

the 5th, some snow developed that afternoon, with generally under an inch accumulating over a two-hour period. Temperatures were also held down that afternoon, only reaching about 40°F before the snow started to fly.

The second week of December was mild and windy. Temperatures were 15-20 degrees warmer than average from the 7th through the 11th. Highs reached into the low to mid 50s from the 9th through the 11th. The windy, mild conditions also helped keep overnight lows warm as well, staying above freezing on the 8th and 10th. A big change finally moved in late in the week, with an initial cold front moving through just after noon on the 11th. Temperatures cooled the rest of that afternoon and evening, with snow developing during the morning of the 12th. Snow and blowing snow continued through the evening hours, with 4-5 inches accumulating in most areas. Temperatures remained below normal on the 13th as the storm departed the region.

Winter made a strong appearance during the week of the 14th as a powerful but quick-moving storm affected the region on the 15th. Ahead of the storm on Monday the 14th, temperatures warmed to slightly above average levels, reaching the mid-40s that afternoon. The leading edge of the storm system and its cold front moved through late that evening, with some flurries developing before midnight. The storm wound up nicely over the eastern Plains of Colorado overnight and by the next morning heavy snow and strong winds were occurring. Travel was difficult most of that day as 6-12 inches of new snow accumulated. The storm moved out quickly however, and by late afternoon was just about done. Clearing skies that night allowed temperatures to plummet, with most areas dropping to zero and slightly below.

The air mass remained cold over the next couple of days, with high temperatures stuck in the 20s and teens through the 17th. We finally broke out of the cold air dur-

ing the morning of the 19th, as westerly winds pushed the cold air east and helped mild conditions return. This was a classic "Chinook" setup, where westerly winds downslope off the mountains and temperatures warm at the same time the air mass dries out. Temperatures maxed out in the low 50s on Saturday the 19th, even with over a foot of snow on the ground and the weak December sun angle. Temperatures remained mild through the next night and morning, before a weak system dropped through and produced a quick round of light snow the next afternoon. Only about a half inch fell, but it did provide a fresh coating and cooled temperatures back to normal.

The week of Christmas started off mild and ended up cold. Highs were in the low to mid-40s on the 21st and 22nd, ahead of an approaching storm. The cold front with this storm moved through during the evening of the 22nd, but there was very little moisture to work with until the next morning. Light snow fell during the morning and again in the evening on the 23rd and temperatures were about 10 degrees colder. Cold air then settled in for the next couple days, with highs on reaching the upper 20s on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. In addition, some light snow fell at times on Christmas Day, making for just about perfect conditions. Even colder air continued to filter in that afternoon, and highs only reached the mid-teens on the 26th with light snow falling during the morning. Christmas weekend ended with temperatures reaching the mid-20s on the 27th, about 10 degrees colder than normal. Overall, most of us accumulated 1-3 inches of new snow, adding to the nice snowpack that has been around since mid-November.

Cold air stuck around through the remainder of the month, with high temperatures failing to reach above freezing from the 28th through the 31st. There was plenty of sunshine each day, but the cold air mass and weak sun angle didn't allow temperatures to warm much. Highs

reached the low 30s on the 28th, then only low to mid-20's on the 29th-30th. A final surge of cold air moved in late on the 30th, holding highs in the mid- to upper teens on New Year's Eve. In addition, a few flurries developed during the early afternoon hours of the 31st.

A look ahead

January can see the coldest temperatures of the year, but there is often a proverbial "January thaw" where mild temperatures make a brief appearance. Precipitation is on the low side, with amounts generally less than an inch. The month experiences numerous sunny and windy days, with quick shots of snow in between.

December 2015 Weather Statistics

- Average High **37.1°** (-1.2°)
- 100-year return frequency value max **50.5°** min **32.6°**
- Average Low **13.4°** (+1.1°)
- 100-year return frequency value max **22.4°** min **5.4°**
- Monthly Precipitation **1.22"**
(+0.23", 19% above normal)
- 100-year return frequency value max 2.82" min 0.00"
- Monthly Snowfall **20.1"**
(+2.6", 13% above normal)
- Highest Temperature **55° on the 10th**
- Lowest Temperature **-4° on the 27th**
- Season to Date Snow **53.1"**
(+13.4", 25% above normal)
(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
- Season to Date Precip. **11.20"**
(+0.12", 1% above normal)
(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
- Heating Degree Days **1233** (+6)
- Cooling Degree Days **0** (0)

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Top weather events of 2015

By Bill Kappel

Record wet May

Precipitation was recorded on every day in May, with an astounding 12.49 inches of total precipitation for the month. The constant, and sometimes heavy, precipitation led to severe flooding throughout the region. Several states including Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas recorded their wettest May on record.

Record warm and dry September and October

Temperatures were above average almost every day during September and October. Our first widespread sub-freezing temperatures weren't recorded until the second week of October, about two weeks later than normal. During September, very little precipitation fell, with just over a 10th

of an inch recorded for the entire month. Only a trace of snow was recorded in October as well.

Heavy, wet snow on May 9

A strong storm system produced heavy, wet snow and strong winds on May 9, adding to the already exasperated flooding problems in the region from the record rainfall. Travel was severely affected, with many roads closed around the region.

Snowy start to the year

Several snowfalls affected the region in January and February, with both months recording snowfall totals well above normal. During the two-month period, just over 50 inches of snowfall accumulated. No single storms recorded more than a foot of snow, but there were nine periods which recorded an inch or more.

Heavy snow in November

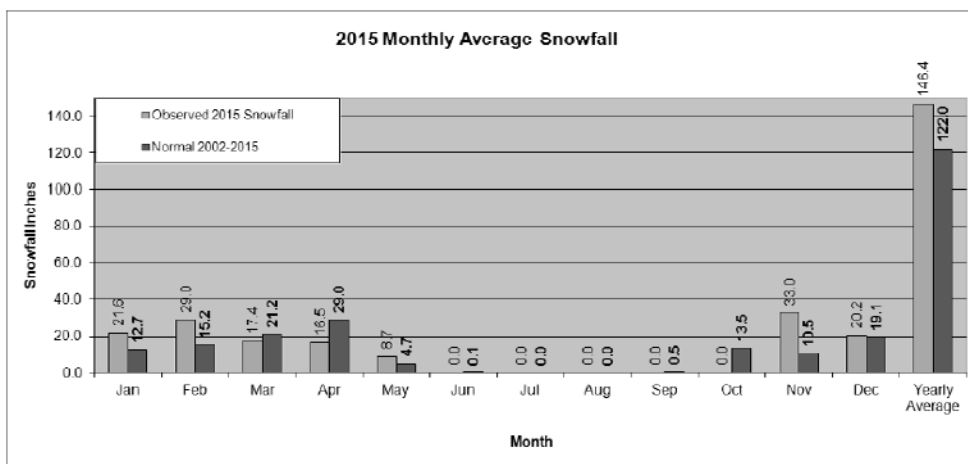
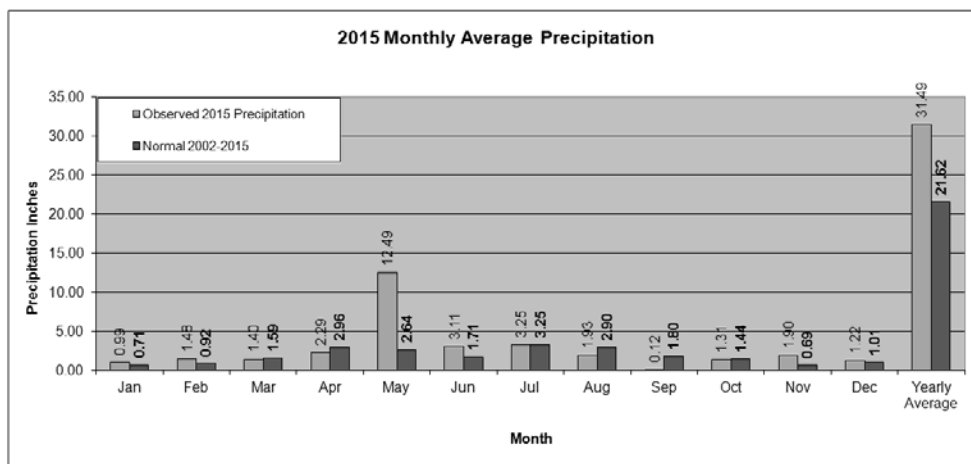
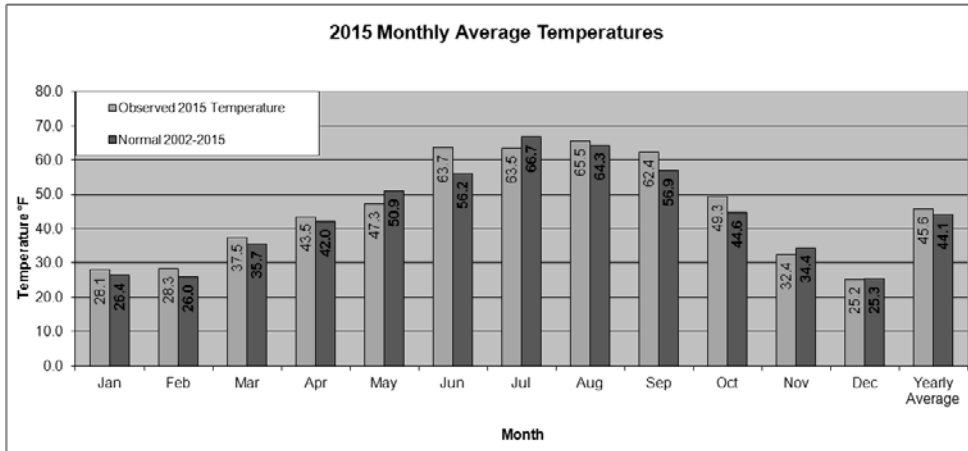
Two big snowstorms affected the region in November, with 4-8 inches on the 11th and 1-2 feet on the 16-17th. This was quite a change after the dry and warm September through October period. In addition, November is normally one of our driest months, so the snow and cold during the month was quite a change from normal.

Cool, wet summer

High temperatures failed to reach above 90°F for most locations above 7,000 feet throughout the summer. In addition, precipitation was above normal in both June and July, adding to the already wet conditions from May.

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Bill's 2015 Weather Summary												
	TEMPERATURE				EXTREMES		MONTHLY				HEATING COOLING	
	AVG MAX	AVG MIN	MONTHLY AVG	MONTHLY NORMAL	2015 HIGH	2015 LOW	PRECIP	NORMAL PRECIP	2015 SNOWFALL	NORMAL SNOW	DEGREE DAYS	DEGREE DAYS
JAN	41.1	15.2	28.1	26.4	62	-9	0.99	0.71	21.6	12.7	1143	
FEB	40.5	16.0	28.3	26.0	66	-8	1.48	0.92	29.0	15.2	1001	
MAR	52.5	22.5	37.5	35.7	75	-3	1.40	1.59	17.4	21.2	852	
APR	57.4	29.5	43.5	42.0	71	21	2.29	2.96	16.5	29.0	646	
MAY	57.5	37.0	47.3	50.9	72	22	12.49	2.64	8.7	4.7	550	
JUN	77.5	49.8	63.7	56.2	89	40	3.11	1.71	0.0	0.1	81	4
JUL	77.3	49.8	63.5	56.7	85	44	3.25	3.25	0.0	0.0	65	20
AUG	80.9	50.1	65.5	64.3	89	40	1.93	2.90	0.0	0.0	41	57
SEP	79.5	45.2	62.4	56.9	86	33	0.12	1.80	0.0	0.5	96	17
OCT	62.8	35.7	49.3	44.6	78	22	1.31	1.44	0.0	0.0	13.5	488
NOV	45.4	19.3	32.4	34.4	68	-4	1.90	0.69	33.0	10.5	979	
DEC	37.1	13.4	25.2	25.3	55	-4	1.22	1.01	20.2	19.1	1233	
ANNUAL	59.1	32.0	45.6	44.1	89	-9	31.49	21.62	146.4	122.0	7175	98



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