

# Montana Drought/Precipitation Summary

**March 2005 (updated Mar 31, 2005)** By NOAA's National Weather Service Great Falls Montana

The first half of March was very warm across Montana. Temperatures averaged 5 to 10 degrees above normal for the period. The last half recorded cooler conditions. As a result, March temperatures averaged from one to five degrees above normal. Welcome precipitation fell. Localized amounts over three inches were noted in some of the island ranges of central Montana. The warmest temperature across the state was 77°F at Huntley on the 12<sup>th</sup> with several daily warm records set across the west. The lowest temperature was -11°F near Rudyard on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Several locations had more than their normal precipitation for the month, with several periods of precipitation. However, the water year totals remained on the dry side. Up to 26 inches of snow fell in the mountains around Red Lodge from the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, while the higher elevations of the Little Belts received around 40 inches. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, up to a foot of snow fell in central Montana and higher elevations west of the divide. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6 to 15 inches of snow accumulated over portions of the central and southeast. Finally, near the end of the month, around a foot of snow fell at scattered higher elevation locations west of the divide. The snowy conditions resulted in monthly records for snowfall being set at several locations in central Montana. The highest gust was 111 mph at Logan Pass on the 6<sup>th</sup>, but winds at lower elevations exceeded 65 mph and produced blowing dust over portions of north central Montana.

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

Location	Mar	% of Normal	Oct 1 - Mar 31	% of Normal	Rank	Percentile	Years of Record
Baker	0.65	104	3.33	108			7
Billings	0.67	60	3.11	60	33 <sup>rd</sup> driest	34 <sup>th</sup>	96
Bozeman	0.87	85	3.06	66	11 <sup>th</sup> driest	17 <sup>th</sup>	64
Butte	0.73	88	1.80	48	5 <sup>th</sup> driest	5 <sup>th</sup>	109
Cut Bank	0.30	55	1.27	52	19 <sup>th</sup> driest	20 <sup>th</sup>	96
Dillon	0.37	70	1.61	73	12 <sup>th</sup> driest	20 <sup>th</sup>	59
Glasgow	0.61	130	2.17	85	27 <sup>th</sup> driest	25 <sup>th</sup>	106
Great Falls	0.94	93	2.75	63	14 <sup>th</sup> driest	12 <sup>th</sup>	113
Havre	0.62	89	1.59	51	7 <sup>th</sup> driest	6 <sup>th</sup>	125
Helena	0.86	137	2.05	65	13 <sup>th</sup> driest	10 <sup>th</sup>	127
Jordan	0.45	126	1.86	75			6
Kalispell	1.19	107	2.34	69	16 <sup>th</sup> driest	13 <sup>th</sup>	127
Lewistown	1.12	97	3.19	61	10 <sup>th</sup> driest	9 <sup>th</sup>	107
Livingston	1.06	110	3.83	71	40 <sup>th</sup> driest	39 <sup>th</sup>	102
Miles City	0.40	69	2.43	69	26 <sup>th</sup> driest	20 <sup>th</sup>	128
Missoula	0.99	103	3.04	53	5 <sup>th</sup> driest	4 <sup>th</sup>	125
Mullan Pass	5.87	188	22.85	103	12 <sup>th</sup> driest	44 <sup>th</sup>	27
Wolf Point	0.65		1.38	74			7

For an automated version of this chart, updated daily, go to <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tfx/dx.php?wfo=tfx&type=&loc=products&fx=PCPNTOTALS>

For a state map of % of normal water year precipitation (updated around the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month), go to: [http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tfx/image.php?wfo=tfx&type=data&loc=hydro&fx=watyr\\_pcptnorm.png](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tfx/image.php?wfo=tfx&type=data&loc=hydro&fx=watyr_pcptnorm.png)

For the latest information on mountain snow pack from the NRCS, go to: <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/index.html>

For the latest U.S. Drought Monitor, issued weekly by the Climate Prediction Center (CPC), go to: <http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>

### **Montana precipitation/temperature forecast.**

The CPC April temperature forecast is for a 50-55% chance of warmer than normal conditions west of the divide and equal chances of above or below normal over the rest of Montana. For

precipitation, there are equal chances of above or below normal conditions. For the period April through June, the forecast calls for equal chances of above or below normal temperatures and precipitation. Graphics and text relating to these outlooks, and additional long-range forecasts can be found at

[http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi\\_season/13\\_seasonal\\_outlooks/color/seasonal\\_forecast.html](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi_season/13_seasonal_outlooks/color/seasonal_forecast.html)

Further inquiries about the moisture conditions can be directed to Dave Bernhardt or Gina Loss 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/tfx/main/drought.php?wfo=tfx>