

The Pennsylvania Observer

October 2, 2008



September 2008 – Pennsylvania Weather Recap

Written by: Tim Buckley

The first month of meteorological fall certainly got off to a very summer-like start across the Keystone State with warm, dry weather. Afternoon high temperatures ranged anywhere from ten to fifteen degrees above their averages from September 1st through September 5th under a broad area of high pressure. Many cities across the state saw temperatures eclipse the ninety degree mark on these days, including Williamsport, PA which hit 90 degrees or more in four consecutive days. The cities of Philadelphia and Harrisburg both sizzled as well, reaching a maximum temperature of 95 degrees during this four day stretch of heat. This was the warmest stretch of weather seen in the Commonwealth since early June when another heat wave gripped the Northeast.

Heading into the first weekend of the month, as the remnants of Hurricane Gustav tracked northward through the nations heartland, another tropical system made landfall along the East Coast. Tropical Storm Hanna became the state's first weather maker of the month, putting an end to the heat and bringing soaking rains and gusty winds to the eastern half of Pennsylvania during the day on Saturday September 6th. Rain gauges were put to work throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania with many locations picking up anywhere from 2 – 4 inches of rain during the day. In fact, Birdsboro, PA, in Montgomery County, received a hefty 4.23 inches during the day on the 6th. Conversely, areas in the western edge of Pennsylvania were affected very little by this tropical moisture, setting the stage for a regional gap in rainfall totals for the month.

A series of cool fronts passed through Pennsylvania during the second work-week of the month, ushering in cooler fall-like air under a large area of high pressure. The first taste of fall brought mild, pleasant afternoons and cool crisp nights to the region with many locales waking up to morning fog. Heading into the month's second weekend, an upper level trough brought unsettled weather in the form of a quasi-stationary front that lingered through the first half of the weekend. By Sunday, the 14th, a push came in the form of a cold front that contained the remnants of Hurricane Ike. The main impact of Ike was not rain, but high winds across the state. A peak wind gust of 69 mph was observed in Clearfield, PA as well as a gust to 55 mph on the campus of Penn State. Ike was one of three tropical systems to impact the state during the month of September.

The stretch of days from Monday the 15th to Thursday the 24th was one of great tranquility across Pennsylvania and the Northeast. With the jet stream still located well to the north in Canada, very few weather systems made the journey across the Lower 48 and a persistent area of high pressure set up in the East. In fact, many barometers read above 30.50 inches of mercury for several days. This extended period of dry weather also appropriately eased the region into autumn, the first day of which was the 22nd, with seasonable afternoon highs, and cool nights. Morning fog was common in the valleys of Central Pennsylvania. Jack Frost even threatened the northern tier of the state at times, with Clarence, PA dipping down to a low of only 32°F on the morning of Friday the 19th.

This string of dry weather would come to an end as a coastal low pressure system brought rains and unsettled weather to Pennsylvania in time for the last weekend of the month. Heavy rains were seen again across the eastern half of the state with areas in the Susquehanna Valley picking up the most rainfall. Storm totals from this system exceeded three inches in Adams and Union counties with heavy rains on both the 27th and 28th to round out the month on a wet note. The Harrisburg International Airport reported the greatest cumulative precipitation amount of 8.90 inches for the month of September.

Weather Stories

Report Aims to Put Pricetag on Climate Change in PA

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08268/914707-100.stm>

PA Takes Another Major Step Towards Addressing Climate Change As Advisory Committee Holds First Meeting

<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/pa-takes-another-major-step/story.aspx?guid=%7B6CA1B22D-7A71-41E5-B6C5-F437D38A9B5F%7D&dist=hppr>

Drastic Shifts in Climate Are Likely, Experts Warn

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9505E5DB143FF931A25751C1A9679C8B63>

Western PA County Declares State of Emergency After Ike

<http://www.forbes.com/feeds/ap/2008/09/17/ap5437361.html>

Is Autumn Foliage Falling Later?

http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/20080922_Is_autumn_foliage_falling_later_.html

Pennsylvania Pumpkins Smaller Due to Low Rainfall

<http://www.theprogressnews.com/default.asp?read=14425>

A Burst of Color Awaits

<http://www.thederrick.com/stories/09272008-6004.shtml>

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (**observations taken at 8AM EDT**) during September 2008 from the NWS Cooperative & ASOS Networks. The extremes occurred in the 24-hour period prior to the date listed.

Parameter	Location	Value	Date (8 AM EDT)	County
Highest Temperature	Philadelphia Franklin Institute	95°F	September 4 th	Philadelphia
Lowest Temperature	Clarence	32°F	September 19 th	McKean
Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Middletown	8.90"	-	Dauphin
Least Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Glenmoore	1.014"	-	Chester