



# **SOUTHWEST WEATHER BULLETIN**

Autumn-Winter 2008-2009 Edition

National Weather Service El Paso/Santa Teresa

## **Monsoon Season Brings Severe Thunderstorms and Floods**

Near record drought conditions which began during the late winter continue through the spring across southern New Mexico and western Texas before moist unstable air flows back into the region. As a result a severe thunderstorm outbreak occurs over the Tularosa vicinity in late May with large hail and high winds extensively damaging the area.

Hot mostly dry conditions develop again in June but southeast winds push very humid air into the Borderland for the remainder of the summer with upper level disturbances and the remnants of Hurricane Dolly moving across the region. This ongoing weather pattern generates scattered to numerous showers and thunderstorms which produce flooding, heavy rains, hail and wind damage beginning in late June and continuing through July and August.

### **Seasonal Weather Highlights**

May 16: El Paso receives its first measurable rainfall since February 15 temporarily ending a prolonged dry spell.

May 20: Hot day across southern New Mexico and western Texas including El Paso which ties a record by reaching 100 degrees.



Severe thunderstorms with wind gusts near 80 mph destroy this trailer at Tularosa NM on May 28, 2008. (Joan Price Alamogordo Daily News)

May 21: Hot, windy and dusty across the Borderland. High temperatures reach 95 to 100 over the deserts with wind gusts measured at 76 mph at El Paso damaging a home and some cars. Strong winds and blowing dust reduce visibilities to under a half mile in some areas including portions of Interstate 10 which is closed from Las Cruces to Deming and Lordsburg.

May 28: During the late afternoon a cluster of thunderstorms develop and move northward through Otero County causing major damage. The Tularosa area is hardest hit as 80 mph winds destroy a mobile home and flip over other mobile homes and a car. (Continued on page 2.)

**National Weather Service El Paso/Santa Teresa**

**Meteorologist-In-Charge - Bill Alexander**

**Warning Coordination Meteorologist – John Fausett**

**Science Officer – Val Macblain**

**Newsletter Editor-Writer/Senior Forecaster – Joe Rogash**



## Spring-Summer 2008 Weather Highlights

May 28 (continued): Winds also blow down utility poles causing prolonged power outages. Golf ball to baseball-sized hail combines with the strong winds to further damage at least 500 homes including breaking windows and damaging roofs. Golf ball-size hail also occurs around Alamogordo. In west Texas one inch-diameter hail falls at Dell City with heavy rains also bringing minor flooding to Hudspeth County.

June 2: El Paso hits 103 degrees to set a new record high temperature for the day.

June 20: Severe thunderstorms strike southwestern New Mexico during the afternoon with golf ball-sized hail reported over Sierra County across Interstate 10 near Monticello. In Grant County nickel-sized hail falls at Ft. Bayard and near Silver City. An inch of rain also falls in 30 minutes at Lake Roberts.

June 21: Another day of severe thunderstorms as wind gusts near 70 mph knock out power, topple large trees and cause the closure of Interstate 10 around Deming. Wind gusts are estimated at 80 mph at Columbus with winds around 60 mph also occurring at El Paso and Santa Teresa. An inch of rain falls in 30 minutes near Mimbres.

June 24: Thunderstorm winds gust to 55 mph around El Paso with a tree blown down at Santa Teresa.

June 25: Severe thunderstorm winds gust to near 60 mph at Deming.

June 26: High winds and blowing dust reduce visibilities to near zero around Deming forcing the closure of Highway 11.

June 27: Early evening severe thunderstorms bring penny-sized hail to Luna County south of Deming. High winds also blow down trees and power lines in the Deming vicinity.



May 28 severe thunderstorms bring large hail which damage homes around Tularosa. (Karen Reyes)



Dry late winter and spring conditions contributed to this wild fire over the Organ Mountains east of Las Cruces. (Chris Carney NOAA/NWS)





A large wild fire burns over the Organ Mountains east of Las Cruces around Dripping springs on June 14 2008. (Shari Vialpando Las Cruces Sun News)

June 28: Damaging thunderstorm winds destroy a marina at Elephant Butte Reservoir in Sierra County.

July 2: Thunderstorms drop nickel-sized hail and heavy rains over El Paso TX and La Union and Vado NM. Over an inch of rain falls in 15 minutes in a few areas causing street flooding.

July 8: Showers and thunderstorms deluge the El Paso area with 2 to 3 inches of rain falling over western and northeastern portions of the city. The rains flood homes and businesses with streets under water and water rescues required. An apartment complex is evacuated and water is up to 4 feet deep at Mesa Hills. In New Mexico heavy rains also fall over Dona Ana County.

July 9: Heavy rains and flooding pound southern New Mexico and western Texas once again. In Sierra County up to 3 inches of rain fall and a 7 foot wall of water gushes down Ash Canyon causing mudslides and washing out Highway 51. High waters also wash out a bridge and close Highway 195. In Dona Ana County heavy rains flood roads around Hatch and Luna. Flooding also occurs near Columbus. More heavy rains create problems for the El Paso metro area with the Rio Grande overflowing over west El Paso and Sunland Park NM. In the Sacramento Mountains 6 inches of rain fall near Weed flooding a ranch.



Storm clouds near Las Cruces on July 7. (Chris Carney NWS/NOAA)



Rainbow near west El Paso on July 8. (Diane Green NOAA/NWS)



Heavy rains on July 10 flood portions of Luna County near Deming. (Matt Robinson/ Deming Headlight)

## 2008 Summer Monsoon Brings Widespread Flooding and Severe Thunderstorms

July 10: Heavy rains fall over Luna County including the Columbus area where Highway 9 is flooded. Highway 51 is also flooded between Deming and Hatch. In Sierra County mudslides close a bridge across Highway 51.

July 12: Torrential rains move across Luna County with flooding closing numerous roads around Deming. Further east in El Paso County flooding occurs in the Fabens and Tornillo vicinities with sandbags required.

July 13: Almost 2 inches of rain fall west of Silver City flooding Red Rock Road. Heavy rains also fall around Las Cruces.

July 16: Thunderstorm winds gust to almost 70 mph near Dell City TX.

July 17: Heavy rains cause mudslides over Highway 82 near Cloudcroft with roads also under water around Mescalero. Severe thunderstorms also drop penny-size hail over northeast El Paso.

July 18: Thunderstorms bring more heavy rains to Luna County flooding numerous roads. Wind gusts near 75 mph blow down utility poles and phone lines around Deming.

July 19: Over an inch of rain falls in 20 minutes over El Paso with portions of a road washed away.



Funnel cloud near Las Cruces on July 13. (Jeff Passner)

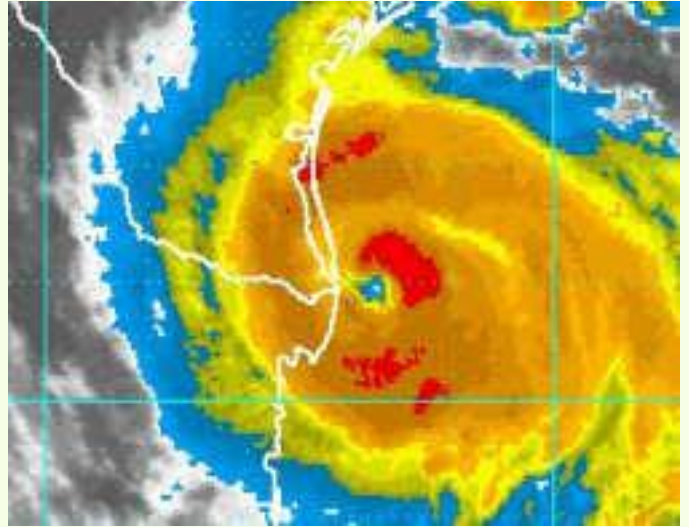


Heavy rains in July force the Rio Grande to overflow over west El Paso. (Joe Rogash NWS/NOAA)



# Hurricane Dolly Floods the Borderland

During the July 26-27 period the well-defined remnants of Hurricane Dolly move across western Texas and southern New Mexico with the center of the storm tracking through the city of El Paso. Portions of Santa Teresa, west El Paso and surrounding locations receive 3 to 5 inches of rain with the high waters flooding numerous homes and making some roads impassable. Elsewhere in Dona Ana County a flash flood is reported at Chaparral while rains flood homes in the town of Dona Ana. Flooding is also reported around Ft. Hancock in Hudspeth County TX.



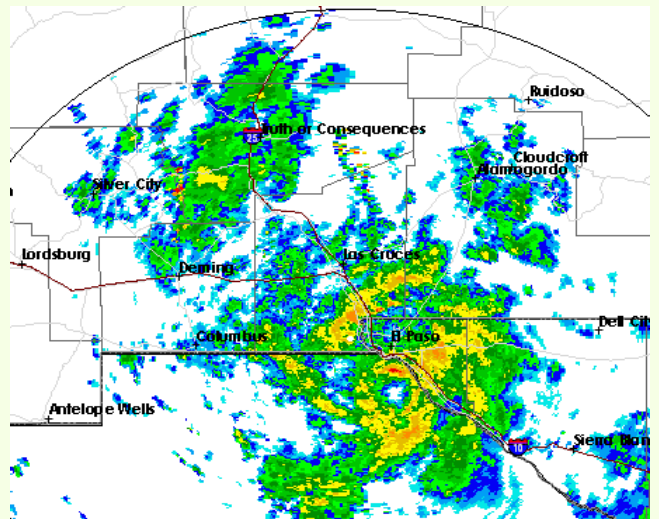
Hurricane Dolly moves inland into southern Texas coastal area.



Dolly then moves to the north bringing more heavy rains to the Sacramento Mountain area. Ruidoso receives over 6 inches of rain which drown one person as rivers and creeks overflow and bring extensive and destructive flooding to the town. Around Mescalero numerous roads and several buildings flood as two dams fail at Mud Canyon. Further west heavy rains and high waters close streets over Grant County around Silver City and northern Sierra County near Monticello.



Heavy rains from Hurricane Dolly flood portions of west El Paso. (Joe Rogash NWS/NOAA)



Weather radar image showing the rain bands and circulation center of Hurricane Dolly as it rotates over the El Paso TX vicinity.



Remnants of Hurricane Dolly bring extensive flooding to Ruidoso NM.  
(Mike Curran Ruidoso News)



Funnel cloud near Las Cruces associated with rain band from Hurricane Dolly. (Jesse Christofano)



Small tornado touches down near Las Cruces on July 30. (David Truby)

July 29: Almost 3 inches of rain fall near Lordsburg.

July 31: Thunderstorms drop penny-size hail near Mimbres with wind gusts near 60 mph blowing down trees over Las Cruces and around Hillsboro.

August 5: Almost 3 inches of rain fall at lake Roberts and floods Highway 35.

August 8: 2.2 inches of rain fall in an hour near Silver City.

August 10: Late afternoon thunderstorms drop heavy rains and dime-size hail at Santa Clara NM with flooding closing area roads. Penny-size hail also falls at White Sands Monument.

August 12: Severe thunderstorms produce wind gusts of almost 70 mph at White Sands Missile Range along with 60 mph gusts over El Paso. Two inches of hail meanwhile accumulate near Deming.



August 15: Thunderstorms drop penny-size hail and heavy rains around Mimbres.

August 19: Over 2 inches of rain fall at Kingston NM.

August 20: Severe thunderstorms with heavy rains strike much of the area. In the afternoon golf ball-size hail falls near Winston NM and 2 inches of rain fall near Silver City causing street flooding. Heavy rains also flood the Mimbres area with a water rescue required. During the evening golf ball-size hail pounds El Paso and thunderstorm winds blow the roof off of a house at Horizon City.

August 31: Thunderstorms with heavy rains move across New Mexico. In Sierra County the rains flood homes around Las Palomas forcing evacuations. Highway 187 is flooded near Arrey with Highway 27 under water close to Hillsboro. In Grant County Santa Clara Creek overflows and floods portions of Santa Clara.

September 14: Evening thunderstorms cause flash flooding over portions of Horizon City TX with one home flooded.



Lightning over El Paso on August 3. (Mike Hardiman NWS/NOAA)



Strong thunderstorms strike the Las Cruces area on September 7. (Jeff Passner)

### **Spotters...Please call the National Weather Service If You Observe:**

**Tornado or Funnel Cloud...Report Time, Location and Movement**

**Hail...1/2 Inch or Larger**

**Damaging Winds...Damage To Buildings, Motor Vehicles, Trees, Power Lines And Other Structures**

**Flash Flooding...Flooding Of Streets and Buildings , Or If Rivers, Streams And Arroyos Flood Or Overflow**

**Heavy Rains...1/2 Inch of Rain In Less Than 30 Minutes Or At Least 1 Inch Of Rain In Less Than 2 Hours**

**Blowing Dust...Whenever Blowing Dust Reduces The Visibility To Less Than 2 Miles.**

**Snow Amounts Greater Than An Inch**