***MARCH 1998:*** The first month of the meteorological Spring was highlighted by wetter than normal conditions and temperatures that represented a mix of Winter (first 3 weeks) and Summer (last week) across the Washington/Baltimore area. A very active subtropical jet, so prevalent during the last half of Winter, continued to provide abundant moisture and energy for storms systems during the first three weeks of March. Monthly precipitation totals at many locations topped 5 inches for the third consecutive month, pushing the January-March 1998 totals over 16 inches (nearly half of the annual totals) at all three of the major airports. In addition, this three month period was the wettest such period ever observed at both BWI and IAD, and the second wettest at DCA (4th overall in Washington). The month's first storm system generated up to three quarters of an inch of rain on the 2nd and 3rd. The rain changed over to a brief period of wet snow across some of the northern and western suburbs. Up to 6" of snow was reported in Cecil County, MD and up to 1.5" at BWI (the largest total of the season). A few days later, another storm system dumped up to two inches of rain on the local area between the 7th and 9th. About a week later, a slow moving storm system drenched parts of the local region with up to three inches of rain over a four day span (17th-21st) and generated thunderstorms on the evening of the 20th. Once again, the rain ended briefly as wet snow in some areas, with BWI recording the only measurable snowfall of the three local airports. The 2.1 inches of snowfall at BWI in March was the snowiest month of the 1997-98 snow season.

Most of March was highlighted by wintry-like weather, yet monthly temperature departures were near- to slightly above normal at the three major airports. This was due to an exceptionally warm period during the last week which produced readings more typical of June and July. Highs soared above 80°F on the last five days of the month at many locations and resulted in a new all-time record March high at BWI and tied the previous such record at IAD on the 30th, with highs of 89°F at both locations. These few warm days erased almost all of the temperature deficits incurred during the first 25 days of the month. Of the three major airports, only DCA recorded slightly below normal temperatures while both BWI and IAD recorded monthly departures between +1.5°F and +2.5°F. In sharp contrast, there were 20 days with at or below normal temperatures at DCA, including the most prolonged period of cold weather since late December 1997. A blast of frigid Arctic air, rarely seen this Winter, from the 11th-13th produced three consecutive days with average temperatures at or below 32°F (the first such occurrence since January 1997 at DCA) across the local area. DCA observed back-to-back highs of 34°F and 37°F on the 11th and 12th and a high of only 41°F on the 13th. Lows dipped into the teens and twenties across much of the local area during this same period. There were 10 March days with lows at or below freezing, more than both January (7) and February (8).

### *MARCH 1998 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:*

| Station | Temperatures (°F) | | | | | Extreme/Month-Day | | Precipitation (In) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Location | AvMx | AvMn | AvgT | NmlT | DepNml | MaxT | MinT | Total | Norm | DepNml | Snow |
| National (DCA) | 55.1 | 38.7 | 46.9 | 47.2 | -0.3 | 87/20 | 20/12 | 5.40 | 3.17 | +2.23 | Trace |
| Baltimore (BWI) | 55.4 | 36.3 | 45.8 | 44.1 | +1.7 | 89/30 | 17/13 | 5.56 | 3.38 | +2.18 | 2.1 |
| Dulles (IAD) | 55.6 | 35.3 | 45.5 | 43.2 | +2.3 | 89/30 | 16/13 | 5.60 | 3.17 | +2.43 | Trace |
| Ft. Belvoir (DAA) | 58.6 | 38.9 | 48.8 | N/A | N/A | 93/30 | 19/13 | 5.75 | 3.7 | +2.1 | Trace |
| Andrews AFB (ADW) | 55.5 | 37.6 | 46.5 | N/A | N/A | 90/30 | 18/13 | 4.45 | 3.6 | +0.9 | Trace |

***LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL:*** *Wet March = Wet Spring?*

With a wet March behind us, our attention turns toward the remainder of Spring and what is in store for the Washington/Baltimore area? Does a March with above normal precipitation necessarily mean a wet Spring? Below is a list of the last ten March's with above normal precipitation at DCA and the corresponding Spring total. [Normal Spring Precipitation at DCA: 9.54"]

| Year | March Precipitation | | Spring Precipitation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Dep. Nml. | Total | Dep. Nml. |
| 1997 | 4.15 | +0.98 | 9.60 | +0.04 |
| 1996 | 3.60 | +0.43 | 11.73 | +2.19 |
| 1994 | 8.45 | +5.28 | 11.59 | +2.05 |
| 1993 | 6.82 | +3.65 | 13.84 | +4.30 |
| 1992 | 3.48 | +0.31 | 9.44 | - 0.10 |
| 1991 | 4.42 | +1.25 | 7.38 | - 2.16 |
| 1989 | 4.30 | +1.13 | 15.57 | +6.03 |
| 1984 | 6.14 | +2.97 | 13.65 | +4.11 |
| 1983 | 4.84 | +1.67 | 16.34 | +6.80 |
| 1980 | 5.04 | +1.87 | 10.96 | +1.42 |