

Montana Weather/Precipitation Summary

May 1-15 2006 By NOAA's National Weather Service Great Falls Montana

In Montana, the first half of May can be characterized as dry. Precipitation has been restricted to the isolated showers over the west, extreme north, and eastern portions. An exception has been around the Little Rockies. On the 9th and 10th, showers brought about one inch of rain to this area, while 4 to 6" of snow fell over the island ranges of central Montana. Drying has been evident across most of the state since mid-April, with precipitation scarce in most areas this month. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the dryness across the state. Winds around a low pressure produced gusty winds in the northeast on the 2nd. Gusts to 60 mph were recorded at Fort Belknap. Winds picked up again on the 8th. Logan Pass reached 89 mph. Temperatures have ranged below average. Kalispell has set two new record lows this month, on the 5th and 10th. A high pressure ridge has generally dominated during the month (Figure 1). This ridge intensified mid-month, and brought continued dry, and even warmer conditions by mid-month. Missoula and Kalispell tied record highs on the 15th, with Missoula reaching 89°F. The warmest temperature of the month so far has been 94°F at Troy on the 15th, while Clover Meadow (in the southwest) dropped to 4°F on the 10th.

Month's summary information (to date):

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| High Temperature | 94°F at Troy | Greatest Precipitation | 1.00" at Zortman |
| Low Temperature | 4°F at Clover Meadow | | 2.20" at Flattop Mtn |
| Warmest Average Temperature | 53.5°F at Thompson Falls | Peak Wind Gust | 89 mph at Logan Pass |
| Coollest Average Temperature | 38.4°F at Cooke City | | |
| Range of Temperature Departures | -5.8°F at Havre to +0.4°F at Cooke City | Highest Average Winds | 12.4 mph at Cut Bank |

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

| Location | May 1-15 | % of Norm | Oct1 – May 15 | % of norm | Years |
|-------------|----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-------|
| Baker | 0.27 | 34% | 5.97 | 125% | 7 |
| Billings | 0.15 | 12% | 8.28 | 101% | 96 |
| Bozeman | 0.01 | 1% | 7.60 | 104% | 64 |
| Butte | T | 0% | 7.03 | 122% | 111 |
| Cut Bank | 0.07 | 6% | 1.99 | 45% | 98 |
| Dillon | 0.00 | 0% | 4.48 | 110% | 65 |
| Glasgow | 0.12 | 14% | 4.32 | 104% | 105 |
| Great Falls | 0.18 | 14% | 8.58 | 122% | 114 |
| Havre | 0.25 | 27% | 4.13 | 84% | 126 |
| Helena | T | 0% | 6.35 | 129% | 128 |
| Jordan | 0.41 | 59% | 6.51 | 157% | 7 |
| Kalispell | 0.05 | 5% | 9.81 | 98% | 112 |
| Lewistown | 0.43 | 29% | 8.61 | 106% | 110 |
| Livingston | 0.01 | 1% | 6.75 | 85% | 101 |
| Miles City | 0.31 | 28% | 7.57 | 126% | 129 |
| Missoula | 0.02 | 2% | 10.15 | 130% | 125 |
| Mullan Pass | 0.36 | 25% | 34.41 | 131% | 65 |
| Wolf Point | 0.24 | 25% | 3.55 | 97% | 8 |
| Glendive | 0.26 | 25% | 7.30 | 134% | 105 |
| Sidney | 0.32 | 32% | 8.93 | 161% | 65 |
| BZN-MSU | 0.03 | 2% | 12.12 | 120% | 127 |

Rankings and Percentiles are 1 = driest, higher numbers = wetter.

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>

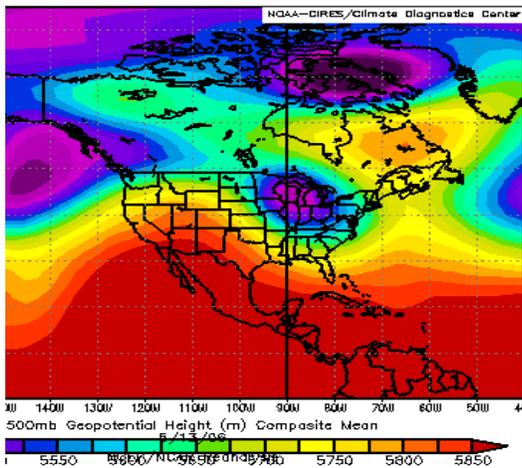
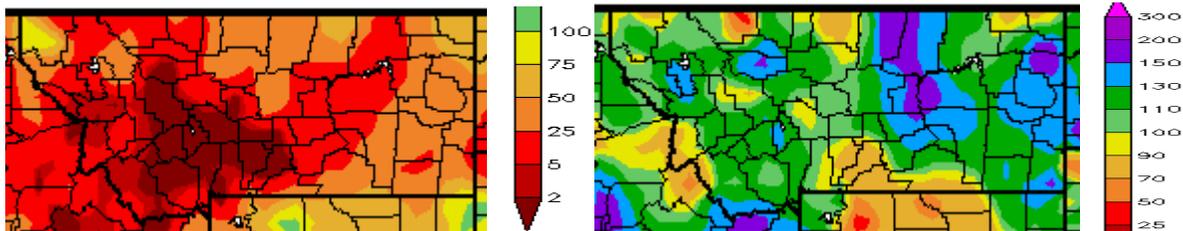


Figure 1. Mean flow at 500 millibars (~18,000 ft), May 1-15 2006. The strength of the ridge over the western U.S. is somewhat anomalous for early May.



a. May 1-15

b. Oct 1-May 15

Figure 2. Precipitation anomaly (% of normal) for the (a) month and (b) water-year-to-date (courtesy High Plains Climate Center).

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>

All reported data is preliminary. 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>