

Seasonal Weather Summary for Northeast Montana Spring 2008

The month of March was drier than normal and no large scale precipitation events occurred. The wettest location was Hinsdale 4 SW with 0.97 inches, and the driest locations were Mildred 5 N and Terry with 0.04 inches. Snowfall was overall light for the month of March, and very sporadic, as just a few compact storm systems affected northeast Montana. The first occurred on the 5th and 6th when Zortman received 4.5 inches of snow and Brussett and Malta 35 S both received 4.0 inches of snow. The second event occurred on the 27th with Jordan 43 ENE receiving 5.0 inches of snow. The third occurred on the 29th when a narrow band of accumulating snow fell from Zortman through Culberston. The highest total in that event was 7.5 inches at Zortman.

The month of March as a whole averaged warmer than normal. There were only two brief periods of cold arctic air. The first occurred from the 5th through the morning of the 7th. Many locations had morning low temperatures below zero on the 6th and 7th. The second occurred from the 29th through the 31st.

The most notable storm system of March was a high wind event on the 24th. All of northeastern Montana either had sustained wind speeds of greater than 40 mph for several hours, and/or gusts in excess of 60 mph. This also led to two very large fires in central Roosevelt and northern McCone Counties. The McCone County fire had several outbuildings and other structural damage to fences and power poles. Glasgow reported a record wind gust of 62 mph for the month of March.

April was generally drier than normal. However, there were a few areas that were wetter than normal due to showery rain and snow. A strong storm system tracked through central Montana on the 20th. Although most of the heavy precipitation was across north-central Montana, a band of light snow did affect northeast Montana, and in many cases, this was the only accumulating snow for the month. The wettest location was Raymond with 1.02 inches of precipitation, followed by Hinsdale 4 SW with 0.94 inches, and Brussett with 0.89 inches. The driest locations were Plentywood and Wolf Point with only a trace, which were followed by Fort Peck and Flatwillow 4 ENE with 0.7 and 0.9 inches of precipitation.

The month of April averaged cooler than normal. Overall many days were near normal. However, a stretch of well below normal temperatures occurred from the 20th to the 26th. On the morning of the 21st, Glasgow recorded a record low temperature of 12 degrees, and Flatwillow 4 ENE recorded a record low temperature of 3 degrees.

The month of May was very wet across most of northeast Montana, although the area along the North Dakota border did not see the amounts that other areas had. There were three primary rain and snow events throughout the month. The first occurred on May 1st as a strong low pressure system produced heavy rain and some significant snowfall at higher elevations in northeastern Montana. Several calf losses were reported

during this event. Glasgow received a record amount of precipitation on May 1st with 1.72 inches. This included 1.8 inches of snow. Also Hinsdale 4 SW, in the Larb Hills received 11.0 inches of snow. An upper level storm system produced several tenths of an inch of rain from the 7th to the 10th. The days leading up to the Memorial Day weekend from the 21st to the 25th were impacted by a deep upper level storm system that brought another significant amount of moisture to portions of northeast Montana. The heaviest rain fell across Garfield, Petroleum, and southern Phillips Counties where several inches of precipitation fell over a five day period. The highest peaks of the Little Rocky Mountains had a foot of snow on the 25th and flooding was reported throughout that area as well as in Petroleum County. Overall during that event, Petroleum and southern Phillips Counties saw from three to eight inches of precipitation. As previously mentioned, most, but not all of northeast Montana received above normal precipitation for the month of May. Areas from Northern Phillips County east to Sheridan County and south to Richland County were near to below normal for the month. Therefore...an extensive spring rainfall deficit continued in those areas. The highest precipitation total for the month was Zortman with 9.07 inches followed by Winnett 6 NNE with 7.15 inches, Grassrange 13 NE with 6.89 inches, Flatwillow 4 ENE with 6.75 inches, and Winnett 12 SW with 5.71 inches. The lowest precipitation totals for the month were at Homestead 5 SE with 0.85 inches, followed by Raymond with 0.93 inches, Opheim 10 N with 0.94 inches, Medicine Lake 3 SE with 1.12 inches, and Culbertson with 1.16 inches.

Temperatures during the month of May were below normal for the second month in a row. There was no significantly colder than average events during the month. However, there were many cool days as a result of cloud cover and rain. The warmest temperatures of the month came on the 18th when many locations warmed well into the 80s and low 90s.