Volume 3, Number 7

October 2010

SERVING NWS BOISE WEATHER SPOTTERS AND COOPERATIVE OBSERVERS

Sage Winds

National Weather Service, Boise, Idaho

Sage Winds

October 2010

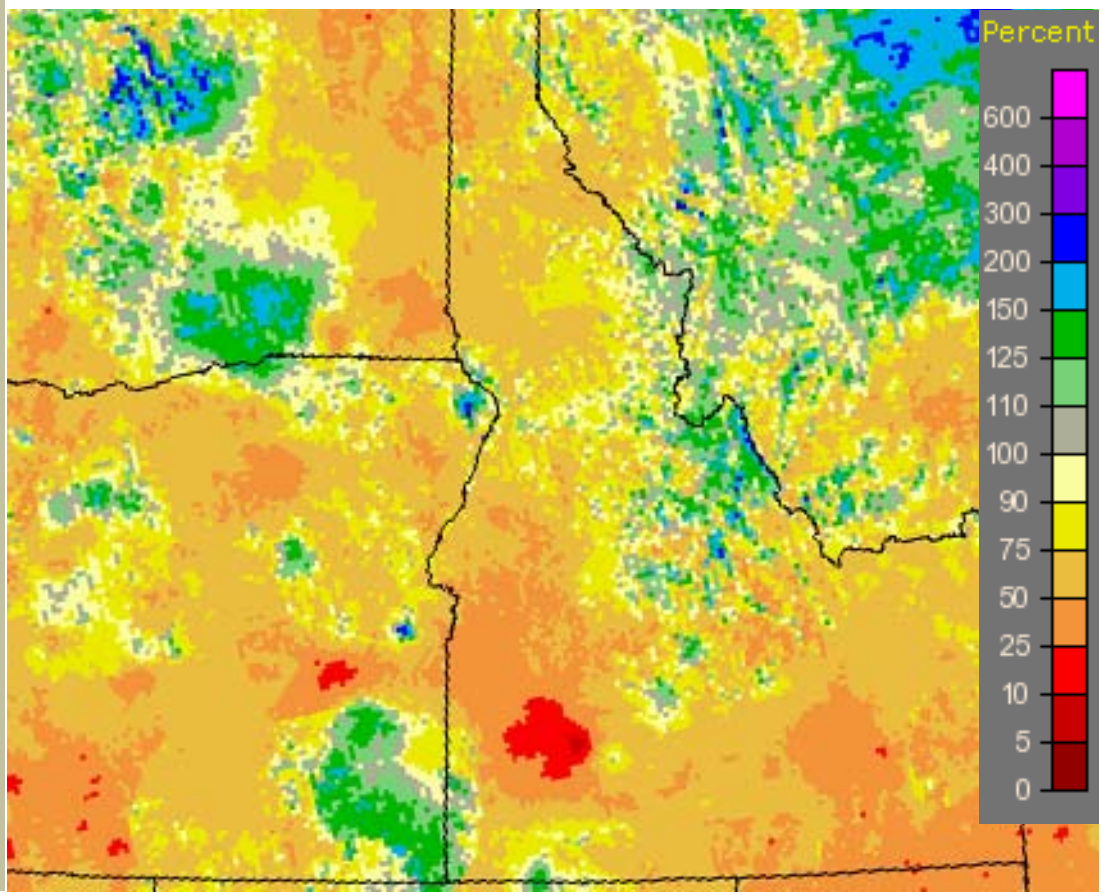
http://weather.gov/boise

Summer Precipitation

The chart below shows the percent of normal precipitation from July 6 through October 6. Most of the area received less than normal precipitation through this time period with just a few small pockets with barely above normal. The summer saw no persistent pattern of heat or cold, just a series of weak Pacific storms moving across the area keeping the temperature in the area alternating between slightly above normal and slightly below normal.

The chart below was extracted from the NWS Precipitation web page at

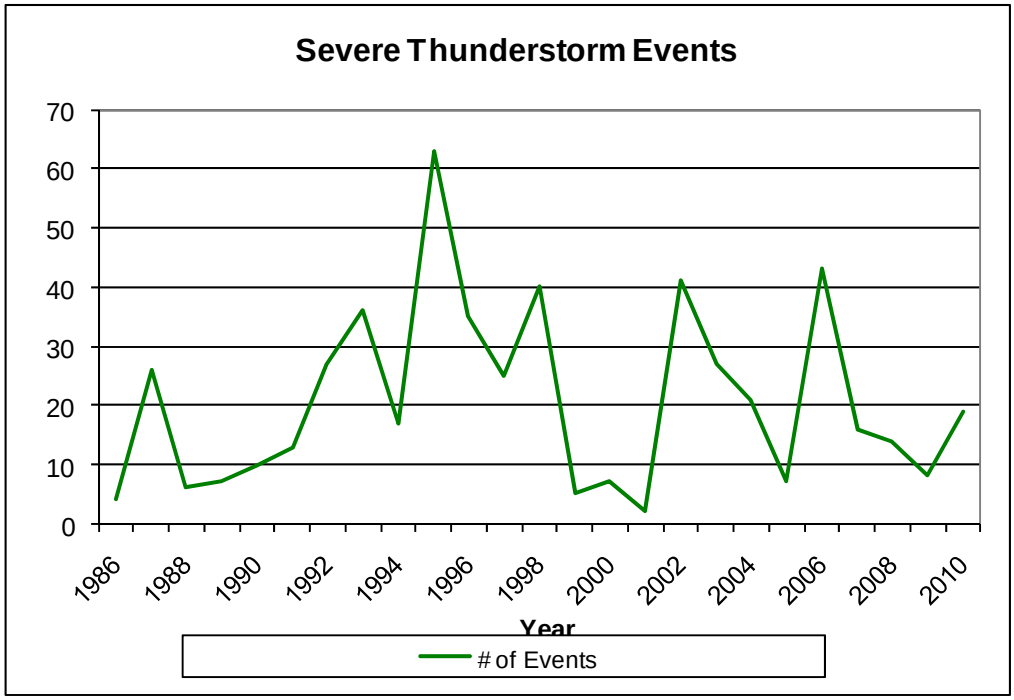
http://water.weather.gov/precip/



Severe Weather Frequency

Those of you who have attended SkyWarn training session have heard me talk about how fortunate we are with our low frequency of Severe Thunderstorms compared to other parts of the country. So how did this past summer season stack up?

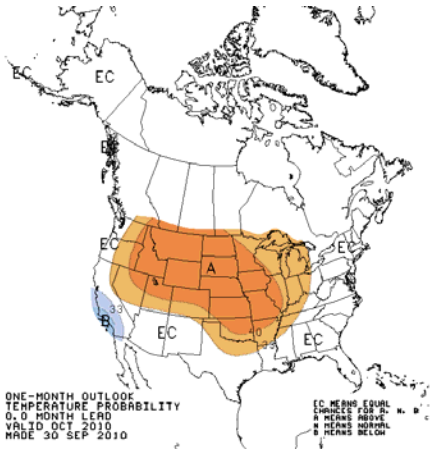
The Boise NWS office takes care of Southwest Idaho and Southeast Oregon. The chart to the right shows the number of Severe Thunderstorm Events since 1986 over this area. The average for all thee years is 21, in 2010 there were 19 events reported over the area which is just a tad below the average value.



So this year was not so bad, right? Well the number of events tells only part of the story. There were two events that were significant, one for its severity and one for its size. The most severe storm of the season was the April 20 event just east of Burns. Winds from this downburst were among the strongest observed in this 15 year record. Substantial damage was reported to structures in the path of this storm. The big event was the June 28th event that swept across a wide swath of Adams and Valley Counties. This second storm snapped hundreds of trees and damaged a significant number of roofs. This Adams/Valley County storm was also significant in that it was an outflow from a thunderstorm complex far to the southwest near Ontario, Oregon! There was no lightning associated with the winds as they moved though the area. Those with a good memory will also recall June 28 as one of the hottest days of the year. Boise reached 102 on this day. We know it was hot in McCall but the winds knocked power out to the observing site at the airport causing a loss of data for the day.

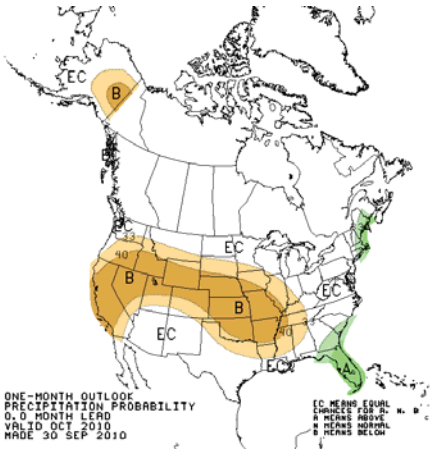
So the number of events was near normal but two of them were far stronger than most storms that hit the area.

October Outlook



<Temperature Outlook

Precipitation Outlook>



http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/index.php

Getting Ready for Winter

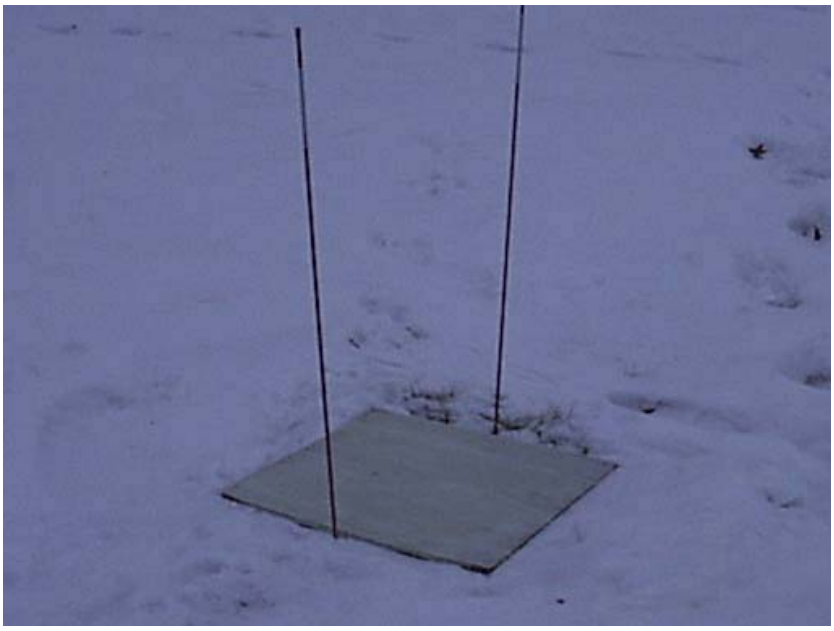
October is a transition month between summer and winter over this part of the country. We usually get our last waning days of hot weather and we usually get our first significant snow by the end of the month. So now is a good time to prepare to measure that snow that will eventually fall.

Your snow reports are a significant help to our forecast operations. With all our latest gadgets including radar, satellite, and remote weather stations, your reports of snowfall are the most reliable reports we get. We need those reports.

So what should you do? First, now is a good time to look around to pick the best open area you have around your house. Pick a place that is flat and away from trees and bushes. Perhaps the middle of your backyard or frontyard, as long as there are no trees nearby. The picture to the right shows a backyard with the circle indicating the best place to make measurements. If you live in a more rural community, your options will be easier.

The next thing to do is to have a good measuring device. If you have time and skills, making a snowboard is the best way to go. A snowboard should be any lightly colored board that is about 2 feet by 2 feet. A piece of plywood painted white works very well. Ideally, it should be painted white to minimize heating by sunlight. Place your snowboard in the spot you have chosen. Mark the location of the snowboard with a stake so you can find it after a fresh snowfall.

So now you have a place to measure the snow, perhaps you have a snowboard as pictured below. What's the best way to measure the snow? Whether you use a snowboard or not, always take several measurements and average the results. Don't pick the deepest snow drift, pick what appears to be an average area and make 3 to 10 measurements and average all the results. Snow should be measured to the nearest tenth of an inch. If you're using a snowboard, clean the board off after you measure it, but only clean the board no sooner than 6 hours after the last measurement. If it is snowing heavy you can measure more frequently, but only clear the board every 6 hours or longer.



Call the NWS with your measurements and tell us the time the snow began and ended. Call us during the storm if it is snowing more than an inch/hour or if you receive 4 or more inches. Call us when the storm tapers off with storm totals.

And if you enjoy outdoor winter sports, **Think Snow!**

Weather Humor

I grew up in Detroit, my favorite winter activity was to ride my bike around during and after big snowstorms. I just loved slipping and sliding on my bike on the deserted roads. After riding for a while, and noticing all the snow piling up in driveways, the next thing I did was grab the snow shovel and start shoveling. I didn't stop at our house, all the neighbors had their driveways done as well. Most may not have enjoyed this "chore" but it was no chore for me, at least I was outside enjoying the weather!

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Weather in the News

Rare tornados near Flagstaff—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/39552111#39552111 In this video is a short clip of my counterpart at the Flagstaff office (George Howard). Some of these tornadoes moved right next the NWS Office in Belmont, AZ

More reports from Flagstaff tornado—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39528247/ns/weather/

Tornado in NY City—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39238600/ns/weather/ This tornado passed over my daughter who lives in NY. She was underground in the subway and never knew it was their until later in the day.

Flooding in China—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39531137/ns/weather/

Another Hail size record—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39467149/ns/local_news-wichita_ks/

Record heat in LA—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39387278/ns/weather/

Climate change—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39508745/ns/us_news-environment/

When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors—http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39526897/ns/weather/

Solar Cycle and Earth's Climate—
http://www.nature.com/news/2010/101006/full/news.2010.519.html