Narrative Summary – December 2011

The average temperature for December 2011 was slightly cooler than normal, averaging 30.7°F, 0.4° below normal (31.1°F). The warmest December (1957) averaged 38.5°F, while the coldest (1985) averaged 21.0°F. The following temperature records were established during December 2011:

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                           New      Old
Date            Category   Record   Record    Year
  28         High Maximum    59       59      1998 (Tie)
  28         High Minimum    48       46      1998
  29         High Minimum    41       41      1998 (Tie)
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Precipitation for December 2011 totaled 0.10 inches, 8% of normal (1.20 inches). The wettest December (1996) received 3.69 inches, and the driest (1999) received 0.07 inch. Snowfall for December totaled 0.3 inches, compared to a normal of 5.9 inches. The snowiest December on record (1996) received 22.6 inches.

The average wind speed for December 2011 was 5.1 miles per hour (mph), which was 0.8 mph below normal (5.9 mph). The windiest December on record (1968) averaged 8.3 mph, while the December with the lightest winds (1985) averaged 3.3 mph. The peak gust for December 2011 was 48 mph on December 29.

Calendar year 2011 averaged 52.2°F, which was below normal (53.9°F). The warmest years (1992 and 1998) averaged 56.4°F, while the coolest year (1985) averaged 49.6°F. The hottest temperature during 2011 was 100°F on August 27th, 28th, September 11th, and 12th. The coldest temperature was 2°F on February 26. Precipitation for 2011 totaled 4.45 inches, 62% of normal (7.14 inches). This makes 2011 the seventh driest year on record. The wettest year (1995) received 12.31 inches, while the driest (1976) received 2.99 inches.

The monthly climatological data summaries, as well as other information, are available on the Internet. Address: http://www.hanford.gov/hms

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Note: The data in this summary pertains specifically to the Hanford Meteorology Station (HMS), which is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Richland, WA. No attempt should be made to infer meteorological conditions at other locations from these data.