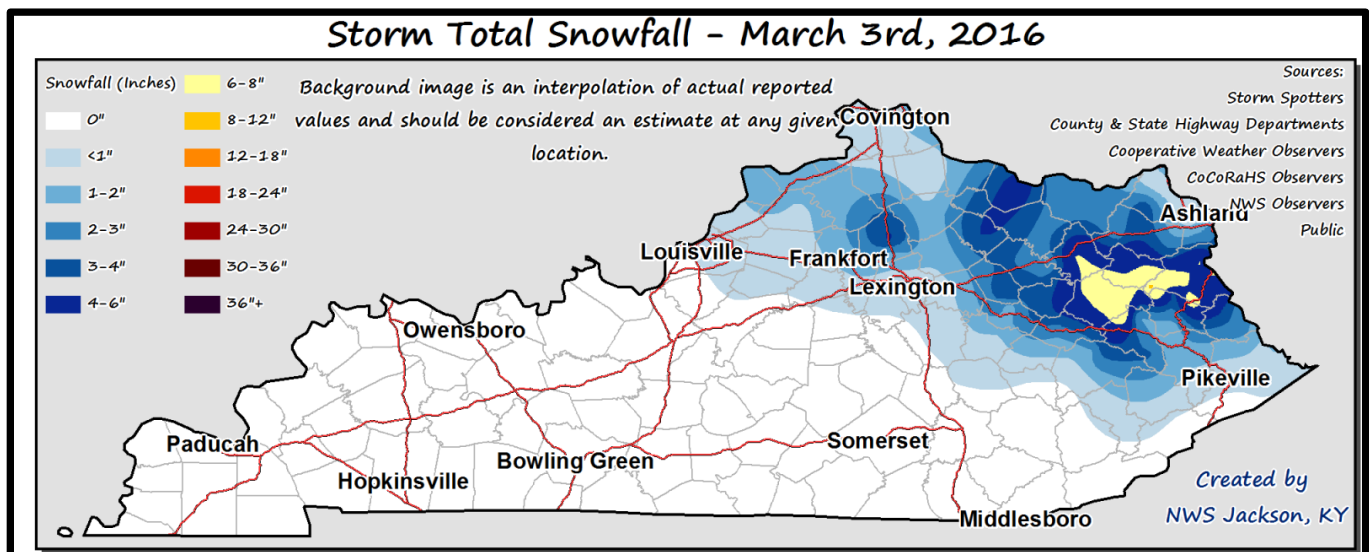
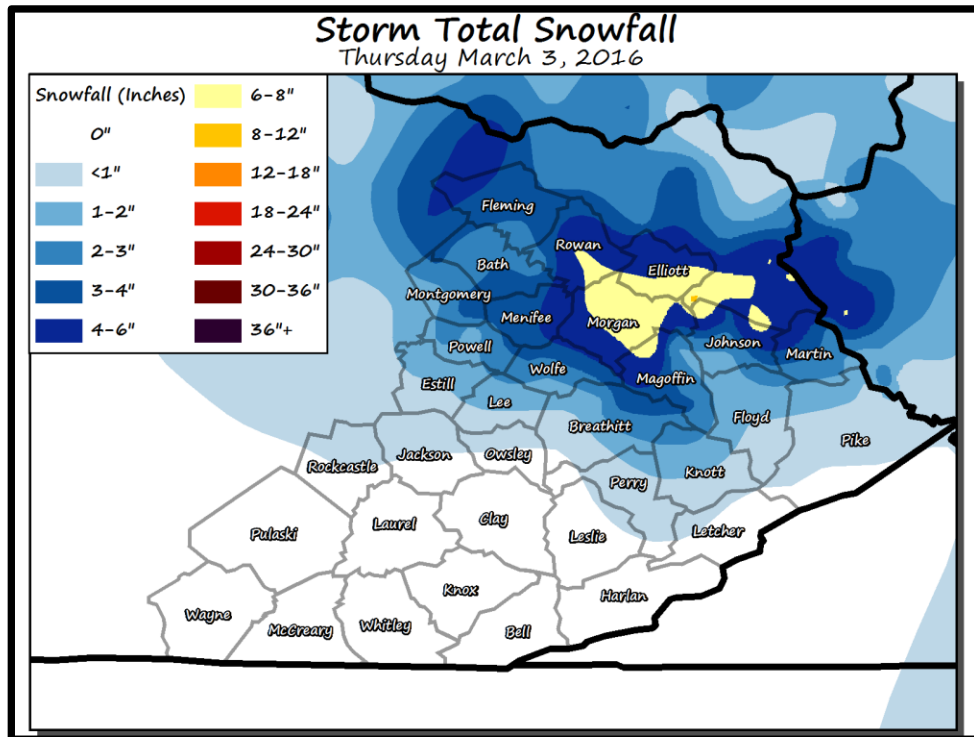
Harlan County was the hardest hit, with 75 to 100 homes affected. The most significant damage occurred in Bledsoe where 3 to 4 feet of water was reported in some homes. The American Red Cross mobilized teams to Harlan County, providing food and water to residents.

Radar Estimated Rainfall for Event



[5. Snowstorm on March 3, 2016 \(Click for More\)](#)

A surprise snowstorm took aim on parts of northeast Kentucky during the midday and afternoon hours of Thursday March 3rd. The storm system that produced the snowfall wasn't that impressive as a weak area of low pressure tracked across southeast Kentucky. However, the precipitation moved in a little quicker and heavier than forecast. As a result, a forecast for rain and temperatures in the upper 30s ended up as heavy snow in a strip from near Georgetown eastward into eastern Kentucky. The heaviest snow fell along and north of the Mountain Parkway where 5 to 8 inches was reported in Morgan, Elliott, Johnson, Rowan and Magoffin Counties. Several vehicles were stranded on area roads due to the quickly accumulating, heavy snow.

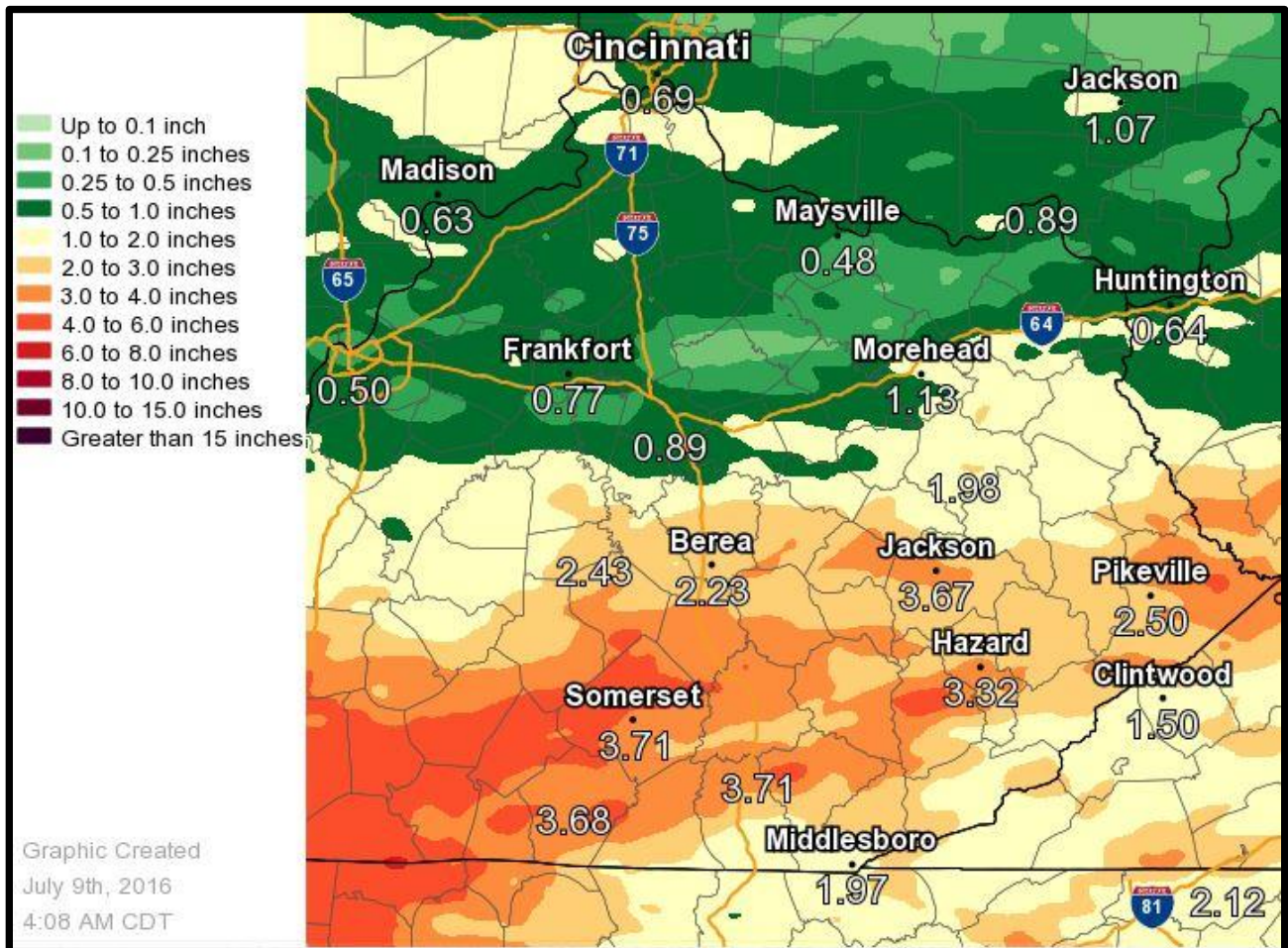


Honorable Mentions

[Flooding on July 8 \(Click for More\)](#)

Multiple rounds of showers and thunderstorms moved across eastern Kentucky between morning and early evening. As a complex of storms moved east through central portions of Kentucky during the late morning and early afternoon hours, increasing moisture and daytime heating, along with abundant lift present with this complex, contributed to widespread showers and thunderstorms. Many locations received an additional 1 to 3 inches of rainfall on top of scattered rainfall over the past few days. With moist soil in place, much of this rainfall was converted to runoff and subsequently led to several instances of flash flooding across eastern Kentucky. Several reports of wind damage were also received in terms of downed trees.

Event Rainfall Totals:



[Large Hail and Flooding on May 1st – 2nd, 2016 \(Click for More\)](#)

Thunderstorms developed and trained over a narrow corridor, producing flash flooding in southwest Breathitt and northern Perry County during the early morning hours of May 1st. Later in the day, numerous strong to severe storms raked across eastern Kentucky during the afternoon and evening hours. The storms formed in a warm moist air mass ahead of an approaching cold front. The storms produced hail as large as 1.75 inches in diameter, damaging winds, and flooding across the area.

Location of Local Storm Reports from May 1-2, 2016

