



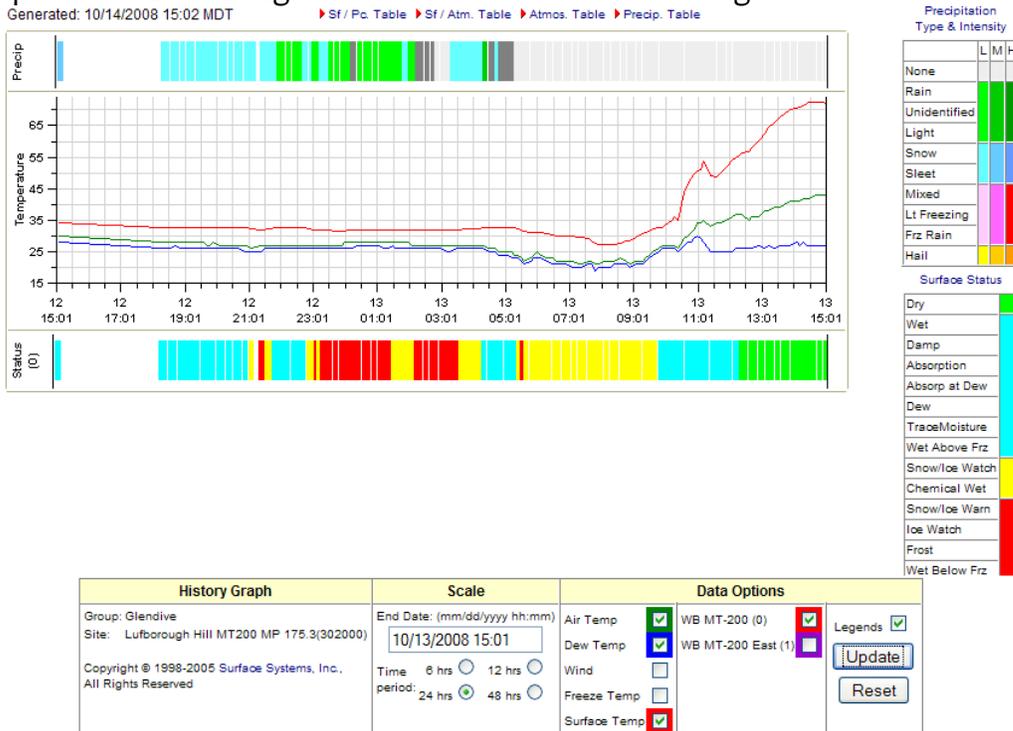
Under the Big Sky E-Letter October 24, 2008

We had our first big winter storm of the year from Oct 10-13th, and the photo above shows some of the tree damage in Fort Peck. Overall, throughout northeast Montana we had 5 to 18 inches of snow reported, with the highest amounts along the Big Sheep Mountains and the Larb Hills. The snowfall was a record breaking one:

Record 24 hour snowfall in Glasgow: On Oct 12th, we measured 12.8 inches of snow, breaking the old record of 11.5" on Oct 12 1924.

Monthly snowfall record at Glasgow: 13.6" of snow for the month of October 2008, with the old record being 11.5" in 1924.

State of Montana Road Weather Information System: The MDT RWIS website has some great information to check out if you are planning on traveling across the state. The website: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/weather/rwis.shtml> has a link to all the road weather observations they have, as well as the web cameras that MDT has out there. We use them quite a bit here at our office to see if there is fog, rain, snow etc. Here is an example of the Lufborough Hill weather observations during our recent snow event:



The top bar shows the precipitation that is falling, so it has snow/sleet and rain identified. The temperature graph shows the air temperature (green line), the dewpoint (blue line) and the red line (road surface temperature). The surface temperature of the road is important in knowing whether ice is forming or not. The bottom bar shows the status of the road surface, and you can see it starts with blues (wet) and then there is some red (snow/ice warning) and yellow (snow/ice watch, chemical wet). So, during the next precipitation event, take a minute or two and check out the latest conditions of the roads in your area.

Winter Weather Preparedness at Home: Last time we covered preparedness on the road, so this time we'll look at being ready at home. Having the following items in a quick and easy to access location is important in case you have extended power outages.

Home Disaster Supply Kit for Winter Storm

- A warm coat, gloves or mittens, hat, and water-resistant boots for each member of the family
- Extra blankets and extra warm clothing
- Non-clumping kitty litter for generating traction, and ice melting products for walkways
- A portable, battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Older style phone that doesn't require electricity to work
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Supply of prescription medications
- Credit card and cash
- Personal identification
- An extra set of car keys
- Matches in a waterproof container

- Signal flare
- Map of the area and phone numbers of places you could go for shelter
- Special needs (e.g. diapers or formula, prescriptions, hearing aid batteries, spare eyeglasses, etc.)
- A week's supply of food (select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking and little or no water)
- Hand held can opener in case you lose power
- At least a three-day supply of water (minimum of three gallons per person each day)
- Wrench to turn off household gas and water
- Emergency Generators. For information on how to safely install a standby generator, please read this brochure provided by the State of Montana Department of Disaster and Emergency Services.
<http://dma.mt.gov/des/library/genbrochurev3.pdf>





A home in Glasgow, Winter of 2003-2004

Getting your home ready for winter!

Make sure your home is properly insulated. If necessary, insulate walls and attic. This will help you to conserve electricity and reduce your home's power demands for heat. Caulk and weather strip doors and windowsills to keep cold air out, allowing the inside temperature to stay warmer longer.

Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside. This will provide an extra layer of insulation, keeping more cold air out.

To keep pipes from freezing:

Wrap pipes in insulation or layers of old newspapers. Cover the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture. Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing. Know how to shut off water valves.

If the pipes freeze, remove any insulation or layers of newspaper and wrap pipes in rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold. A hand-help hair dryer, used with caution to prevent overheating, also works.

Consider storing sufficient heating fuel. Regular fuel sources may be cut off. Be cautious of fire hazards when storing any type of fuel.

Install and check smoke alarms prior to the winter season. Make sure the batteries are new.

Consider keeping safe emergency heating equipment.

- Fireplace with ample supply of wood.
- Small, well-vented wood, coal, or camp stove with fuel.
- Portable space heater.

When using alternative heat from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater, use fire safeguards and ventilate properly. Fire hazard is greatly increased in the winter because alternate heating sources are used without proper safety precautions.

Install snow fences in rural areas to reduce drifting in roads and paths, which could block access to buildings.

NWS Glasgow happenings:

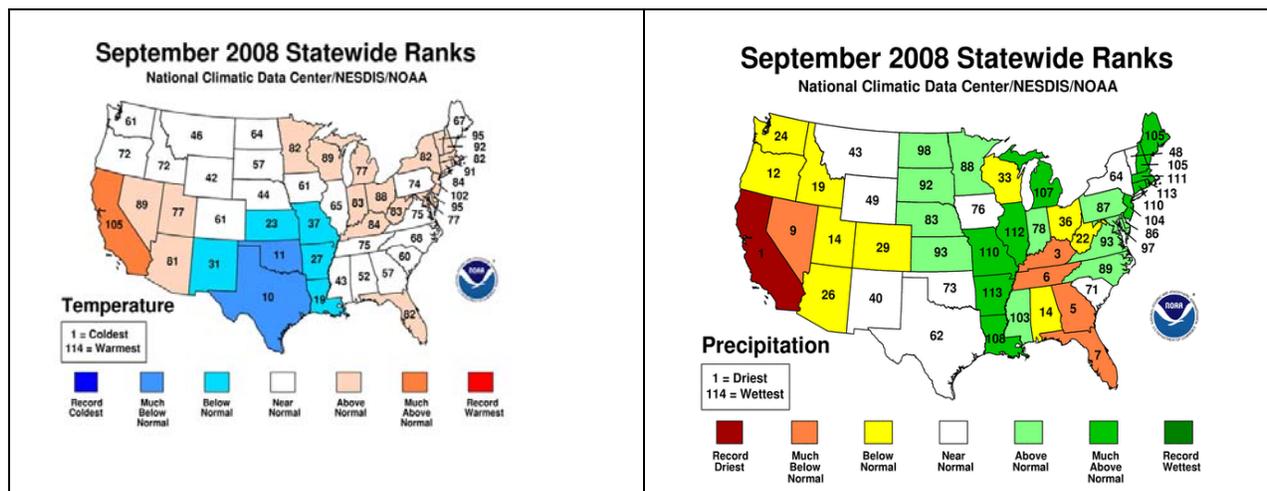
Our Science and Operations Office Bill Martin will be in Glendive on Tuesday for the Montana Dept of Ag's "Agricultural Plant Pesticide" course. He'll discuss the role of weather in spraying crops, and how inversions and topography affect the wind. I recently gave the "Go Green" presentation from this summer to the folks at the Prairie Ridge Assisted Living Facility. Everyone who attended, and brought an old incandescent light bulb was given a new CFL lightbulb to replace their old one. I also held a CoCoRaHS online training course, which was a good refresher for some, and allowed for us to recruit a new observer in Saco.

NOAA happenings:

An annual report on the Arctic by NOAA shows that global warming impacts continue to affect the area. You can read the summary of the report at: http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20081016_arcticreport.html To see the actual report, go to: <http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/reportcard/index.html>

The September climate summary for the United States is available. Looking at the graphics below, you can see it was fairly cold in the south-central US, and the 10th warmest in California. It did turn out to be the driest month on record for California, with a fairly wet Atlantic and Mississippi region.

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20081010_septranks.html

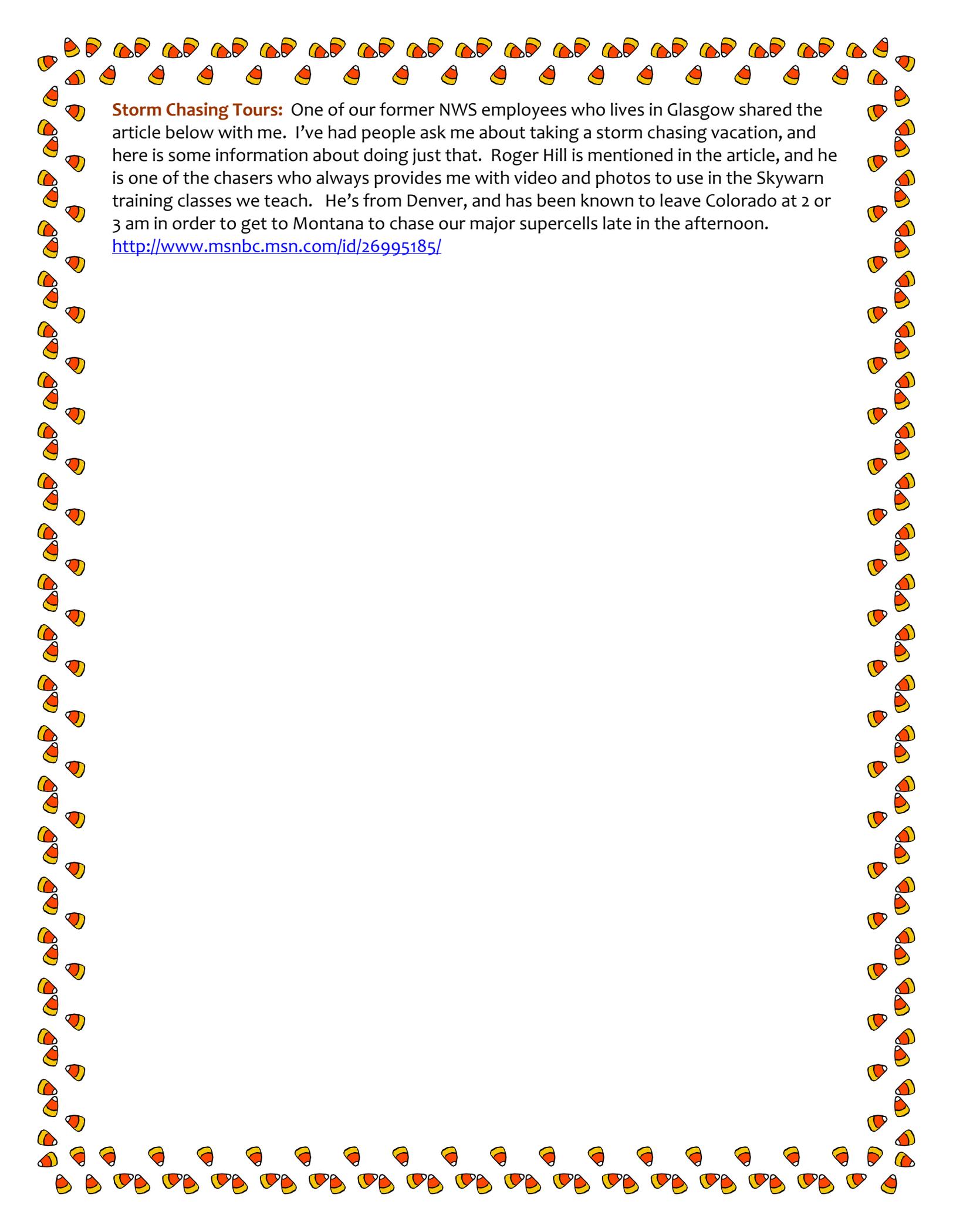


Miscellaneous items of interest:

Fallin' Back: This upcoming weekend, Daylight Savings Time will end on Sunday at 2:00 am local time. We will then return to Standard Time. Please remember to set your clocks back one hour.

Glacial Ice animation: A colleague of mine sent this cool interactive website that shows a timeline of recent ice ages. You can click on the green arrows on the bar on the right side of the screen to see the extent of glacial ice over North America.

<http://www.glaciers.pdx.edu/Projects/LearnAboutGlaciers/ROMO/BasicIceAges.swf>

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Storm Chasing Tours: One of our former NWS employees who lives in Glasgow shared the article below with me. I've had people ask me about taking a storm chasing vacation, and here is some information about doing just that. Roger Hill is mentioned in the article, and he is one of the chasers who always provides me with video and photos to use in the Skywarn training classes we teach. He's from Denver, and has been known to leave Colorado at 2 or 3 am in order to get to Montana to chase our major supercells late in the afternoon.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26995185/>