

Montana Weather Summary

April 1, 2002

next issuance: Monday, April 15.

Montana precipitation summary, March 16-31.

East of the Continental Divide, precipitation was near normal for the period, except for southern and southwest Montana which were drier than normal. There were periods of snow over the northern plains between the 16th and the 20th, with most areas receiving over 3 inches. Parts of Cascade, Judith Basin, and Fergus counties had over 8 inches. It was mostly dry between the 20th and 26th. From the 26th through the 30th, occasional light snow showers fell over the northern plains, with very little liquid content.

West of the Continental Divide, precipitation was also near normal. Northwest Montana was hit hardest by the snowstorm on the 19th and 20th, with Kalispell receiving over a half inch of water equivalent, and Missoula had 6 inches of snow. The south received some rain and snow between the 26th and 29th, but amounts in valleys were mainly less than a tenth of an inch of water equivalent.

Historical Rank of Precipitation (inches) for the Past Month and Water Year to Date

Location	March 1 - March 31	Rank as driest	October 1 - March 31	Rank as driest	Data Begins
CTB	0.19	27th	0.68	1st	1909-10
BZN	0.42	3rd	3.36	12th	1948-49
GTF	0.70	42nd	2.12	3rd	1893-94
HLN	0.52	42nd	1.85	5th	1893-94
MSO	1.01	33rd	5.95	29th	1948-49
FCA	0.95	60th	4.82	7th	1899-00
GGW	0.40	48th	1.33	4th	1893-94
BIL	0.25	3rd	2.11	1st	1948-49
MLS	0.35	20th	1.14	2nd	1937-38

For an automated version of this chart, updated daily, go to
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/Greatfalls/getproduct.pl?PCPNTOTALS>

For a state map of % of normal water year precip (updated around the 7th of each month), go to
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/Greatfalls/txf.php?TEXT+wateryear_percent.html

For the latest information on mountain snowpack from the NRCS (updated around the 5th), go to
http://nrfs.state.mt.us/nrcs/Mar02/03_02swehuc.pdf

For the latest information on streamflows from the NRCS (updated around the 5th), go to
http://nrfs.state.mt.us/nrcs/Mar02/03_02stfp.pdf

Montana precipitation forecast.

As of March 31, the Climate Prediction Center forecasts near normal precipitation across Montana for the period April 8 to April 14. The outlook for April has an equal chance of above or below normal precipitation, and the outlook for April through June has below normal precipitation for Montana west of the Continental Divide, and near normal elsewhere. Graphics and text relating to these outlooks can be found at

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi_season/13_seasonal_outlooks/color/seasonal_forecast.html

El Niño may be developing in the equatorial waters of the Pacific Ocean. A moderate to strong El Niño usually causes a drier than normal period in Montana, especially during the Winter. For the latest details on El Niño, go to

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/

The Montana Drought Summary is produced by the [National Weather Service Office in Great Falls](#), Montana, and is updated twice a month. Any further inquiries about the drought can be directed to Ken Mielke or Ken Pomeroy at (406) 453-2081. Many more links can be found on the Drought Information Page of the NWS Great Falls web site at
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/Greatfalls/txf.php?HTML+drought>.