

Weather of 2005

Warm Year with Alternating Wet/Dry Periods, Some Flooding, Record Tropical Season, Winter Arrives Early

2005 will undoubtedly be remembered for its extremely active tropical season that included devastating Hurricane Katrina. Although tropical systems did not affect the area as directly as they did in 2004, the indirect effects were definitely felt. The other big story was the unusually warm temperatures that persisted nearly every month of the year.

The New Year was off to a balmy start with a record high of 68 F on New Year's Day. The first half of January felt more like spring with abundant rainfall and very mild temperatures. Only two of the first 13 days saw freezing temperatures. However, a strong cold front on the 14th brought a dramatic pattern change. The second half of January was much colder and drier. Freezing temperatures occurred every day from the 14th on. The month's only significant snow of 4" fell on the 22nd.

February saw a return to relatively mild temperatures that persisted most of the month. Little precipitation fell until a couple of heavy snows during the final week. 7" of snow fell on the 24th, and another 7.5" fell on the 28th.

March began cold, snowy and windy. Scattered snow showers were observed nearly every day in the first two weeks, but most of the snow did not accumulate east of the Allegheny Front. The first three weeks of March were bone dry with only .10" of precipitation, all melted snow. However, nearly 4 inches of rain fell from two heavy rain systems late in the month. On the 23rd, 1.16" fell, and a cut-off Low over the Mid-Atlantic dumped 2.53" on the 27th-28th, causing quite a bit of flooding, as this heavy rain also melted a deep snow pack in the mountains. A water level of 11.41' was measured at Wills Creek, the highest reading since September 1996, leading to an evacuation of Locust Grove.

Another major storm system impacted the area on April 1-3. A total of 1.23" rain fell. Heavy snow fell behind the system in the higher elevations, and winds gusted up to 62 mph in the area, causing tree and structural damage. Temperatures made a quick rebound from a high of only 42 on the 3rd to 84 on the 6th. The rest of April remained mild and dry until another weather system brought 1.06" rain on the 22nd-23rd. A weak cold front behind the first system brought more mountain snow on the 24th-25th and gusty winds. The high on the 25th only reached 43 F.

Though 2005 was a warm year, May was a major exception. A mean temperature of 56.8 F tied it with 1994 as the 4th coolest May on record. The high only reached 48 on the 2nd, and snow flurries flew in the mountains on the 3rd. Nighttime lows were close to freezing the first 8 days. Precipitation was slightly above normal, with nearly about 80% of it falling in a 5-day period from the 19th-23rd. On the 19th-20th a strong coastal storm brought 1.58", and on the 23rd another 1.40" fell from heavy thunderstorms.

Temperatures made a dramatic recovery in June. Days were consistently warm, and the overnight mean low temperature of 61.1 F was the warmest on June record. A monthly mean temperature of 71.1 tied June 2005 as 5th warmest on record. Every day from the 5th through the end of the month reached 80 or above, except for a brief cool stretch from the 16th-20th where high temperatures failed to reach 80. Thunderstorms were scattered about, with one storm on the 10th producing so much lightning that a webcam atop Big Savage Mountain near Frostburg, which only takes three instantaneous snapshots per hour, captured a large bolt over Cumberland.

July was very warm, wet and humid. Only two days failed to reach 80. Two tropical systems fueled heavy rain and thunderstorms. The remnants of Tropical Storm Cindy moved up the east coast and dropped 1.92" on the 7th-8th. Another 3.78" on the 13th-17th were attributed to the remains of Dennis. On the 13th, a monster thunderstorm hammered the Cumberland area with buckets of rain and nearly continuous cloud-to-ground lightning. A storm spotter in Cumberland reported 3 inches of rain in an hour, and fellow weather observer Tim Thomas reported a lightning strike that destroyed a digital thermometer in his backyard. Lightning also struck two transformers at a substation, knocking out power to thousands of customers. The entire city of Cumberland was badly flooded. Pea-sized hail and locally damaging winds were also reported in the area. At this station, 2.20" of rain fell, with 2 inches between 3 and 4pm.

The weather continued unseasonably warm and uncomfortably humid, but beginning in late July, the weather turned bone dry. August was the driest month in 3 ½ years, with most of the rain falling in the final week from a weak cold front and a brushing from the remnants of Katrina, which passed mostly to our

west and north. The summer of 2005 set a new record for warmest average minimum temperature, 63.6 F. The warmth continued into September, which was also extremely dry. Nearly two-thirds of the month had highs 80 or above. Only 0.34" of rain fell all month, the 2nd driest September and 5th driest month ever.

October began warm with temperatures around 80 the first week with no rain until the 7th, when the area experienced an abrupt end to the extreme dryness. A slow-moving cold front, combined with the remnants of Tropical Storm Tammy, produced 2.45" rain on the 7th-8th. Tremendous amounts of rain, upwards of 10 inches in some areas, fell on the eastern half of the state. The second week was cool and cloudy as another big storm lurked just off the Mid-Atlantic coast. The third week was mild, dry and breezy before two major storms affected the area during the final 10 days. While cold heavy rains (1.56") fell here, an unusually heavy early season snow hammered the mountains on the 24th-25th, with over a foot in some areas. As trees were still leaved, many trees and power lines went down. In some areas, it took nearly a week to restore power. Damage was similar to that of the late October 2002 mountain ice storm. This major storm resulted from the merging of three systems: A low over the Ohio Valley, Hurricane Wilma, the strongest hurricane ever in the Atlantic and one that ravaged much of Florida, and another tropical storm Alpha.

Mild weather continued into November, especially during the first half of the month. Mid 70s were recorded from the 3rd-6th. However, the area experienced a white Thanksgiving after 3 inches of snow fell the previous evening. Temperatures dropped to a chilly 15 on Black Friday. On the evening 29th, a 1.76-inch deluge from heavy thunderstorms caused widespread flash flooding again in the area.

December was the coldest month of 2005, with 14.5" of snowfall, all of it during the first half. Two major winter storms hit the area. On the 8th-9th, 8 inches of snow fell. Then on the 15th, another 5.5" of snow and sleet fell. Temperatures were consistently cold than normal during the first three weeks, with a low of 8 on the 14th, before a moderating trend around the holidays. A cold rain mixed with sleet was recorded on Christmas Day.

2005 Weather Statistics

2005 Monthly and Annual Climate Summary LaVale, MD, Allegany County Observers Dave Drewery & Charlie Orlick (data compiled by Nate Mullins) Station Observation Time: Midnight Lat: 39.657780°, Long: - 78.821871°, Elevation 1016'										
Month	Temperature, ° F							Number of days		
	Mean Max	Mean Min	Mean Temp	Max Temp	Date	Min Temp	Date	Max > 90	Max ≤ 32	Min < 32
Jan	38.8	25.2	32.0	68	1	4	24	0	9	20
Feb	44.1	27.4	35.7	60	6	14	19	0	1	21
Mar	46.8	30.1	38.5	65	30	12	4	0	2	19
Apr	64.7	41.9	53.3	84	6	32	16	0	0	1
May	68.1	45.5	56.8	86	11	33	5	0	0	0
Jun	81.0	61.1	71.1	90	14*	49	1	2	0	0
Jul	84.3	65.1	74.7	92	27	56	24	2	0	0
Aug	81.9	64.5	73.2	93	14*	55	23	6	0	0
Sep	79.6	56.2	67.9	88	27*	37	30	0	0	0
Oct	64.0	48.7	56.4	82	5	32	31*	0	0	2
Nov	55.4	35.0	45.2	76	4	15	25	0	0	13
Dec	37.6	26.0	31.8	54	23	8	14	0	7	26
Year	62.2	43.9	53.1	93	8/14*	4	1/24	10	19	102

Precipitation, Inches			Number of days				Snow/ice, Inches			
Month	Total Precip	Max Day	Date	> 0.01"	> 0.10"	> 0.50"	> 1.00"	Total Snow	Max Day	Date
Jan	4.20	1.25	5	16	7	2	2	5.8	4.0	22
Feb	2.53	0.75	28	8	5	3	0	15.0	7.5	28
Mar	4.07	2.05	28	11	4	2	2	2.5	1.0	1
Apr	2.93	0.90	22	8	7	2	0	T	T	3
May	4.26	1.40	23	9	5	3	2	0.0	-	-
Jun	2.74	0.76	28	12	8	2	0	0.0	-	-
Jul	5.93	2.20	13	12	8	4	2	0.0	-	-
Aug	1.67	0.51	27	9	5	1	0	0.0	-	-
Sep	0.34	0.20	29	5	2	0	0	0.0	-	-
Oct	5.24	2.15	7	12	7	3	1	0.0	-	-
Nov	3.98	1.76	29	17	8	2	1	3.7	3.0	23
Dec	2.35	0.94	15	11	5	2	0	14.5	6.0	9
Year	40.24	2.20	7/13	130	71	26	10	41.5	7.5	2/28
Note: * = also occurred on earlier dates that month										
Number of days with										
Month	Fog	Sleet	Glaze	Thunder	Hail	Dmg wind				
Jan	5	0	0	0	0	0				
Feb	3	0	0	0	0	0				
Mar	7	0	0	1	0	0				
Apr	5	0	0	1	0	1				
May	7	0	0	3	0	0				
Jun	9	0	0	7	0	0				
Jul	9	0	0	10	0	0				
Aug	12	0	0	1	0	0				
Sep	3	0	0	0	0	0				
Oct	7	0	0	0	0	0				
Nov	3	0	0	2	0	0				
Dec	2	3	0	0	0	0				
Year	72	3	0	25	0	1				