



Under the Big Sky e-Letter May 28, 2010

It's been a bit crazy around here the past few weeks, and I know I'm well behind on getting out this newsletter. Lots of things happening though!

I almost find it humorous that in the last newsletter that I sent out, we were looking at drought conditions beginning and now we are in a flash flood watch due to the moisture. I know many of you are thinking, "90 days after fog" so I did a mini-study on it, just at Glasgow, but here are the results:

1. From Jan 1- Mar 31, 2010 we had 61 days that had some form of fog. 26% of those days had precipitation 90 days later.
2. In the same time frame, we had 29 days with dense fog, reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile. 17% of those days had precipitation 90 days later.
3. Climatologically this time of year, we should be getting precipitation every 3 to 3.3 days.

The photo above is Valley County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Rick Seiler staking out a flooded road so that people would not drive across. Remember, when flooding occurs and roads have water going over them, or recently had water going over, do no drive across! Turn Around, Don't Drown! 😊

NWS Glasgow Happenings:

MIC Steve Apfel moving to Cheyenne, WY as the MIC: Our Meteorologist in Charge, Steve Apfel is heading to Cheyenne, WY to be the MIC there. Steve has been here in Glasgow for about 3.5 years, and will be moving closer to his daughter in Colorado, and his family in Nebraska. He'll be here a few more weeks, so feel free to call or stop in and congratulate him on the new adventure in his future.

Long time cooperative weather observer Stanley Wiggins passes away: Stan and Shirle Wiggins have been the cooperative weather observers in Flatwillow, MT since 1961, but the station has been in the Wiggins family at the same location since 1913. In 2000, they were recipients of the prestigious Thomas Jefferson Award for their dedication to the cooperative weather observation program. Stan's health has declined in recent years, but his wife Shirle has diligently been calling in observations every evening for many years. We send the family our deepest condolences!

http://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/announcements/obituaries/article_1dc9b46e-678f-11df-bb8a-001cc4c002e0.html

Visit to the CMR: Incident Meteorologist (IMET) Pat Gilchrist and forecaster Rob Smith recently were able to attend a prescribed burn on the CMR refuge near the Fred Robinson Bridge. Our forecasters produce fire weather spot forecasts for specific locations based on the location of prescribed burns and wildfires. As an IMET, Pat gets called out to major wildfires across the country, and forecasts for incident management teams. Having our staff familiar with what the wildfire community does, and how weather impacts their burns is a huge learning lesson that allows us to create the best forecast and information as possible.



Rob Smith in his personal protective gear. This is Rob's first fire. Below: Fire crews use a drip torch to start the prescribed burn.



SAFER Workshop: I've been involved with a program to bring in more societal impacts and social sciences into the NWS operations products and services. Last week we held a workshop that was a year in the making in Salt Lake City with over 60 attendees from the western region NWS offices, and many other offices across the country. I highlighted the Cold Advisory for Newborn Livestock (CANL) system that originated at NWS Glasgow, showing the economic impacts of lost livestock, and how we included the ranching community in the process of developing the system.

Rural Heat Health Warning System: We recently were informed that we were approved for a grant to work with Dr. Larry Kalkstein (world's leading expert on heat health warning systems) from the University of Miami. Larry is the one who came to use to look at cold weather impacts in our area, and the CANL system was developed from it. He's developed heat health warning system for major cities within the US and across the Globe, but really wants to make sure that rural areas are not forgotten. This research will be done during the next year, and we'll have a prototype ready by next summer. If you work in public health, and would be interested in being one of our stakeholders and provide feedback, let me know.

School tours: We've had several schools tour the office in the last few weeks, including the Lustre School, Frontier School in Wolf Point, and Trinity School from Williston, ND. It's always great to see the things they've learned through the year in books come to life for them when they see all the tools we have here at the office to observe the weather and to make the forecast with.

NOAA News:

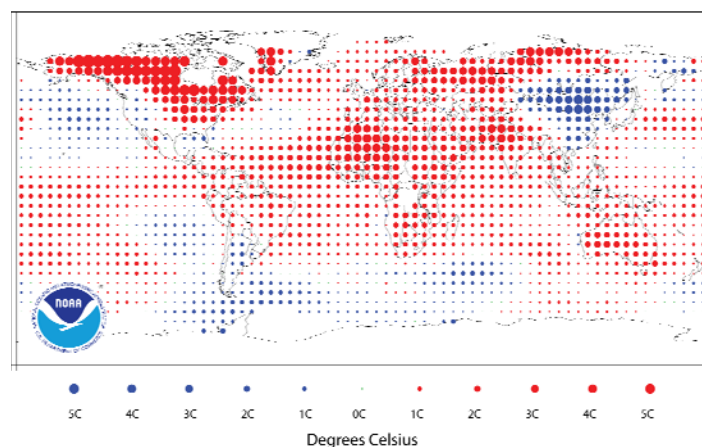
April 2010 and Jan-April 2010 Warmest on Record Globally: Again, it's hard to imagine that temperatures have been warmer than normal globally when it seems we've been sitting in an ice box, but April actually was a degree or two warmer than normal in eastern Montana.

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100517_globalstats.html

Temperature Anomalies April 2010

(with respect to a 1971-2000 base period)

National Climatic Data Center/NESDIS/NOAA



2010 Hurricane Outlook: The Atlantic Hurricane outlook has been issued, showing a more active season than normal. It doesn't mean that they will all impact land, just that there are more expected than normal. http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100527_hurricaneoutlook.html

The eastern Pacific Outlook looks less active,

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100527_pacifichurricanes.html

Weather in the News:

Visualization of European Air Traffic during Volcanic Disruptions: One of my mentors sent me this, he's the one who hired me into the National Weather Service, and retired as the Director of the Aviation Weather Center. It's a cool animation showing how reduced the air traffic was in Europe in mid-April after the volcanic eruptions in Iceland, and then showing the return to normal air travel traffic:

<http://flowingdata.com/2010/04/26/air-traffic-rebooted-in-northern-europe/>

Oklahoma Hailstorm Video: Oklahoma City had a significant hailstorm about two weeks ago. This video was pretty amazing, looked like missiles hitting the water. Take a look:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFv2W7Duqiw>