

Weather of 2008

Wet Year, Temperatures Return to Normal, Ice Storms Early and Late, Severe Summer Storms, Active Tropics

After two warm, dry years, 2008 brought well above normal precipitation and a return to average temperatures. In general, below normal maximum temperatures offset above normal minimums. Precipitation for the year totaled 45.72", exactly 10 inches more than in 2007. Highlights of the year included frequent ice storms at both ends of the year, a wet spring, an early summer heat wave and scattered severe storms

January began seasonably cold with snow flurries. However, within the first week, temperatures reached a balmy 69 on the 7th, followed by 66 on the 8th, both records for the respective dates. Heavy rain (1.11") fell on the 11th, accounting for nearly half of the month's 2.28" of precipitation. After a mild first two weeks, more seasonable winter temperatures set in during the remainder of January. A moderate snow/ice storm passed through on the 17th, dropping 3" of snow and ice. The month ended with very strong winds up to 60 mph early on the 30th, causing scattered tree damage and power outages.

February saw a parade of minor to moderate winter storms that brought a mixed bag of precipitation. The month began with a moderate ice storm on the 1st that brought glaze and sleet, making for some treacherous travel. The 6th was spring-like with temperatures in the low 60s and an evening thunderstorm. An Arctic front on the 10th brought snow squalls, sleet and damaging winds that gusted up to 70 mph. The 11th tied the 21st for the coldest temperatures of the season and year, with a low of 5. Four inches of snow fell on the 12th, the heaviest snow of 2008. More snow and ice was observed on the 22nd, 26th and finally on the 29th, when 2.5" of snow set a new Leap Day snowfall record.

March came in like a lion and went out like a lamb. Temperatures reached a mild 69 on the 3rd, before a cold front brought heavy rains totaling 1.66" on the evening of the 4th, causing some flooding throughout the county. The other heavy rain event was on the 18th-19th, when 1.14" fell. Damaging winds were observed again on the 20th. The month finished quiet, with a lack of snowfall all month.

April was a mild month, with temperatures reaching the 80s by the 17th. The 18th saw near-record warmth of 86 degrees. Following this warm, dry stretch, a series of systems brought heavy rains the final two weeks of April, pushing precipitation above normal. A slow-moving Low south of the area brought Atlantic moisture that interacted with the mountains and dumped heavy rain totaling 2.98 inches on the 20th-21st. Strong thunderstorms rumbled through on the 25th and 26th, and a cool steady rain of 0.83" fell on the 28th.

May was a cool, wet month. After a warm start, the area endured a two-week stretch of nearly constant weather systems and cloudy, cool weather. From the 8th-21st, only two days didn't have measurable rainfall. The strongest in the parade of storms was an unusually strong late-season Nor' Easter on Mother's Day that brought 1.53" of rainfall, gusty winds, and snow showers to the higher elevations. The high on the 12th was only 47, a record low. After a brief respite from the damp, cool weather, heavy thunderstorms again rumbled through the area on the morning of the 31st, dropping over an inch of rain.

June 2008 was much like June 2007 – warm with numerous strong to severe thunderstorms. This station again dodged the bullet, as severe storms hammered other parts of the county. An intense squall line passed through on the 4th, dropping nearly an inch of rain in a half-hour and producing funnel clouds in the Frostburg area. Many tornadoes touched down in other parts of the state. Then, an early season heat wave pushed temperatures in the 90s from the 7th-10th. Late on the 10th, a severe thunderstorm clipped the northwest part of the county, producing 65 mph wind gusts in Frostburg and Mount Savage. On the 13th, another intense storm hit Frostburg with 2 inches of rain and severe lightning that struck several homes. Flooding was reported there, but this station had a mere .06" of rain. Severe storms passed close by on the 16th, 21st and 22nd, when half-dollar sized hail hit the Spring Gap area. On the 28th, damaging winds hit Barton, Creasaptown and Bowling Green just to our south.

The 4th of July was damp and cool, with steady rains all day raining out many fireworks displays. The rest of the month was quite warm, with the year's high of 94 on the 19th. Most of the month's rain fell from the 20th-31st. On the evenings of the 20th and 21st, storms moving southeastward from PA brought locally damaging winds to the Cumberland area. More strong storms hit the area on the 23rd, mainly east of LaVale. Then on evening of the 30th, a strong storm, again moving southeastward from PA, produced an

EF2 tornado in the Accident area of Garrett County that fortunately lifted as it clipped southwestern Allegany County. The storms late on the 30th and early on the 31st dropped .96” of rain on this station.

August began and ended wet, with a long dry stretch in the middle. A large complex of thunderstorms (MCS) moving eastward from WV and OH brought a series of strong storms in the predawn hours of the 2nd, with intense lightning and heavy downpours totaling 1.37”. The second week of August was cool and dry, with daytime highs in the 70s. The remnants of Tropical Storm Fay dropped a hefty 3.52” of rain on the 27th-28th. August 2008 had the second lowest average maximum on record, 78.5 F.

September was warm and dry, with tropical systems Hanna and Ike passing east and west of the area, respectively. Ike produced a surge of warm air and gusty winds on the 14th, when the monthly high temperature of 86 was reached. A welcome 1.82” of rain finally fell on the 26th-27th.

October was a very dry, sunny month with virtually no rain until the 24th. High temperatures only reached the mid 40s on the 28th-29th, with rain showers in the valleys and snow showers in the nearby mountains that accumulated several inches.

The first half of November was generally mild, with little precipitation until the 13th, when several minor systems ushered in a much colder air mass and a mixed bag of precipitation. Temperatures during the final two weeks were well below normal, with three days failing to climb above freezing. Sleet or freezing rain was observed on the 24th, 25th and 30th. 2.9” of snow and ice fell in November.

December went in the record books tied for the 3rd wettest with 1972 as 5.67” of precipitation fell. Despite adequately cool temperatures and the abundance of moisture, only 3.5” of snow fell, as it seemed that every winter storm was associated with a thermal inversion. This led to numerous ice storms. The worst ice storm hit on the 16th-17th, with a mess of snow, sleet and freezing rain. 2” of snow and ice fell. More freezing rain fell on Christmas Eve. This shortly followed the coldest air of the month on the 22nd, when the temperature reached a chilly 6 F with a high of only 18. Several fronts between Christmas and New Years brought high winds to the area and variable temperatures. An inch of snow fell on New Year’s Eve as an Arctic front passed through with snow squalls and high winds, dropping wind chills below zero.

2008 Weather Statistics

2008 Monthly and Annual Climate Summary LaVale, MD, Allegany County Observer Scott Lohr (Data Compiled by Nate Mullins) Station Observation Time: Midnight Lat: 39.657780°, Long: - 78.821871°, Elevation 1016'										
Temperature, ° F								Number of days		
Month	Mean Max	Mean Min	Mean Temp	Max Temp	Date	Min Temp	Date	Max > 90	Max ≤ 32	Min ≤ 32
Jan	38.7	25.0	31.9	69	7	6	21	0	7	24
Feb	36.9	24.0	30.5	62	6	5	21*	0	10	24
Mar	49.7	32.6	41.1	69	3	19	9	0	0	17
Apr	64.5	45.7	55.1	86	18	32	16*	0	0	2
May	67.0	47.9	57.5	87	26	40	23*	0	0	0
Jun	80.3	61.0	70.7	92	9*	51	2	4	0	0
Jul	83.1	64.4	73.8	94	19	55	3*	4	0	0
Aug	78.5	60.5	69.5	88	24	54	16	0	0	0
Sep	73.1	56.9	65.0	86	14*	47	24	0	0	0
Oct	60.5	43.7	52.1	80	15	29	23	0	0	3
Nov	47.7	34.8	41.3	75	7	15	23	0	3	13
Dec	39.4	26.3	32.8	60	15	6	22	0	6	27
Year	59.9	43.5	51.8	94	7/19	5	2/21*	8	26	110

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	2.28	1.11	11	6	4	1	1	3.5	3.0	17
Feb	2.87	0.53	1	15	10	1	0	12.5	4.0	12
Mar	3.94	1.66	4	12	8	2	1	0.2	0.1	16*
Apr	5.45	1.84	20	16	7	4	2	T	T	3
May	6.76	1.53	11	17	10	7	3	0.0	-	-
Jun	3.55	0.95	4	14	7	3	0	0.0	-	-
Jul	3.29	0.75	4	12	7	3	0	0.0	-	-
Aug	5.79	2.87	28	9	6	3	2	0.0	-	-
Sep	3.23	1.61	27	8	6	2	1	0.0	-	-
Oct	0.83	0.42	25	5	3	0	0	T	T	29
Nov	2.06	0.58	13	11	6	1	0	2.9	1.8	21
Dec	5.67	1.39	11	12	8	5	2	3.5	2.0	16
Year	45.72	2.87	8/28	137	82	32	12	22.6	4.0	2/12
Note: * = also occurred on earlier dates that month										
Number of days with										
Month	Fog	Sleet	Glaze	Thunder	Hail	Dmg wind				
Jan	3	1	1	0	0	1				
Feb	5	3	3	1	0	1				
Mar	4	1	0	0	0	1				
Apr	3	1	0	2	0	0				
May	4	0	0	3	0	0				
Jun	1	0	0	9	0	0				
Jul	6	0	0	7	0	0				
Aug	3	0	0	3	0	0				
Sep	9	0	0	2	0	0				
Oct	3	0	0	0	0	0				
Nov	4	2	2	0	0	0				
Dec	10	2	3	0	0	0				
Year	55	10	9	27	0	3				