

2007 Weather Summary

The 2007 year began with a “Snow Drought” that persisted until the end of February. The lack of snowfall was most acute in central and northern Minnesota. The landscape was so bare, in fact, that grass and cattail fires occurred in mid-January. “Old Man” winter did stage somewhat of a comeback with a double whammy of snowstorms for the final days of February into March. Seasonal snow totals for 2006-07 were generally below average, with the exceptions of Rochester and La Crosse, WI, which happened to be at the epicenter of the largest snowstorms of the year. The winter season came to a close at the end of March when a soggy system brought heavy rains over much of the state. There was some record warmth too with highs in the low 80’s across southern Minnesota.

The first week of April was dominated by an arctic air mass that plunged temperatures to the single digits in the north. One of the coldest spots was a low of zero at Itasca on April 5th. Some snow accompanied the cold as well. Temperatures rebounded by the middle of the month and highs in the 60’s and 70’s were common.

Mirroring 2006, spring and summer of 2007 were marked by a significant drought. Some of the precipitation deficits were carried over from 2006, especially in the north. The drought intensified in July and August and had reached its zenith by the second week of August. A good chunk of Minnesota was under the U.S. Drought Monitor’s “Severe Drought” category, except the northwest and southeast corners.

A singular event from August 18th to the 20th was on par with the drought as the biggest weather story of the year for Minnesota. A series of thunderstorms moving along a stalled frontal boundary dropped extremely heavy rain on much of southern Minnesota. The most intense precipitation rates occurred during the afternoon and evening hours of Saturday, August 18, and the early morning hours of Sunday, August 19. The heaviest rainfall reports came from Winona, Fillmore, and Houston counties, where 36-hour totals exceeded 14 inches. While this heavy rain all but erased the drought in the southeast, September and October also proved to be very wet across the rest of Minnesota and eroded away at the areas of drought. By the end of October, the drought was effectively eliminated in much of the state except for a stubborn pocket in west central Minnesota. As the ground began to freeze in November, this area of moderate drought persisted into December.

The winter of 2007-08 got an early start with two snowstorms that left the state under a blanket of significant snow. By December 4th, snow depths were roughly 8 to 15 inches from the Twin Cities north to the Canadian border and from 2 to 8 inches south of the Twin Cities. An early and enduring snow cover has been rare in recent years in Minnesota.

Source: State Climatology Office, Minnesota DNR Division of Waters

