



The West Texas

# TWISTER



Winter 2003

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE FORECAST OFFICE LUBBOCK TEXAS

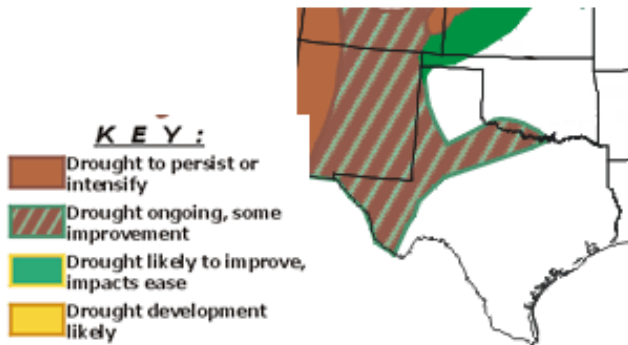
## Long-term Drought Persists

By Robert Barritt, Senior Forecaster and John Lipe, Hydrologist

Extremely dry conditions continue across most of the South Plains area late this fall as rainfall totals for the year remain well below normal across most of the region. As of this writing, the Lubbock International Airport has received only 48 percent of its normal rainfall and Plainview was even drier having received only 39 percent of its normal rainfall. For the period January through October, Lubbock recorded its second driest period on record and even if the area receives its normal precipitation in November and December, this year will still go down as one of the five driest years since 1911. As of November 11th, the Lubbock International Airport has received 8.63 inches of precipitation this year. The Lubbock area hasn't seen a year with less than ten inches of precipitation since 1934!



### Texas Seasonal Drought Outlook Through January 2004



Water supplies from area lakes remain extremely low, averaging

between fifteen and twenty percent of conservation capacities. Lake Meredith, Mackenzie Lake, and White River Lake remain at or near record low capacities. Crop yields are expected to be significantly lower this year due to the prolonged drought that existed through the growing season.

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## Winter Weather Awareness Day – December 2<sup>nd</sup>

The Texas Division of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service have joined together to declare Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> as Winter Weather Awareness Day (WWAD) in Texas. The purpose of WWAD is to focus public attention across the state on winter weather, so that they will begin to take steps now to prepare for the upcoming winter season. Even though it's a southern state, western Texas is known for its sharp outbreaks of cold during the winter months, which can be mixed with periods of snow and ice. Preparations for the hazards that winter storms can bring to West Texas should be made before we get into the heart of the season. Our office will issue several public information statements during the day addressing winter storms and their impacts on the region.



Each year, dozens of Americans die due to exposure to cold. Add to that number, vehicle accidents and fatalities, fires due to dangerous use of heaters and other winter weather fatalities and you have a significant threat.

## NWS Winter Weather Products

Our office will likely issue a number of products in the coming months for various winter weather events. Here's a summary of the conditions that we expect when we issue each of these products:

**Winter Weather Outlook** - Significant winter weather is possible in the 48 to 120 hour timeframe. The timing, precise track, and forecast intensity of the storm may be uncertain and thus specific details may still be undetermined.

**Winter Storm Watch** - Significant and potentially dangerous winter weather is possible in the 12 to 48 hour timeframe. Heavy snow and/or heavy accumulations of ice and sleet are possible.

**Winter Storm Warning** - Significant winter weather is likely within the next 30 hours. Four or more inches of snow and/or dangerous accumulations of freezing rain and sleet expected. Conditions could lead to injuries or loss of life. If only one element is expected then the warning may be issued as an event specific warning such as "Ice Storm Warning" or "Heavy Snow Warning".

**Winter Weather Advisory** - A combination of snow amounts of 3 inches or less and light accumulations of ice or sleet will likely result in hazardous conditions in the next 30 hours.

**Snow Advisory** - Snowfall amounts of 1 to 3 inches will likely occur in the next 30 hours.

## Road Conditions

- **Texas DOT** – Phone – 800-452-9292 [www.dot.state.tx.us/hcr/main.htm](http://www.dot.state.tx.us/hcr/main.htm)
- **New Mexico DOT** - Phone – 800-432-4269 [www.nmshtd.state.nm.us/](http://www.nmshtd.state.nm.us/)
- **Colorado DOT** - Phone – 303-639-1111 [www.cotrip.org/](http://www.cotrip.org/)

## SKYWARN Recognition Day Is December 6<sup>th</sup>

By Ed Calianese, WCM

The National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League developed SKYWARN Recognition Day (SRD) in 1999. It celebrates the contributions that volunteer SKYWARN spotters make to the National Weather Service's severe weather program. During the day, SKYWARN spotters visit NWS offices and amateur radio storm spotters contact other radio operators across the world. The NWS Lubbock Office will again be celebrating this event this year along with many other NWS offices across the country.

Last year, we were on the air for a total of 17.5 hours. Radio operators who worked our station (WX5LBB) during the event included Kendall Stanaland (WX5EMT), Bruce Haynie (N5WRA),



**From left to right:** Ed Calianese, Jason Jordon, Larry Vannozi, David Purkiss, and Steve Slay working SRD 2002.

David Purkiss (KJ5RP), Jason Jordan (KC5KND), Rob Hogan (N5LAW), Carl Petmeckey (KC5KQF), Ed Calianese (W5SVR), and Steve Slay (KC5MVY).

We made 110 total radio contacts, including contacts to 49 other NWS offices across the country. We primarily worked the 10m, 15m, 20m, and 70cm bands last year and plan to also operate on 40m and 80m bands during this year's event.

Please watch our website for more details regarding this upcoming event.

## National Weather Service Forecasts

- Telephone – 806-745-4260
- Lubbock NOAA Weather Radio – 162.400 MHz
- Plainview NOAA Weather Radio – 162.525 MHz
- Summerfield NOAA Weather Radio – 162.500 MHz
- Web Site : [www.srh.weather.gov/lub](http://www.srh.weather.gov/lub)

## Floydada Becomes the South Plains' Second StormReady Community



**From left to right:** FOX34 Assistant News Director Kay Boren; Floydada EMC Carroll Sims; MIC Larry Vannoizzi; Lubbock EMC Ken Olson; WCM Ed Calianese.

By Ed Calianese, WCM

On August 26th, the National Weather Service Office in Lubbock recognized the City of Floydada as a StormReady community. Officials in Floydada have taken a proactive approach to severe weather preparedness in their community and as a direct result have become better prepared for all disasters – both natural and manmade. The City of Floydada has developed a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center that is staffed with key personnel whenever severe weather threatens the county. They have several means to receive warnings directly from the NWS as well as the local media and state agencies. They also have multiple ways to relay warning information to their citizens. NOAA Weather Radios have been placed in a number of key locations across the city, including all city offices and the school superintendent's office.

StormReady guidelines are based on the applying community's population so small towns have the same opportunity for recognition as large cities. In order to be recognized as StormReady, communities must have multiple ways to receive severe weather warnings and to alert the public to the threat, they must establish a 24-hour warning point and EOC from which emergency response efforts can be coordinated, they promote the importance of public readiness through education and training, and have a formal hazardous weather operations plan that is utilized during disasters. Communities have fewer fatalities and property damage if they plan before dangerous weather arrives. No community is storm proof, but StormReady can help communities save lives.

Including the City of Floydada and the City of Lubbock, there are currently just 31 StormReady designations in the state of Texas. Texas towns routinely have to deal with natural disasters and thus many communities in the state likely already have most of the requirements for StormReady certification in place. We'd like to see more communities in the South Plains area recognized for their hard work! If you're interested in learning more about (or applying for) the StormReady program, please contact Ed Calianese at 806-745-3916 x223.

## Weather Radio Coverage Expands

by Ed Calianese, WCM

Two new NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) transmitters will soon be broadcasting 24-hour weather information directly from the NWS Office in Lubbock to citizens of the South Plains and extreme southwestern Panhandle. Installation of these two transmitters is well underway as of this writing and broadcasts are expected to begin very soon. The new sites will supplement the NWR coverage provided to the central South Plains by NWR Station WXX-79 located north of Lubbock.

NWR station WNG-657 will be located on the KNNK radio tower in Summerfield, which is located in extreme northwestern Castro County, and will broadcast on a frequency of 162.500 Mhz. NWR station WNG-561 will be located on a Titus Towers owned radio tower in Plainview and will broadcast on 162.525 Mhz. These two 1000-watt transmitters will have effective listening ranges of up to 40 miles and will dramatically improve the NWR coverage between Amarillo, Lubbock, and Clovis, NM. Hereford, Friona, Dimmitt, and Muleshoe will be in listening range of the Summerfield transmitter and Floydada and Tulia will be in listening range of the Plainview site.

Similar to the Lubbock broadcast, the new transmitters will take advantage of the latest technology available to automate "The Voice of the National Weather Service". This automation allows us to quickly move critical weather information from advanced workstations to the NWR transmitters and makes use of a computer-synthesized voice. The new technology eliminates many of the delays inherent in the older systems and thus allows us to broadcast our forecasts and warnings seconds after the products are issued.



## Coop – News



by Johnny Wallace, DAPM

During the past few months, we were fortunate to present Length of Service Awards to our Cooperative Observers at Floydada 9SE (25 years of service) and Jayton (40 years of service). Other awards will be presented to observers in Littlefield (25 years of service), Friona (15 years of service) and Brownfield (30 years of service) within the next few weeks. These and all of our other observers continue to do their neighbors and the rest of the country a great service each day of the year.

As all the Cooperative Observers know, over the past few months the NWS has made a new reporting system (IVROCS) available for use in order for them to phone in their daily reports. The new system is a work in progress and has experienced some problems. Please know these problems are being looked into and corrections are coming. There is also talk about shortening the reporting time needed with newer software improvements that will come in the near future. Please bear with us during this time of improvement. From the staff at WFO Lubbock and the rest of the National Weather Service, thanks for your service and have a happy holiday season.

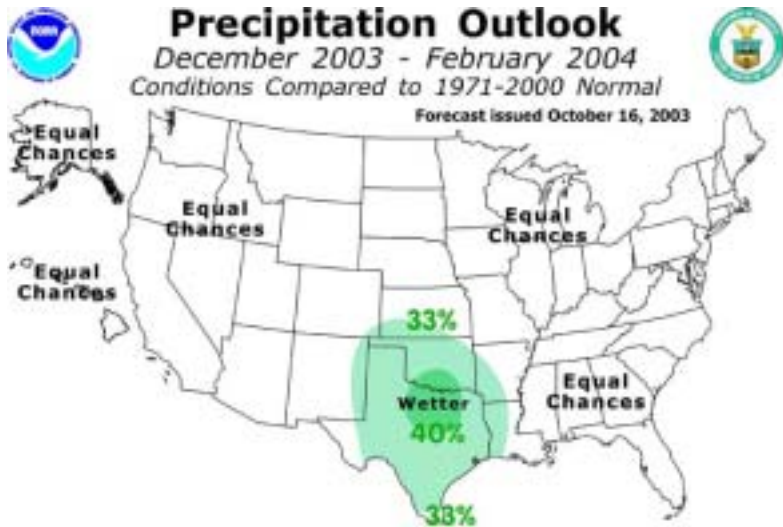


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**In This Issue...**

Persistent Drought, Winter Weather Awareness Day, Coop News, Weather Radio Expands, SKYWARN Recognition Day and more....



Ocean temperatures in the tropical, eastern Pacific are warmer than long-term averages, and may even reach the level of a weak El Niño by late November. Even if these conditions do develop, little impact is expected on the United States from El Niño this winter. Without the influence of a strong El Niño, there is more uncertainty in the long-term forecast. This winter is expected to bring its typical weather variability.

During periods when a dominant El Niño is not present, scientists rely on historical trends of temperature and precipitation averages as well as dynamical and statistical models to make long-term projections. The latest projections of temperature and precipitation are shown. These long-term forecasts indicate that there is a slightly higher probability for the Southern Plains to receive a warmer and wetter than normal winter than normal or below normal average temperatures and precipitation this winter.

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