

Montana Drought Summary

May 15, 2002

next issuance: Monday, June 3.

Montana precipitation summary, May 1-14.

East of the Continental Divide, precipitation was near to above normal for the period. Rain showers fell over parts of northern counties on the 5th and 6th with amounts over 0.50 inches reported. Most of the precipitation fell on the 7th and 8th. South central and northeast Montana were hardest hit by this event, picking up over .75 inches of water equivalent. The entire region saw some precipitation on these days. From the 9th through the 14th it was mostly dry, with only isolated thunderstorms falling over eastern and southern counties on the 14th.

West of the Continental Divide, precipitation was below normal. Almost all precipitation during the period fell between the 6th and the 9th. The system that affected the east on the 7th and 8th also hit the west during this time. However amounts were lighter, with only a few places reporting more than 0.50 inches of water equivalent.

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

Location	April 15 - May 14	Rank as driest	October 1 - May 14	Rank as driest	Years on Record
Billings	2.62	38th	4.84	5th	54
Bozeman	1.68	33rd	5.61	15th	50
Cut Bank	0.80	42nd	1.64	6th	83
Glasgow	0.96	43rd	2.55	10th	98
Great Falls	0.60	18th	2.88	2nd	109
Havre	0.96	51st	2.07	2nd	109
Helena	0.64	21st	2.88	6th	109
Kalispell	0.35	6th	5.73	7th	101
Lewistown	0.72	15th	3.08	1st	76
Miles City	1.83	42nd	3.28	9th	65
Missoula	0.50	9th	7.01	24th	50

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/tfx.php?TEXT+wateryear_percent.html

For the latest information on streamflows from the USGS, go to <http://mt.waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/sw>

For the latest streamflow forecasts from the NRCS (updated around the 5th of each month), go to http://nris.state.mt.us/nrcs/May02/05_02stfp.pdf

Montana precipitation forecast.

As of May 14th, the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) forecasts above normal precipitation across Montana for the period May 22nd through the 28th. The outlook for May through July, issued by the CPC on April 18th, calls for equal chances of above and below normal precipitation. New long range outlooks will be issued on May 16th. 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 off of South America. 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. This document is posted on the internet at http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/Greatfalls/drought_semi.pdf. 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/tfx.php?HTML+drought>.