



Under the Big Sky January 18, 2008

Ice Jam Information:

The photo above was taken by Richland County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Butch Renders during the March 2003 Ice Jams that occurred on the Yellowstone River. This water is a few miles north of Savage, about a mile west of the actual river channel, and did some significant damage to irrigation ditches and affected a few homes. Did you know that Montana accounts for 9% of all ice jams reported nationwide? In Montana, the Milk, Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers account for the majority of the ice jams in the state. The US Army Corps of Engineers has a Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory that has done a lot of work on gathering data from local sources on ice jams that occur. You can view the database of past ice jams by clicking on the map at: <http://www.crrel.usace.army.mil/icejams/>

They also have a research paper that was done specifically on Montana Ice Jams. It's only 6 pages, and had an excellent historical look at the 1899 ice jam in Glendive that killed 12 people. <http://www.crrel.usace.army.mil/ierd/tectran/IEbul19.pdf>

It's official, 2007 is the 10th Warmest on Record for the United States, and 5th Warmest Worldwide!!: More details on this article can be found at: http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20080115_warmest.html Also, the NWS Glasgow office has written up a climate summary for the year for both Glasgow and all of northeast Montana. You can read them at: <http://www.weather.gov/glasgow> in the headlines section of the site. This data was collected from our official observation sites, which includes over 70 cooperative weather observers.

Solar Activity Expected to Increase: Scientists at the Space Weather Prediction Center have found a new sunspot on the sun which is signifying the start of a new solar cycle (Solar Cycle 24). This 11 year cycle of solar activity can bring with it increased risks for power grids, interrupt or enhance communications for the military, civilian and airlines, and can even affect cell phones and ATM transactions. You can read more about it at: http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20080104_sunspot.html

Drought Intensifies in Northeastern Montana: On January 9th, the NWS office in Glasgow had only received .9” of snowfall for the season. We’ve added a few more inches this week, but it’s still well below normal. Some locations such as the Winnett area have seen some accumulations, but others such as Wolf Point have had even less than Glasgow. The Drought Monitor was update recently to change much of the area north of the Missouri River to moderate drought conditions. You can view the latest at: <http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html> The Drought Monitor is updated weekly on Thursdays.

If you are experiencing impacts from the drought (which we thankfully haven’t had any so far), it’s good to let us know about it, as well as the drought impact reporter, a website that allows you to enter in impacts you are experiencing from drought. This time of year it may be related to water storage, but during crop season you may experience crop damages or losses, or have to move livestock to greener pastures which could be hundreds of miles away. Impacts can be reported online at: <http://droughtreporter.unl.edu/>

Cool Weather Videos:

Have you checked out You Tube lately? We’ve been looking more and more lately, and finding just about everything you can imagine, including the Abbot and Costello, “Who’s on First?” routine to show my baseball loving kids.

Here are a few good videos of weather phenomena that I have come across lately:

- Gravity Wave Cloud:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwdDKtn5HD0&feature=related>
- Ball Lightning:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ioN-3UWYrY&feature=related>
- Shelf Cloud near Grand Forks, ND:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXEK-xBO15k&feature=related>

New Forecaster: Last but not least, I mentioned a few months ago that one of our forecasters moved on to Fairbanks, AK. We have promoted a meteorological intern from our office into the forecaster position. Andrew Zimmerman is our newest forecaster, and has done an excellent job here since he arrived in October of 2006. So, now the search is on for his replacement.

Recent Tornado Outbreak Affects the Mid-West: You may have heard about the recent tornado outbreak that occurred through Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin, producing 44 tornados! An event this far north at this time of year is very rare, and the folks in southern Wisconsin actually had anywhere from 6 to 12 inches of snow on the ground in the days leading up to the event. You can read about the events and even see some photographs of the damage at the following NWS office websites:

- Springfield, MO (the tornado came right over the NWS office!):
http://www.crh.noaa.gov/sgf/?n=010808_tornadoes
- St. Louis, MO: http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lx/?n=01_07_08
- Milwaukee, WI: http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mkx/?n=010708_tor

