

# The Weather Watcher

## of the Inland Northwest

[www.weather.gov/Spokane](http://www.weather.gov/Spokane)



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

125 yrs of Weather	2
Z to A	2
Virtual Training	2
Summer 2017	3
NWS Mobile Wx	4
Fall Reminders	4

## Former Weather Bureau Employee Returns to NWS Spokane



NWS Spokane Staff : Andrew Kalin, Andy Brown, Jeffrey Cote, Laurie Nisbet with Marie Askins.

On July 3, 2017, the Weather Forecast Office in Spokane, WA had the distinct honor of hosting a former Weather Bureau employee, Marie Askins. The prior week, Marie's son reached out to WCM Andy Brown to arrange a visit for his mother. Marie was 94 years old and worked at the Spokane Weather Bureau Office in 1943. She returned to Spokane for a family reunion and was hoping she could stop by to learn how a modern National Weather Service office works. The staff was ecstatic to be able to interact with a true "Rosie the Riveter", especially someone who served in our home town for the Weather Bureau!

Marie explained how her brief career started with the Weather Bureau. After the war started, she took the Civil Service test and was given a list of different jobs to choose from and in her words, "I thought weather school offered something new to learn". Marie attended a 6 week course in Seattle during the spring of 1943 to learn how to observe the weather and relay critical information to forecasters. At the end of the training program, she worked at Boeing Field in Seattle until positions elsewhere

opened. Again she was given a choice; this time, it was between Anchorage AK, Bend OR, or Felts Field in Spokane. Since Spokane was her home, she started working at Felts Field near downtown Spokane August of 1943.

For the next 15 months, Marie worked as a weather observer at Felts Field with several other "Rosie's" and Meteorologist in Charge, Robert McComb. She explained that her routine duties included launching a pilot balloon every three hours from the roof of the 2 story airfield tower, tracking the balloon with a theodolite, and launching balloons with radiosondes every 12 hours. She also became proficient at analyzing weather charts and talking to pilots about the local weather. The staff at Felts Field would frequently relay this information by phone to the forecasters stationed in Seattle.

The tour ended by going outside to see the weather balloon. Marie couldn't stop smiling! She said many times how it brought back memories including the cold nights on the rooftop. When it was time to let the balloon go, she held on to the string as the wind whipped the balloon around her as her family watched on. She held on to it fiercely before someone finally said "you can let it go". She quipped back "I know!" Marie was enjoying the moment and wasn't quite ready for it to be over. ☀️ *Andy Brown*



Marie launching the weather balloon

### Editor's Notes

*The morning of August 21, 2017 was an exciting celestial event when the moon passed between the Earth and Sun, leading to a total solar eclipse. It was the first time in 38 years that one could be seen in this part of the county. Although the path of totality (total darkness) was further south, from Oregon into southern Idaho, much of the Inland NW was near 90% of darkness. At its peak at 10:27 AM, observed surface temperatures fell slightly across the region, about 2 to 6 degrees while winds became light.*

*Another note: the Autumn Equinox will be September 22nd at 1:02 pm. Then the length of the darkness will increase into December.*

*We're always looking for new ideas and stories for our publication. Please send to [nws.spokane@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.spokane@noaa.gov).*

*Newsletters are available on the NWS Spokane web page.*

*The main purpose of this publication is to keep our readers informed about NWS services and programs, and recognize those who help us with our mission, including weather spotters, observers, media, emergency managers, and government agencies.*

*All articles are written by the NWS staff. A special thanks goes to Andy Brown, Mark Turner & Jeremy Wolf for their contributions.*

**Follow NWS Spokane on Facebook and Twitter!**

# 125 years of Weather



NWS Spokane Mark Turner with Roy Patton of Parker Farm in Moscow ID

The Parker Farm at the University of Idaho in Moscow, ID received a prestigious Cooperative Observer Award—a 125 year Length of Service Award! The weather observations site was established in February 1, 1892. There are only 5 other Cooperative weather stations in Idaho have been reporting for this long, Coeur d’Alene, Garden Valley, Payette, Porthill and Lewiston.

The weather station was originally located on the U of I campus near Morrill Hall and was moved slightly several times until 1960. At that time it was relocated to the Plant Science Farm and has been in its present location since 1964. The current weather observer, Roy Patton, is the 17th recorded observer at the site, and has been our weather observer for 32 years; the longest serving observer on record!

The following weather extremes were recorded at the U of I Moscow station:

- High temperature = 109° F on 1961-08-04
- Low temperature = -42° F on 1968-12-30
- Max 24 hr precip = 2.51” on 1998-12-02
- Max 24 hr snowfall = 19” on 1933-01-02
- Greatest snow depth = 36” on 1969-02-02
- Greatest water year precip = 37.87” in 1995-96 ☀ *Mark Turner*



## Staff News

Andrew Kalin received a promotion to Forecaster at NWS Sioux Falls, SD and moved there this August. Paul Bos is no longer with the NWS. We wish Andrew and Paul the best of luck on their future endeavors. ☀ *Andy Brown*

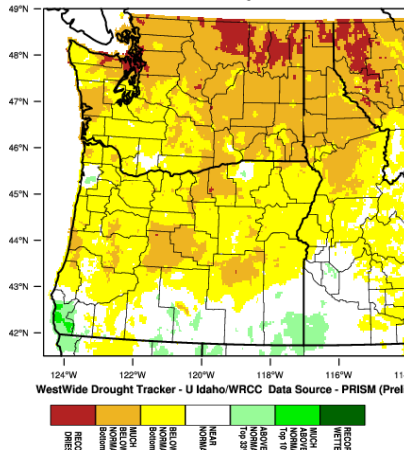
# Z to A: Zeros to Apps

It’s time to clean up the rain gauge and get ready for fall rains. In the meantime, hope you have been sending in your daily precipitation reports even if it’s a zero. Be a Hero and report your Zero. Zeros are important! For example, when a frontal passage arrives with rain detected on the radar, NWS forecasters like to know if anything is reaching the ground and how much. The length of a dry stretch is essential when determining the drought status of a region.

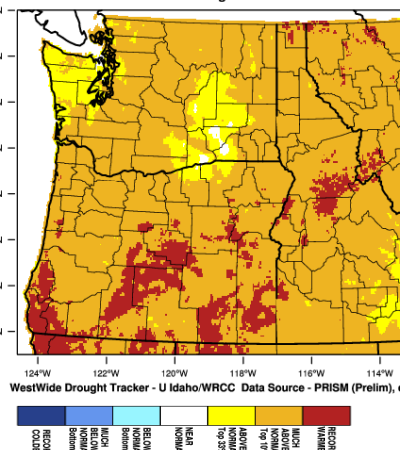
Do you like to report your precipitation on your phone? **CoCo-RaHS** has a phone app, both on iPhone and Android. A recent update now allows the observer to report a multi-day report on the app. What a terrific addition! See <https://www.cocorahs.org/> for details.

Still interested in weather apps? Try the **mPING** app. This crowd sourcing application allows anyone to report the precipitation type at their location. It can be important to share especially as the colder months approach with mixed precipitation, like: rain, sleet, freezing rain and snow. Other report types on this app include: hail, wind damage, tornado, flooding, mudslides and reduced visibility. No need for amounts; It’s just precipitation or weather type. Very handy! See <https://mping.nssl.noaa.gov/> for details. ☀ *Robin Fox*

Pacific Northwest - Precipitation  
June-August 2017 Percentile



Pacific Northwest - Mean Temperature  
June-August 2017 Percentile



Here's maps showing how Summer 2017 ranked precipitation and temperature wise.

# Virtual Training

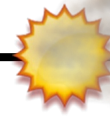
Need to brush up on your weather spotter training? The NWS Spokane web page has been updated in the Spotter Resources section. Look under the Local Programs tab for the Weather Spotter Program at [https://www.weather.gov/otx/Spotter\\_Resource\\_Page](https://www.weather.gov/otx/Spotter_Resource_Page) You will find an updated Virtual Spotter Training from June 2017 that includes both warm and cold season spotting criteria. It will take you to our NWS Spokane YouTube page where you can view the updated 4 part session on spotter training. Also, there are links to 3 Spotter training under the COMET MetEd training sites. In addition, you can find access to the Weather Spotter Field Guide and Sky Watcher Chart. Once you complete any of the online training, just email @ [nws.spokane@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.spokane@noaa.gov) and we will mark you down as a trained weather spotter. ☀ *Robin Fox*

Fall 2017 Outlook Temperatures—Warmer ☀

Precipitation—Seasonal ☀



# Summer 2017



After such a wet October through May, the weather made a dramatic turn over the summer with hot and dry conditions. There were very little noteworthy weather events of the summer, with the warm and dry conditions the big story. Thankfully, the dry conditions meant not much lightning, although when lightning did occur fires resulted. Through the end of August, Spokane Airport had recorded 64 consecutive days without measurable rain. The record streak is 73 days set back in 1917. Here's a table showing how the summer ranked precipitation and temperature wise.

Site	Jun-Aug 2017 Precip	Record lowest	Jun-Aug 2017 Avg temp	Record warmest
Spokane	0.71" (5 <sup>th</sup> driest)	0.44 (2015)	71.2 (3 <sup>rd</sup> warmest)	72.7 (2015)
Lewiston	0.65" (6 <sup>th</sup> driest)	0.01 (1883)	74.8 (7 <sup>th</sup> warmest)	76.8 (2015)
Wenatchee Waterplant	0.13" (6 <sup>th</sup> driest)	0.04 (1970)	74.5 (6 <sup>th</sup> warmest)	76.9 (2015)
Ritzville	0.32 (8 <sup>th</sup> driest)	0.11 (2015)	69.2 (11 <sup>th</sup> warmest)	72.6 (1961)
Republic	0.54 (3 <sup>rd</sup> driest)	0.24 (1914)	64.9 (5 <sup>th</sup> warmest)	67.2 (2015)



**June** had the most active summer weather. A strong cold front brought showers and a few thunderstorms on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Temperatures cooled from the mid 90s on the 7<sup>th</sup> to the mid 70s on the 8<sup>th</sup>. A thunderstorm developed behind the front over Banks Lake producing strong winds with Ephrata gusting to 47 mph. Another weather system on the 26<sup>th</sup> brought a line of strong thunderstorms which tracked from the Spokane and Deer Park areas east to Sandpoint producing frequent lightning, localized heavy rain, and wind gusts up to 45 mph. Pullman and Lewiston also had thunderstorms with wind gusts to around 40 mph. Another area of thunderstorms tracked from Mission Ridge to Palisades starting several fires which became large on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> due to gusty winds, warm temperatures, and low relative humidity. More thunderstorms on the 28<sup>th</sup> over North Idaho produced brief heavy rain and pea size hail in Coeur d'Alene, Priest Lake, and Bonners Ferry.



**July** brought hot and dry conditions. There were three days with thunderstorms beginning on the 10<sup>th</sup> as thunderstorms tracked near the Canadian border from Laurier to Northport producing brief heavy rain. More significant lightning occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> with most storms dry. This resulted in several new fires with the most significant one the Craig Mountain Complex south of Lewiston which burned 50,395 acres. More dry lightning occurred over northeast Washington and North Idaho on the 20<sup>th</sup>.



**August** brought warm, smoky, and hazy conditions especially for the first 11 days of the month. Persistent north to northwest flow brought an abundance of smoke into the region from British Columbia. A strong cold front brought some relief for the middle of the month with light showers on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and high temperatures in many areas only reaching the mid to upper 70s. A dry cold front late on the 16<sup>th</sup> contributed to rapid fire spread of the Monument Hill Fire near Quincy with several structures lost. Hot, dry, smoky conditions returned for the end of the month with Lewiston reaching 105° on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

☀ *Jeremy Wolf*

## Summer Weather Statistics

Wenatchee Water Plant	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Avg High Temp	79.9	92.4	91.3	87.9
Departure from Norm	+0.1	+4.2	+3.7	+2.7
Avg Low Temp	56.5	63.3	63.5	61.1
Departure from Norm	+0.9	+1.8	+3.0	+1.9
Total Precip	0.10	0.00	0.03	0.13
Departure from Norm	-0.56	-0.34	-0.16	-1.06
Total Snowfall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Departure from Norm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lewiston Airport	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Avg High Temp	81.4	95.3	93.2	90.0
Departure from Norm	+2.9	+6.0	+4.4	+4.4
Avg Low Temp	54.9	62.4	61.4	59.6
Departure from Norm	+1.5	+2.8	+2.2	+2.2
Total Precip	0.62	0.01	0.02	0.65
Departure from Norm	-0.62	-0.65	-0.67	-1.94
Total Snowfall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Departure from Norm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spokane Airport	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Avg High Temp	77.8	88.5	87.8	84.7
Departure from Norm	+4.0	+5.2	+4.9	+4.7
Avg Low Temp	53.0	60.5	59.7	57.7
Departure from Norm	+2.6	+4.2	+3.9	+3.6
Total Precip	0.71	T	T	0.71
Departure from Norm	-0.54	-0.64	-0.59	-1.77
Total snowfall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Departure from Norm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

## Remember your Autumn Spotter Checklist

<b>Reduced Visibility:</b> under a mile due to smoke, fog...
<b>Strong Winds:</b> 30mph+ or damage
<b>Hail:</b> pea size or larger
<b>Tornado or Funnel Cloud</b>
<b>Heavy Rain:</b> Showery: 1/2" + in 1hr Steady: 1"+ in 12hr/1.5"+ in 24hr
<b>First Snow of the Season!!!</b>
<b>Then Snow:</b> 2"+ valleys & 4"+ mountains
<b>Any Mixed Precipitation</b>
<b>Any Flooding</b>
<b>Travel Problems or Damage:</b> due to severe/hazardous weather

## NWS Mobile Weather

Take the weather with you on your smartphone! Wherever you are, you can get the local NWS forecast with one click on your home screen. Bookmark it to make sure that you have the latest weather news and information on the go. Add it to your Home Screen and you have an instant app.

- Visit [www.mobile.weather.gov](http://www.mobile.weather.gov) from your phone's internet browser. Search for your city.
- Click the Send button (iPhone) or the Menu button (Android)
- Choose "Add to Home Screen" and then "Add."
- It's that easy! Now you are one click away from your local NWS weather forecast.

## Fall Reminders.....

**Observers:** When sub-freezing temperatures are expected, please winterize your rain gauge. Remove the funnel & inner tube. Bring it indoors. Review the rules on observing and measuring snow through the training shows @ [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org)

**Spotters:** Please report your 1st snowfall of the season and then after that – any significant snow.

## Be Prepared—Plan an Emergency Kit

- ⇒ *Water—1 gallon/person for at least 3 days*
- ⇒ *Food—at least for 3 days*
- ⇒ *Battery powered (or hand cranked) radio & NOAA Wx Radio. Extra batteries*
- ⇒ *Flashlights—extra batteries*
- ⇒ *First Aid Kit*
- ⇒ *Whistle & Local maps*
- ⇒ *Dust mask, plastic sheeting & duct tape—shelter in place*
- ⇒ *Tools: Wrench & pliers—turn off utilities, can opener*
- ⇒ *Cell phone with charger(s)*

**Watch :** Conditions are favorable for severe or hazardous weather around the watch area.  
**CAUTION—Watch the Sky!**

**Warning :** Severe or hazardous weather is likely or is occurring in the warned area.  
**DANGER—ACT NOW!**

## The Weather Watcher Of the Inland Northwest



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**Trivia: Making plans for the next solar eclipse? When will it be?**