

Heavy Rain Continues Into July August 3, 2015

The heavy rains of spring continued right through the first week of July before finally giving way to a more typical summertime pattern. Rainfall totals during July were particularly excessive from south central through east central Oklahoma, with widespread amounts of 10-15 inches through that area. According to preliminary data from the Oklahoma Mesonet, the statewide average for the month was 5.89 inches, 3.01 inches above normal and the sixth wettest July since records began in 1895. East central and south central sections of the state were 6.44 inches and 4.04 inches above normal, respectively. Haskell led the Mesonet with 15.05 inches during July, and seven other stations registered double-digit rainfall amounts. The Altus and Tipton Mesonet sites finished with less than an inch, the former receiving a paltry 0.16 inches. Idabel came in with a total of just 1.04 inches, more than 2.5 inches below normal for that location.

The 2015 calendar year is on pace to top 1957 as the wettest on record. The moisture in July brought the January-July rainfall total up to a statewide average of 34.73 inches, nearly 13 inches above normal and ranked as the wettest first seven months of the year on record. That tops the previous record holder's total of 34.17 inches set back in 1957, on its way to a record annual total of 47.88 inches. The Mesonet site at Tishomingo led the state over that period with 56.67 inches of precipitation. The annual average at Tishomingo is 44 inches. Many other stations across south central and east central Oklahoma have already surpassed their annual average in just the first seven months alone.

Although July's statewide average temperature was just a tad below normal at 81.4 degrees, the state still had plenty of hot, miserable weather. A large area of high pressure camped over the state for much of the second half of the month. That persistent summertime feature of the Southern Plains provided ample sunshine and steered storms system up and around Oklahoma. Heat alerts were fairly common during the second half of the month with heat index values of 105-115 across much of the state. Vinita captured both the number one and two spot in the unbearable category with heat index readings of 118 degrees on the 24th and 116 degrees on the 19th. The 120 Mesonet stations registered a heat index of at least 110 degrees 169 times during July. A heat index of at least 105 degrees was recorded 930 times. The highest actual air temperature during the month was 108 degrees at Buffalo on the 13th. Arnett was held to a rain-cooled 68 degrees for the lowest maximum temperature. The lowest minimum temperature recorded was 52 degrees at three Panhandle stations on July 8. The January-July statewide average of 59.4 degrees was near normal and ranked that period as the 53rd warmest on record.

The U.S. Drought Monitor continued to show an Oklahoma devoid of drought, and the NWS' Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) Monthly drought outlook for August predicted more of the same. CPC's August outlooks called for increased odds of above normal precipitation and below normal temperatures for the northern half of the state during August.

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