

Montana Drought/Precipitation Summary

April 2005 By NOAA's National Weather Service Great Falls Montana

Rain and snow fell over south central Montana early in April. Over one-half inch of moisture fell at Livingston on the 4th, which was the greatest daily amount since late October. Up to 10 inches of snow fell in the mountains around Cooke City. Another storm over the 9-10th, dropped over one inch of rain over portions of southeast Montana and 10 inches of snow in the Bull Mountains and 18 inches in the Little Rockies. Very strong winds accompanied this storm creating blizzard conditions in the northeast; gusts reached 85 mph at Zortman. This storm also caused power line damage that produced power outages lasting nearly a week in the Turner area. A fast moving storm produced around ½ inch of rain with snow over central Montana on the 14th. Up to 8 inches of snow fell along the Rocky Mountain Front. Ahead of the storm, warm temperatures and gusty winds were felt. Gusts reached 74 mph over northern Valley County on the 14th. Elsewhere, the highest gust for the state was 95 mph at Logan Pass on the 1st. Another spring storm dumped over 3 inches of precipitation over the south from the 18th-21st. Temperatures averaged near normal – but as high as three degrees above normal in the northeast. A statewide daily high temperature record was set on the 9th, when it reached 88 degrees at Sidney. Hardin also reached 88 degrees on the 18th, for the highest temperatures in the state. The month's lowest temperature occurred near West Yellowstone on the 1st; it dropped to –8F. A cold snap late in the month brought scattered below zero readings, mainly to higher elevations. Winds were generally near average for the month. The April precipitation improved the moisture conditions for the water year. Now, only two sites rank among the 10 driest of record through April, and 7 of 16 locations now have over 90% of the water year normal.

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

Location	Apr	% of Normal	Oct 1 - Apr 30	% of Normal	Rank	Percentile	Years of Record
Baker	1.55	173	4.88	122			7
Billings	3.31	190	6.42	93	30 th wettest	69 th	96
Bozeman	1.65	118	4.71	78	20 th driest	31 st	64
Butte	0.96	94	2.76	58	10 th driest	9 th	111
Cut Bank	0.50	56	1.77	53	16 th driest	16 th	98
Dillon	1.49	157	3.10	98	34 th driest	52 nd	65
Glasgow	1.39	185	3.56	108	52 nd wettest	50 th	105
Great Falls	1.20	86	3.95	68	16 th driest	14 th	113
Havre	0.50	57	2.09	53	10 th driest	8 th	125
Helena	0.90	99	2.95	73	19 th driest	15 th	127
Jordan	2.95	297	4.81	139			6
Kalispell	0.94	77	6.28	70	15 th driest	12 th	127
Lewistown	1.77	128	4.96	75	20 th driest	19 th	107
Livingston	2.43	170	6.26	94	42 nd wettest	59 th	102
Miles City	1.60	114	4.03	82	43 rd driest	34 th	128
Missoula	2.12	194	5.16	76	21 st driest	17 th	124
Mullan Pass	3.38	124	26.23	105	12 th wettest	56 th	27
Wolf Point	0.64	75	2.02	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 7th of each month), go to: http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tfx/image.php?wfo=tfx&type=data&loc=hydro&fx=watyr_pcntnorm.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 May temperature and precipitation forecast is for equal chances of above or below normal conditions over the state. For the period May through July, the forecast also 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

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>