

THE NATIONAL CLIMATE EXTREMES COMMITTEE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the National Climate Extremes Committee (NCEC) is to assess the scientific merit of extreme meteorological/climatological events and provide a recommendation to NOAA management regarding the validity of the measurement. The NCEC will also act to disseminate NOAA's recommendation of the event and coordinate any media inquiries with the NWS Public Affairs Office. The NCEC was established in 1997 following an investigation into a possible 24-hour snowfall record at Montague, New York.

2. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Committee will be chaired by a representative from the National Climatic Data Center and composed of additional representatives from the National Weather Service's Office of Meteorology and the American Association of State Climatologists (AASC). The AASC member will be the current president of the organization. Discussions on the role of the Committee and its interaction with the state climatologist community will be conducted at the annual meeting of the AASC.

3. PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The Federal Committee's mandate is restricted to national extreme values of the elements listed in the attachment. This attachment provides previously accepted national extremes through 1997, along with the location and date of each occurrence. The Committee's mandate does not include the reevaluation of the existing extreme values listed. This list may be expanded as additional element extremes, such as greatest monthly rainfall/snowfall are developed. Some elements, such as hail size and short-duration

rain rates, are frequently reported in the media. Because they are anecdotal and non objective in nature, the Committee will not be responsible for validating reports of this nature.

Extreme values which are not national in magnitude will be validated using current procedures. Local daily/monthly/annual records at National Weather Service (NWS), Federal Aviation Administration and possibly military sites, will be the responsibility of on-site personnel. State records for most listed elements are maintained at the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) and new records will be validated via communication between NCDC, NWS and the state climatologist for the state in question. If the state does not have an active state climatologist program, coordination will be with the Director of the Regional Climate Center (RCC) covering the state. NCDC will update the list of state records with any reports validated through this procedure.

If, in the judgement of the NWS, a national extreme value warrants investigation, the NWS will assemble a team with the geographical and technical expertise required to determine the accuracy of the reported extreme.

For national extremes reported from NWS sites, the measurement will be examined for compliance with established NWS guidelines and specifications. Specifically, the investigating team will assess observational procedures instrument exposure and operation, along with reporting equipment maintenance and calibration. At a minimum, the investigating team will be composed of personnel from the site in question (for WSO sites) or the NWS Cooperative

Program Manager for cooperative sites, instrument and observational procedures specialists from NWS headquarters, and the state climatologist, or if necessary, a representative from the RCC covering the state in question. Additionally, the state climatologist or RCC representative from the state with the current national record will also be invited to participate as a member of the investigating team.

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