

Under the Big Sky e-letter

Feb 18, 2009

Cooperative Weather Observer (12 SSE Opheim) passes away: Erling Dohlen, a cooperative weather observer for the National Weather Service for over 50 years passed away on Feb 5th. The following was from his obituary: *For many years, Erling was a volunteer weather observer who faithfully recorded various weather measurements every morning and every evening. Erling's father, Hjalmer started taking observations in Opheim in 1930. Erling took over the station in 1958. In 1991, Erling received the John Campanius Holm Award from the National Weather Service, which is given to cooperative observers for outstanding accomplishments in the field of meteorological observations. In October 2007, Erling was further honored by the NWS when he received the Thomas Jefferson Award in recognition of for 50 years of faithful service. This award is the highest award the NWS presents to volunteer observers which honors cooperative weather observers for unusual and outstanding achievements.*



This photo was from the Jefferson Award Dinner in October 2007. In the photo, Steve Apfel (MIC NWS Glasgow), Erling Dohlen, Dan Matusiewicz (NWS Western Region HQ), Matt Moorman (OPL NWS Glasgow) and Brian Fuhrman (neighbor and friend who wrote a letter of recommendation for the award)

Red River could have Major Flooding this Spring this spring:

Our neighbors to the east in the eastern Dakotas and Minnesota may see some major flooding this spring. They've had above normal precipitation this winter, and quite a bit of snow depth with good snow water equivalents. Some areas had 23 days of snowfall in the month of December! The latest outlook for them is at:

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2009/20090205_redriver.html



NOAA Photo: Sorlie Bridge, Grand Forks, ND
April 4, 2006



Ice Jam flooding in Okanagan County, WA: A recently had some ice jam problems on the Twist River, and tried to use an excavator to fix them. You can see it wasn't very successful based on the photo to the left. They tried to explode the 300 foot long, 15 foot deep ice dam, but didn't have luck with that either.

<http://www.omakchronicle.com/nws/n090206c.shtml>

Photo: From the Okanagan County Sheriff's department

Snowpack: One of the Valley County Commissioners dropped in recently, and we discussed the snowfall we've had this winter. I've mentioned the NOHRSC (National Operational Hydrological Remote Sensing Center...yes, I had to look that up) website to you all in the past, but one thing I hadn't done much of was animating the images. I did that for the commissioner, and it was pretty cool to see how our snow has occurred this season. You can see the big October storm hit, and then melt. December hit with a vengeance, but in the last few days you'll see quite a bit of melting or sublimation has occurred. The areas from Williston to Minot and around Lake Sakakawea are showing a snow depth of 20 to 40 inches, much of it from the recent major storm that hit them on Feb 8-10. To see the animation, go to:

http://www.nohrsc.noaa.gov/nsa/js_animate.html?ts=24&year=2009&month=2&day=12&type=nsn_depth®ion=Upper_Midwest

To look at the other data they have available in regards to snow, visit:

<http://www.nohrsc.noaa.gov/nsa/>

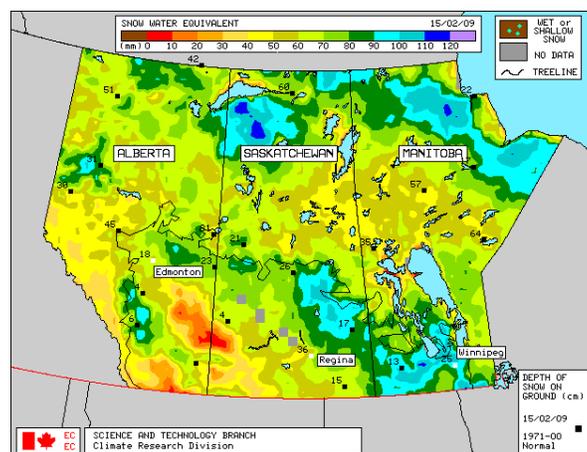


*Photo from Jackie Couture in Williston, ND on Feb 9th.
She works with the USDA NPARL in Sidney, MT and got stuck at home for a few days!*

If you are wondering about conditions to our north in Canada, you can see the current snow water equivalent (sample graphic below) from Environment Canada at:
http://www.socc.uwaterloo.ca/snow/snow_current_e.cfm#prairies

They have about 1-1.5" of snow water equivalent. Also, SaskWater has the February edition of their spring runoff potential on their website at:
<http://www.swa.ca/WaterManagement/MonthlyForecast/ProvincialForecast.pdf>

It currently has normal runoff west of the Poplar River, with above normal runoff north of the Poplar and Big Muddy Rivers.



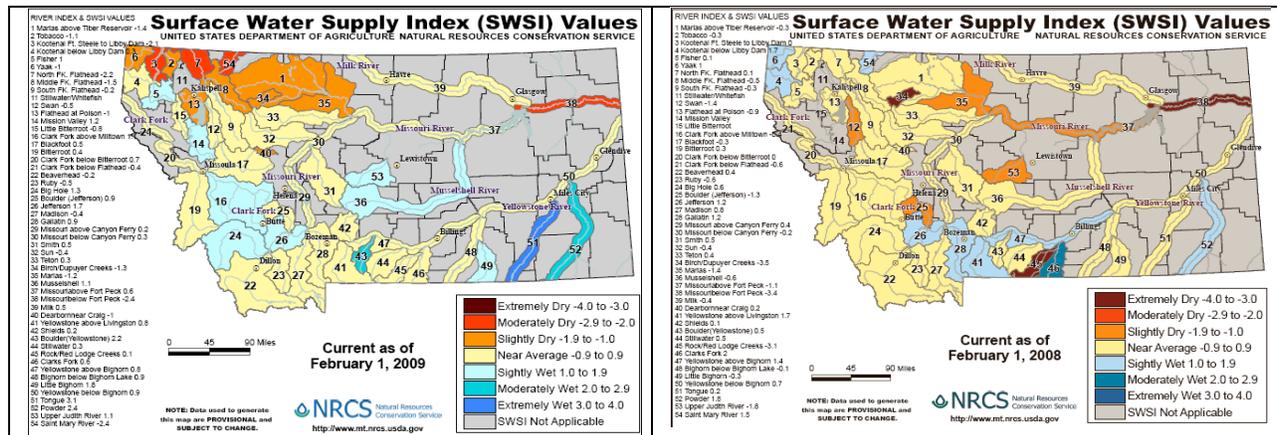
Streamflow, Mountain Snowpack: Things are looking up in Montana this year. If you look at the reservoir storage graphics, you'll see the majority of reservoirs in the state have either the same or greater storage this year than compared to a year ago:

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/resv-graph.pl?state=MT>

Also, the current Surface Water Supply (provided by the NRCS) can be seen at:

<http://nris.mt.gov/wis/SWSInteractive/>

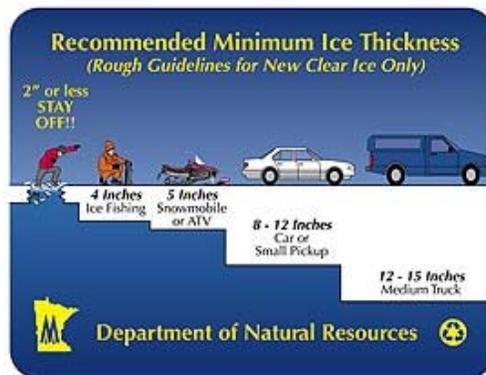
The graphics below show Feb 2009 vs. Feb 2008.



Ice Safety: We're seeing more of the snow melting, and perhaps even some ponding of water on the ice on the lakes. Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources has a great website on Ice Safety, and the Ohio State University Extension Service has a great article on Ice Safety. It seems we hear about a few cars each year that end up on the bottom of a lake, or broken through the ice. If you are an ice fisherman, you may want to check these out:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice/index.html>

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/aex-fact/pdf/0392.pdf>



Recent Tornado Outbreak in Oklahoma: Rare occurring February tornadoes struck portions of Oklahoma on Feb 10th. At least 8 fatalities were reported, along with dozens of injuries.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29139816/>

http://www.usatoday.com/weather/storms/tornadoes/2009-02-10-severe-thunderstorms-oklahoma_N.htm?csp=34

Do 1 Thing: Are disaster preparedness chores easier to digest in bite-size pieces? That's the premise being served up at Do 1 Thing, a site aimed at helping families and local organizations prepare for emergencies one step at a time. The site offers community resources, monthly themes, and simple suggestions meant to add up to a year's worth of preparation. Enter in a loved one's name and watch your motivation (or guilt) factor soar with each targeted e-mail.

<http://www.do1thing.us/index.php>

NWS Glasgow happenings:

Glasgow Science Fair: We had two staff members and two spouses help judge the Glasgow Science Fair, Bill and Sharon Martin, Greg Forrester and Mike Fransen. Many of the students will now be heading to the regional science fair in Havre on March 4th. The creativity of the projects amazes me every year! We wish all the students participating in science fairs this year the best of luck!

Upcoming Event: The Eastern Montana Hazardous Weather Workshop will be held in Miles City on February 19 (noon-5 pm) and 20th (8 am to noon). This is the fourth year of the workshop, which is aimed at those who are in local or state governments, the media and those in the private sector that have roles in safety positions. We have a great agenda in store, so if you are interested in attending, please let me know.

Upcoming Event: NWS Glasgow is hosting a Fire Weather Workshop for all local, state and federal fire agencies in northeast Montana. It will be on Feb 27th from 1 pm to 5 pm, with a repeat on the 28th from 8 am to noon. If you are interested in attending, the invitation is on our website at:

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/ggw/pdf/fw-wkshp-09.pdf>

Humor for the week....scroll down to next page!

Quit Hogging all the Blankets!

(Humor for the week sent by Vina Smith – Fort Peck Tribes Environmental Educator)

