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PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SEATTLE WA
600 AM WED DEC 24 2008

...2008...WESTERN WASHINGTON WEATHER YEAR IN REVIEW...

THE YEAR WAS MARKED BY THE THIRD MAJOR DECEMBER STORM SEQUENCE IN A ROW. UNSEASONABLY COLD WEATHER SURGED INTO THE REGION IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MONTH ACCOMPANIED BY PERIODS OF SNOWFALL. MANY LOCATIONS RECEIVED AS MUCH AS A FOOT OR MORE SNOW DURING A WEEK AND A HALF. SOME LOW TEMPERATURES DIPPED INTO THE TEENS AND SINGLE DIGITS AS WELL. YET FORTUNATELY...THERE WERE NO KNOWN WEATHER RELATED FATALITIES.

DURING THE YEAR...ADVERSE WEATHER RESULTED IN FIVE DEATHS AND THREE INJURIES. THREE OF THE FATALITIES INVOLVED AVALANCHES...ONE DUE TO EXPOSURE ON MT RAINIER AND THE OTHER THE RESULT OF A WIND DRIVEN FALLEN TREE. WEATHER RELATED PROPERTY DAMAGES THROUGH THE MONTH OF OCTOBER TOTALED LESS THAN A HALF MILLION DOLLARS. DAMAGES FROM THE TWO NOVEMBER FLOOD EVENTS AND THE DECEMBER COLD SNAP WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

THE YEAR BEGAN WITH A SURGE OF WINTER WEATHER IN THE MOUNTAINS. SNOW FELL IN THE HIGHER TERRAIN IN DOZENS OF FEET. THE MOUNTAIN PASSES WERE FREQUENTLY CLOSED FOR AVALANCHE CONTROL AND SNOW REMOVAL... HAMPERING MOTORISTS. WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION REPORTED THAT THE PASSES WERE CLOSED FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED HOURS DURING THE WINTER...PRIMARILY DURING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY.

THE SPRING WAS UNUSUALLY CHILLY. THE COOL SPRING WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY A UNIQUE WEATHER EVENT IN MID APRIL. A PUGET SOUND CONVERGENCE ZONE COMBINED WITH A QUITE COLD AIR MASS RESULTED IN SNOWFALL FROM NORTH KING COUNTY INTO SKAGIT COUNTY - UP TO 10 INCHES IN SOME PLACES.

THE COOL SPRING TURNED AROUND QUICKLY WITH THE SUMMER SEASONS FIRST HOT SPELL IN MID MAY. SOME WESTERN WASHINGTON LOCATIONS SOARED INTO THE 90S...A SHARP CONTRAST TO THE COOL SPRING WEATHER. A FEW RIVERS WERE CLOSED TO RECREATION AS A RESULT OF SNOWMELT RUNOFF AND COLD SWIFT WATER FOLLOWING SEVERAL SWIFT WATER RESCUES.

THE SUMMER OFFERED SEVERAL OTHER WARM PERIODS - MID JUNE AND AGAIN IN EARLY AND MID AUGUST. OLYMPIA AND SEATAC AIRPORT EACH HIT THEIR WARMEST TEMPERATURES OF THE YEAR ON JUN 29TH WITH 94 IN OLYMPIA AND 92 AT SEATAC.

THE FALL WAS RATHER TRANQUIL AND MILD. NOVEMBER HAD TWO HEAVY RAIN EVENTS AND FLOODING...THE SECOND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MONTH RESULTING IN FLOODING ON 15 MAIN STEM RIVERS...SIX OF WHICH REACHED MAJOR FLOOD CATEGORY.

THE MILD WEATHER CONTINUED INTO DECEMBER BEFORE THE COLD SNAP HIT BY THE MIDDLE OF THE MONTH. THE COLDEST TEMPERATURES OF THE YEAR WERE ON THE 20TH FOR MANY LOCATIONS. SEATAC AIRPORT DIPPED TO 14 DEGREES ...OLYMPIA 7 ABOVE AND ARLINGTON DOWN TO 6 BELOW ZERO.

OVERALL...TEMPERATURES IN WESTERN WASHINGTON WERE CLOSE TO NORMAL OR A LITTLE BELOW NORMAL FOR THE YEAR...IN PART THANKS TO THE COOL SPRING AND DECEMBER COLD SNAP. PRECIPITATION WAS BELOW NORMAL... BETWEEN 5 AND 15 INCHES BELOW NORMAL. FOR INSTANCE...FORKS WAS CLOSE TO 15 INCHES BELOW FOR THE YEAR WHILE SEATAC AIRPORT WAS NEARLY SEVEN INCHES BEHIND.

FOR THE SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR...THERE WERE NO TORNADOES IN WESTERN WASHINGTON ALTHOUGH FIVE FUNNEL CLOUDS WERE REPORTED. WASHINGTON

AVERAGES BETWEEN ONE AND TWO TORNADOES PER YEAR.

A LIST OF SIGNIFICANT 2008 EVENTS IN WESTERN WASHINGTON IS GIVEN BELOW...AS WELL AS RECORD TEMPERATURES FOR SELECTED LOCATIONS.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

TORNADOES/WATERSPOUTS/FUNNEL CLOUDS

JUN 6 - NORTH SEATTLE - KING COUNTY

A FUNNEL CLOUD WAS BRIEFLY OBSERVED BY STAFF AT THE NWS SEATTLE FORECAST OFFICE OVER LAKE WASHINGTON.

JUN 6 - 1 EAST OF BLACK DIAMOND - KING COUNTY

A FUNNEL CLOUD REACHED ABOUT HALF WAY TO THE GROUND FOR A MINUTE.

AUG 25 - NW OFF MERCER ISLAND OVER LAKE WASHINGTON - KING COUNTY

A FUNNEL CLOUD LASTED ABOUT 2 MINUTES OVER LAKE WASHINGTON THAT MORNING NEAR 840 AM.

AUG 25 - NEAR BLACK DIAMOND - KING COUNTY

TWO BRIEF FUNNEL CLOUDS WERE SPOTTED NEAR 545 PM THAT AFTERNOON.

LIGHTNING

JUL 2 - INTERIOR OF WESTERN WASHINGTON AND CASCADES

SEVERAL DOZEN THUNDERSTORMS THAT NIGHT PRODUCED OVER 2500 LIGHTNING STRIKES.

HAIL

JUL 2 - 1 SOUTH OF KANGLEY - KING COUNTY

ONE THUNDERSTORM AMONG MANY THUNDERSTORMS THAT NIGHT PRODUCED HAIL OF 0.90 INCH DIAMETER.

HIGH WINDS

JAN 14 - ADMIRALTY INLET AREA AND HOOD CANAL

WINDS UP TO 50 MPH BLEW THROUGH THE REGION. ONE PORT LUDLOW WOMAN WAS KILLED WHEN A TREE STRUCK HER CAR. THE EVENT PRODUCED \$10000 IN DAMAGE.

FEB 6-7 - SOUTHWEST INTERIOR AND WESTERN SKAGIT COUNTY

STRONG WINDS UP TO 55 MPH BLEW THROUGH THESE AREAS CAUSING ABOUT \$22000 IN DAMAGE FROM DOWNED TREES AND POWER LINES.

JUN 9 - MUCH OF WESTERN INTERIOR

A JANUARY LIKE STORM HIT THE REGION WITH STRONG WINDS OF UP TO 45 MPH. THE WIND KNOCKED POWER OUT TO NEAR 35000 CUSTOMERS...TOPPLED TREES ONTO THREE MOBILE HOMES IN PURDY AND CAUSED \$25000 IN DAMAGE.

WINTER STORMS

JAN 27-31 - PUGET SOUND AREA NORTHWARD

SNOW FELL IN THE REGION WITH AMOUNTS OF UP 6 INCHES.

JAN-FEB - CASCADES AND OLYMPIC MOUNTAINS

A SERIES OF COLD WINTER STORMS PERIODICALLY SWEEPED THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS...DUMPING DOZENS OF FEET OF SNOW. THE HEAVY SNOWFALL RESULTED IN FREQUENT AVALANCHE CONTROL AND HIGHWAY SNOW REMOVAL EFFORTS...CLOSING KEY TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS LIKE INTERSTATE-90 THROUGH SNOQUALMIE PASS AND U S HIGHWAY 2 THROUGH STEVENS PASS FOR CLOSE TO 200 HOURS. ON FEB 8TH...SNOQUALMIE...STEVENS AND WHITE PASSES WERE ALL CLOSED - THE FIRST TIME THAT HAD HAPPENED SINCE 1996. WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION INDICATED THAT FOR EVERY TWO HOURS I-90 WAS CLOSED COST THE STATE ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO THE STATES ECONOMY.

FEB 6 - HOOD CANAL REGION

A BRIEF SNOWFALL EVENT PRODUCED UP TO 4 INCHES OF SNOW IN THIS REGION.

APR 18-19 - NORTH PUGET SOUND REGION

A PUGET SOUND CONVERGENCE ZONE WITH UNSEASONABLY COLD AIR COMBINED TO GENERATE A LATE SEASON SNOW EVENT IN THIS AREA...PRODUCING UP TO 10 INCHES OF SNOW BETWEEN NORTH KING AND SOUTHERN SKAGIT COUNTIES.

JUN 10 - CENTRAL CASCADES

A JANUARY TYPE STORM HIT THE CASCADES IN MID JUNE. A DAY HIKER ON THE SLOPES OF MT RAINIER DIED AFTER BEING CAUGHT IN WINTER-LIKE CONDITIONS. TWO OTHERS IN THE HIKING PARTY WERE INJURED.

DEC 12-24 - WESTERN WASHINGTON LOWLANDS

A MODIFIED ARCTIC AIR MASS MOVED SOUTH INTO THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST EARLY IN THE PERIOD. SNOW FELL OVER THE WEEKEND OF DEC 13-14 IN SOME AREAS WITH UP TO 4 INCHES...AGAIN ON DEC 17-18 WITH SOME PARTS OF NORTH ISLAND AND SKAGIT COUNTIES GETTING OVER A FOOT OF NEW SNOW... AND THEN A WIDESPREAD EVENT DEC 20-21 WITH MOST AREAS HAVING BETWEEN A HALF FOOT AND TWO FEET OF SNOW ON THE GROUND TOTAL. TEMPERATURES DIPPED INTO THE TEENS WITH SOME SPOTS INTO THE SINGLE DIGITS ON THE MORNING OF THE 20TH. ARLINGTON PLUNGED TO 4 DEGREES BELOW ZERO THAT DAY. INTERSTATE 90 WAS CLOSED DUE TO SNOW AND BLOWING SNOW DURING THE WEEKEND OF THE 20TH AND 21ST.

AVALANCHE

JAN 1 - MT BAKER

TWO SNOWMOBILERS DIED AND ONE WAS INJURED IN AN AVALANCHE.

JAN 4 - NEAR VERLOT - NORTH CASCADES

A 13-YEAR OLD GIRL DIED IN AN AVALANCHE.

FLOODS/HEAVY RAIN/LANDSLIDES

NOV 7-8 - PARTS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON

SIX RIVERS ROSE ABOVE FLOOD STAGE AS THE RESULT OF HEAVY RAINFALL. THE STREAMS INCLUDED THE SATSOP...SKOKOMISH...SKYKOMISH...TOLT...SNOQUALMIE...SNOHOMISH AND STILLAGUAMISH. THE TOLT AND SKOKOMISH EACH REACHED MAJOR FLOOD CATEGORY. DAMAGE ESTIMATES WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

NOV 12-13 - MUCH OF WESTERN WASHINGTON

ANOTHER HEAVY RAINFALL EVENT PRODUCED MORE WIDESPREAD FLOODING THAN THE WEEK BEFORE ON 15 RIVERS...INCLUDING MAJOR FLOODING ON THE SKOKOMISH...TOLT...SNOQUALMIE AND SNOHOMISH RIVERS AS WELL AS THE COWLITZ AT RANDLE. DAMAGE ESTIMATES WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

HEAT

MAY 16-17 - WESTERN WASHINGTON

THE FIRST HEAT WAVE OF THE YEAR OCCURRED IN THE REGION WITH HIGH TEMPERATURES SOARING INTO THE 90S. NORTH SEATTLE REACHED 90 DEGREES - THE WARMEST RECORDED DURING THE YEAR AND THE EARLIEST IN THE YEAR THAT SEATTLE EVER HAS HIT 90...WHILE FORKS HIT 91...ALSO THE WARMEST OF THE YEAR. THE HEAT WAS A SHARP CONTRAST TO THE WELL BELOW NORMAL SPRING TEMPERATURES TO THAT POINT AND RESULTED IN PUSHING SEVERAL MOUNTAIN SNOWMELT STREAMS HIGHER WITH SWIFT AND QUITE COLD WATER. A COUPLE OF KING COUNTY RIVERS WERE CLOSED TO AVOID HEAT RELATED DROWNINGS AFTER A NUMBER OF SWIFT WATER RESCUES TOOK PLACE.

JUN 29 - WESTERN WASHINGTON

ANOTHER HOT SPELL HIT THE REGION WITH READINGS CLIMBING INTO THE 90S. OLYMPIA REACHED 94 FOR THE WARMEST HIGH TEMPERATURE OF THE YEAR WHILE SEATAC AIRPORT CLIMBED TO 92...ALSO THE WARMEST OF THE YEAR.

HIGH...LOW...AND PRECIPITATION RECORDS BROKEN AT WESTERN WASHINGTON LOCATIONS DURING 2008. RECORDS WILL BE SHOWN WITH THE DATE AND RECORD VALUE REACHED FOR THAT DAY. (UP TO DECEMBER 21ST)

SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

HIGH		LOW		PRECIPITATION	
04/12	79	04/03	34(T)	08/20	0.70
05/16	84(T)	06/09	44(T)		
05/17	90	06/10	44(T)		
06/28	91(T)	10/11	37(T)		
08/14	90	12/14	22		
11/07	62	12/15	19		
11/19	60(T)	12/20	14(T)		

OLYMPIA AIRPORT

HIGH		LOW		PRECIPITATION	
05/17	91	04/02	23	03/13	1.21
06/28	92(T)	04/03	24	08/20	0.68
08/05	90	04/26	27(T)		
11/29	56(T)	06/15	37(T)		
		10/11	28		
		12/19	11		

QUILLAYUTE AIRPORT

HIGH		LOW		PRECIPITATION	
02/18	60	04/02	26	07/29	1.24
05/16	91	06/23	38	07/31	0.50
08/05	84	07/28	39	08/01	0.23
09/29	83	10/10	31	10/02	0.99
10/27	69	10/11	29	11/06	3.30
10/30	64	12/16	19	11/07	4.07
11/17	60	12/18	20	11/11	2.36
11/24	56				
11/30	58(T)				

BELLINGHAM AIRPORT

HIGH		LOW		PRECIPITATION	
05/17	82	04/01	26	03/29	0.76
09/29	77	04/02	27	05/13	0.70
11/08	63	04/22	29	08/10	0.31
		06/15	44(T)	09/20	0.55
		06/23	42	11/06	1.23
		07/11	44	11/29	0.85
		07/31	45(T)		
		10/09	31(T)		
		10/10	30		
		10/11	26		
		12/14	18		
		12/20	11(T)		

HOQUIAM AIRPORT

HIGH		LOW		PRECIPITATION	
04/12	78(T)	04/02	31	05/13	0.72
05/16	93	06/23	43	08/20	0.30
		09/10	43(T)	11/12	2.87
		09/23	38(T)		

10/08 38(T)
 10/09 36(T)
 10/10 31
 10/11 32
 10/15 33
 10/19 35(T)
 12/15 25(T)

STAMPEDE PASS

HIGH		LOW		PRECIPITATION	
02/28	50	04/01	19(T)	08/20	0.45
02/29	49	04/18	21(T)	11/12	6.75
06/28	82	06/09	30		
06/29	90	06/10	30		
06/30	84				
08/05	83				
08/15	88				
08/16	92				
09/16	79(T)				
11/15	61				
11/16	63				
11/17	61				
11/29	50				
11/30	60				
12/05	54				
12/06	51				
12/07	44(T)				

SEATTLE WFO AT SANDPOINT

HIGH		LOW		PRECIPITATION	
02/18	57	01/21	26	01/03	0.58
02/29	61	01/22	25	02/09	0.21
04/12	79	01/23	28(T)	03/23	0.69
05/17	90	01/24	26	03/28	0.56
06/29	88	01/25	24	04/14	0.33
08/06	86	03/05	32(T)	04/18	0.35
08/15	92	03/24	34	05/13	0.29
08/16	88	03/28	33	06/03	1.23
08/17	87	03/30	35(T)	07/03	0.25
11/01	60(T)	03/31	35	07/31	0.12
11/02	59(T)	04/01	33	08/01	0.06
11/08	63	04/02	33	08/19	0.44
11/12	59(T)	04/03	31	08/20	0.52
11/17	62	04/08	35(T)	08/24	0.80
11/30	55	04/19	36	08/25	0.17
12/01	59	04/20	35	09/20	0.53
		04/21	36	10/03	0.42
		04/22	37(T)	11/06	1.15
		05/02	40(T)		
		06/06	47(T)		
		06/09	45		
		06/10	45		
		06/13	48(T)		
		06/14	47		
		06/15	46		
		06/17	48(T)		
		06/18	48(T)		
		06/23	47		
		06/24	47		
		06/25	50(T)		
		06/26	50(T)		
		07/11	52(T)		
		07/23	53		

07/24	54(T)
07/26	53(T)
08/03	52(T)
08/30	51
08/31	51
10/08	43
10/09	42
10/10	42
10/11	38(T)
10/14	41(T)
10/18	41
10/19	39
10/23	39(T)
10/24	38
12/14	25
12/15	23
12/16	20

BUEHNER/NEHER/BURG/DAMICO

WEATHER.GOV/SEATTLE/