

SAGE WINDS

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

BOISE, IDAHO

<http://www.weather.gov/boise>

FEBRUARY 2011



SERVING NWS WEATHER SPOTTERS, CO-OP OBSERVERS & COCORAS OBSERVERS

SAGE WINDS

Local Flooding— January 17th

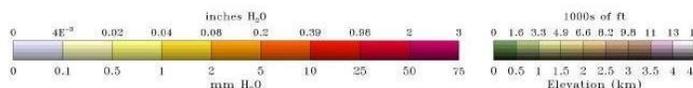
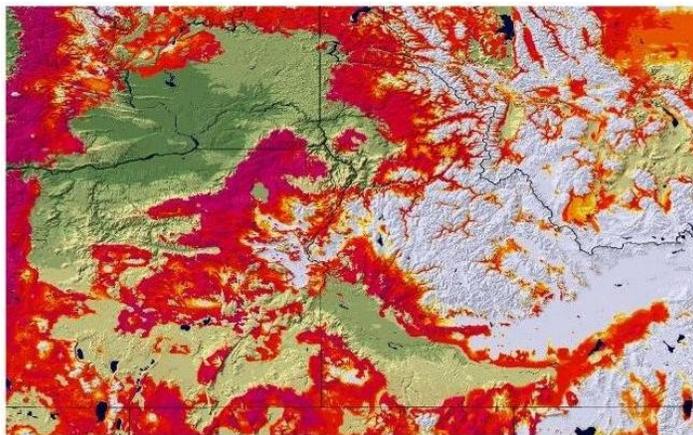
With a strong ridge of high pressure parked over the northeastern Pacific, northwesterly flow aloft (on the eastern edge of this system) allowed Pacific moisture to stream into southeast Oregon and southwest Idaho the weekend of January 15th and 16th.

Weekend temperatures were well above January “normals” in this pattern, with highs in the upper 30s to lower 50s. This made for widespread rain, even in mountain locations such as McCall. Total precipitation (liquid) ranged from 0.25 to 1 inch in the valleys to between 0.5 and 3 inches in the mountains.

Boise forecasters did a great job pinpointing the incoming precipitation, but the effects of the impending “rain on snow” were more difficult to gauge. Ultimately, deep low-density snowpacks at high elevations were able to absorb a large portion of the rain (a “ripening” of the snowpack) and impacts were localized.

Across lower elevations, however, effects were more pronounced as shallower snow depths were “overwhelmed” by the onslaught of rain— leading to large amounts of snowmelt and increased total runoff.

By early Monday morning, area rivers had begun to respond and local impacts included:



24 Hour Snow Melt (inches H₂O), ending 10 pm on January 16, 2011.

Image courtesy of [NOHRSC](http://www.nohrsc.com).

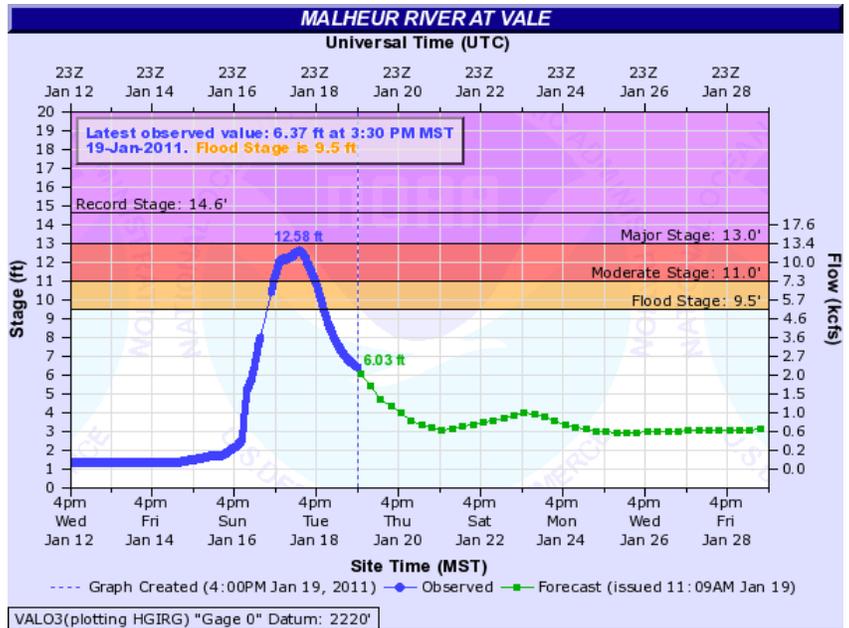
- Flooding on the Powder River near Baker City, OR.
- Flooding of Canyon Creek in Glenn’s Ferry, ID.

CONT’D...

Flooding Continued...

- Localized flooding and reports of rockslides/mudslides in the West Central & Boise Mountains.
- Flooding along the Malheur River near both Vale and Ontario, OR.

As seen in the hydrograph on the right, the Malheur River at Vale crested at 12.58 ft (~3 ft above flood stage) on the afternoon of January 18th. >>>



Spotter Reports – December 28th & 29th

OREGON	IDAHO
Halfway—30"	Council—24"
Burns—24"	Fruitvale—26"
	Glendale—26"
	Crouch—28"
	Placerville—23"
	Idaho City—36"
	Centerville—18"

It may feel like a distant memory now, but it wasn't long ago that we were being pummeled with snow instead of rain. A strong winter storm struck the area on December 28th & 29th, spreading several *feet* of snow across southeast Oregon and higher terrain of southwest Idaho.

Your snow observations provide critical information, which help us issue more accurate forecasts and higher quality Warnings. From all of us at WFO-BOI, thank you for your timely reports and observations!

<<< A sampling of storm totals from the December 28th & 29th storm. (Some of you may recognize these values!)

Weather In The News

["Midwest, Plains Brace for Massive Winter Storm" \(AP via USA TODAY\)](#)

["Life-Threatening Blizzard On Its Way To Chicago Area \(Chicago Sun Times\)](#)

["Swamped Australia Braces for Monster Cyclone" \(AFP via Yahoo News\)](#)

["Study Closes Hole In the 'Hole-Punch' Cloud Theory" \(USA TODAY\)](#)



Letter From The Editor: Happy Groundhog Day!

Quick Facts

Everyone's favorite forecaster, Punxsutawney Phil, will be put to work this week on his annual "short-range climate forecast". Will he see his shadow and return to his burrow...promising six more weeks of winter? Or will he meet cloudy skies and no shadow...giving us hope for an "early" spring?

This national pastime (of relying on groundhogs for climate forecasts) has blurry origins. Supposedly it stems from a German ritual associated with the religious holiday Candlemas, also celebrated on February 2nd. It was 18th century German immigrants in Pennsylvania who brought this ritual to the United States, explaining the popularity of Groundhog Day celebrations in Pennsylvania today. As we all know, the largest and most famous of these celebrations is held in Punxsutawney, PA, where Phil the Groundhog is both a national celebrity and a movie star.

Now that Groundhog Day 2011 is upon us, I must extend my best wishes to my fellow forecaster. Good luck Phil! May your forecast (whatever it may be) verify.

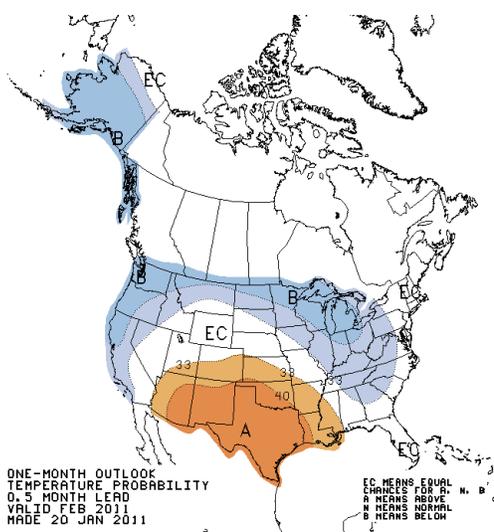
-Megan

- If the groundhog sees his shadow - we can expect six more weeks of winter.
- If the groundhog doesn't see his shadow - spring is just around the corner.
- You can compare Phil's forecast to the Climate Prediction Center's at: <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

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February Outlook

<< Temperature Outlook

Precipitation >> Outlook

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

