

2010 Weather Summary

January 2010 began with a deep snow pack over much of southern Minnesota. In fact, the snow depth reached three feet in some areas in southwest Minnesota by mid-February. Thankfully March was virtually snow-free across the state and rather dry as well. This was a piece of good fortune to people waiting for the impending spring flood. As a result of the March dryness, the spring floods weren't as bad as predicted.

Spring came early with March and April temperatures much above normal and eroded the snowpack quickly. Many of the lakes in the state lost their ice in a one week period from the end of March to the first week of April; some lakes in northern Minnesota saw new record earliest ice out dates. May temperatures had a bit of a roller coaster ride to them with cold temperatures for the end of the first week of May, then record heat on May 23-24.

June was a stormy month across the state. A record 48 tornadoes touched down on June 17. In all, 113 tornadoes touched down in Minnesota in 2010. This broke the previous record of 74 in 2001. Hopefully this new record will stand for a long time. The largest flood event to hit southern Minnesota since the flood of August 18-20, 2007 occurred on September 22-23. This rain system dropped between 6 to 8 inches over a swath of southern Minnesota, with one of the highest totals reported at Truman in Martin County with 10.20 inches. Flooding was made worse because the rains fell on already saturated soil. There were many reports of flooded basements in the flood-stricken area. Highway 169 between St. Peter and Le Sueur was virtually destroyed in one area, and did not reopen until October 5.

The first three weeks of October were warm and dry, much to the delight of people with soggy fields. In fact, there was hardly a drop of rain from September 27 to October 23. The first widespread killing frosts of the season were on October 28 and 29. Winter arrived on cue with the continuous snowpack starting on November 13. December was marked with numerous snowfalls across the state, setting the stage for another "real winter." Annual precipitation departures were universally wetter than the 1971-2000 normal across the state, with the only exception in the northeast. Some places in south central and west central Minnesota saw a foot of precipitation above normal for 2010.

Source: State Climatology Office – DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources

