



Under the Big Sky

Feb 3, 2009

Groundhog's Day: By now I'm sure you've heard that Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, and we have another 6 weeks of winter. Given the fact that we have a La Nina event occurring (colder than normal equatorial Pacific temperatures), that wasn't a surprise to many meteorologists. Some interesting Punxsutawney Phil facts that come from his website: <http://www.groundhog.org/>

According to WeatherBug: Phil has made 122 prognostications (through 1997), and seen his shadow 96 times, and not seen his shadow 15 times. For some reason or another, he has 9 years where he didn't make an appearance, mainly in the late 1880s and 1890s.

Lenticular clouds: Some really nice photos have come across my email recently, especially those showing lenticular clouds over Mt. Rainier. Lenticular clouds are formed when moist air flows over mountainous regions and it creates a wave. The result is seeing the lens shaped cloud over the top of the mountain. Those waves also exist with drier air, you just can't see a cloud then.

<http://brainstuff.howstuffworks.com/2009/01/06/how-lenticular-clouds-work/>
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/newzealand/4315307/Swirling-cloud-captured-above-New-Zealand--The-Land-of-the-Long-White-Cloud.html>

To see more beautiful images of this cloud, just do a google image search on the words, "Lenticular Clouds"

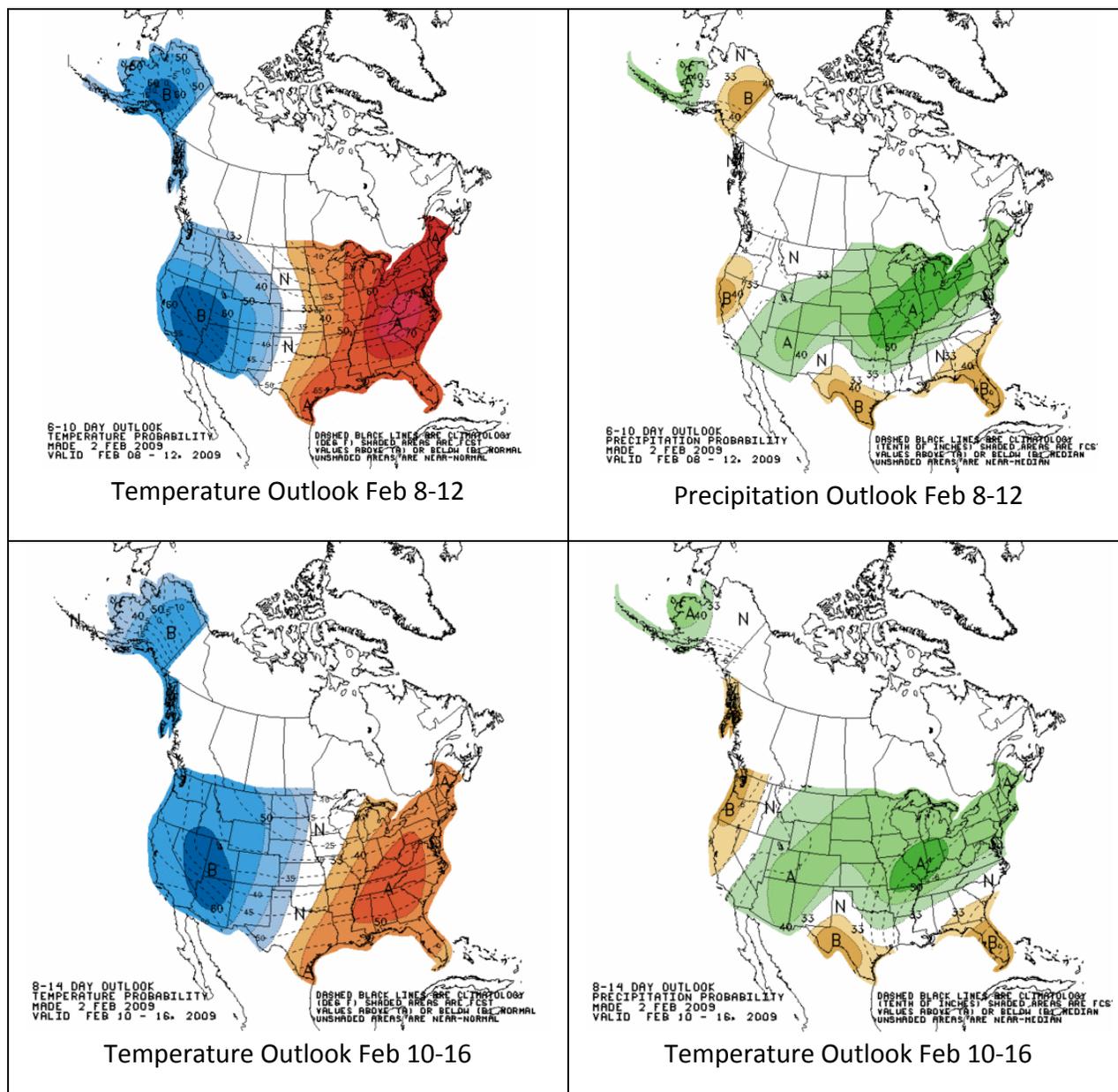


Lenticular Cloud over Mt. Rainier from National Geographic

Recent Research on Climate Change: The Washington Post recently ran an article discussing the latest research on climate change, and the news isn't good. According to scientist Susan Solomon (from NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory), "...you have to think about this stuff as more like nuclear waste than acid rain: The more we add, the worse off we'll be," NOAA senior scientist Susan Solomon told reporters in a conference call. "The more time that we take to make decisions about carbon dioxide, the more irreversible climate change we'll be locked into." To read the article, go to:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/26/AR2009012602037.html?referrer=emailarticle>

Weather Outlook: the 6-10 day outlook (Feb 8-12) and the 8-10 day outlook (Feb 10-16) are shown below:



Yearly Climate Summary for northeast Montana: Our climate focal point, Don Simonsen recently completed the yearly climate summary for northeast Montana. If you'd like to read about the highlights for 2008, please go to:

http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/ggw/wx_summaries/Yearly_2008.pdf

Research Channel on Satellite: I was able to watch on our satellite an interesting presentation on Hurricane Katrina, given by former National Hurricane Center Director Max Mayfield at the 2008 American Meteorological Society Conference in New Orleans. The Research Channel occasionally offers 30 minute programming under the name American Meteor Soc. It's not the Meteor Society, but the Meteorological Society. They have had several programs that discuss major weather events, and climate and climate variability. To see their program guide online, go to: <http://www.researchchannel.org/prog/> You can do a site search of "American Meteorological Society" to see the weather and climate related programs.

Yellowstone Earthquakes: There has been quite a bit of seismic activity in Yellowstone Park in the last month, with over 800 quakes from Dec 16th through Jan 8th. The Billings Gazette has an article out today on it:

<http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2009/02/03/news/wyoming/25-quakes.txt>



Volcanic Eruption possible in Alaska, Mt.

Redoubt: Mt. Redoubt is showing some activity in the past two weeks. It's not too far from Anchorage, and there's been a lot of people there keeping a close eye on it. There is a webcam, but with only a few hours of daylight, you can only see it for a few hours each day:

<http://volcanoes.usgs.gov/avo/webcam/redoubt.jpg>

More information is available at:

<http://www.avo.alaska.edu/>

NWS Glasgow News:

Hydrology Review: We recently had former Meteorologist in Charge Jim Rea give the office staff a hydrology review of this area. Many of our newer staff members were able to attend. Jim has always had a strong interest in hydrology, and when he spun up this office into a forecast office, he had the staff in the mid 1990's spend a lot of time researching past hydrological events, surveying past floods and pulling together the information that now shows up in the impact statements on the AHPS pages. You can keep up with current river levels in the area by going to: <http://ahps2.wrh.noaa.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=ggw>

Lewistown BLM Fire Crew visits the office: We were happy to give six members of the Lewistown BLM fire office a tour of our office last week. They spent about an hour and a half with us, seeing our operations area, asking weather questions of the forecasters, and seeing the weather balloon release. We were able to show them what happens on our end when they submit a spot forecast request for one of their wildfires or prescribed burns.

Glasgow Science Fair: Several NWS Glasgow staff members and their spouses will be helping judge the science fair in Glasgow this upcoming weekend. There are several northeast Montana schools participating in the science fair this year, and we wish all the participants best of luck, and we hope you had fun doing your projects!

US and Global Weather Headlines in the last two weeks:

Snow causes chaos in Britain: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28972533/>

Drought forces Mexico City to limit water: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28967672/>

Record heat scorches Australia: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28931926/>

Storm Danger? Cowboy Arrested for Drunk Riding: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28918466/>

California facing worst drought in modern History: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28896638/>

http://www.usatoday.com/weather/drought/2009-01-30-california-drought_N.htm?csp=34

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28948970/>

Avalanche Deaths in the headlines this winter:

http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/ski/2009-02-02-avalanche_N.htm?csp=34

Rhode Island Cities out of money for snow removal:

http://www.usatoday.com/weather/news/2009-02-03-rhode-island-snow-removal_N.htm?csp=34

Deadly Ice Storm – 1 million without power and Disaster Declarations:

http://www.usatoday.com/weather/storms/winter/2009-01-31-ice-storm_N.htm?csp=34

http://www.usatoday.com/weather/storms/winter/2009-02-02-ice-storm-recovery_N.htm?csp=34



Ben Franklin jump starts his car.