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November 2008 – Pennsylvania Weather Recap

Written by: Daniel Pollak

November 2008 was definitely a month with a wide variety of weather in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The first week showed temperatures well above average across the state with large ridges of high pressure dominating the weather pattern interspersed with weak low pressure systems. On the 1st of the month, afternoon high temperatures soared into the mid to upper sixties with some cities such as Philadelphia even surpassing the seventy degree mark. A back door cold front the night of the 1st brought temperatures down, but not for long. By the 3rd, the warm sector from a low tracking into central Canada brought warm air deep into the northern tier of the United States. The weather remained mainly calm and dry for the rest of the work week with the only exception being a coastal low that brought rain to eastern portions of the state on November 6th. With temperatures reaching into the sixties and low seventies, the first week of November proved to be unseasonably warm and pleasant. The weather took a drastic change as a strong cold front passed over the state on the 8th. The front brought rain showers, cooler more seasonal weather, and also started up some Lake Effect snow from Lake Erie. Scattered snow showers were seen in the northwest part of the state on the 9th and 10th. Brisk autumn temperatures and brilliant sunshine prevailed for the eastern parts of the state not affected by the snow showers. A ridge of high pressure built in across the state on the 11th and 12th ahead of a low approaching from the mid-south. As the low passed to the northwest of Pennsylvania, it brought with it another ridge of warmer air and steady rains which dropped anywhere from a quarter of an inch to nearly an inch of rain around Philadelphia. The 14th and 15th stayed very warm with the jet stream pushing warm air deep into New England. The high in Philadelphia on the 15th soared to 72 degrees, some 17 degrees above average! As the jet stream pushed eastward, an area of low-pressure moved into the state on the 15th bringing with it a large dose of rain in which many locales reported an inch or more. Western areas of the Commonwealth even reported snow late in the day as the strong trough passed the region. This strong cold front signaled the end of the warm November weather and the start of cooler than average temperatures which prevailed for the remainder of the month. The lake-effect snow machine came into full swing with Erie officially receiving 8.8 inches of fresh snow on the 16th. It remained active for most of the rest of the month. Erie reported at least some snow every day for the rest of the month except on just four days. From the 17th – 19th, reinforcing shots of cold air invaded Pennsylvania keeping maximum temperatures near 40 and lows around 30. Pittsburgh was one of the coldest parts of the state with temperatures barely getting above freezing. 2-3 inches of snow fell across the Pittsburgh metro during these days, but this is nothing compared to areas in Erie and Crawford counties which received anywhere from 10 inches to 20.8 inches of snow! A reinforcing Alberta clipper which traversed the state late on the 20th brought more some flurries. The lake effect snow bands that formed after the passage of its front were substantial in that they did not break up over the mountains. One particular snow squall stretched from Lake Erie almost continuously to Philadelphia. Some of the southwestern and northwestern suburbs of Philadelphia received an inch or two of the white stuff. The key story of the weather during the 19th – 22nd was the strong northwesterly flow which brought in the Canadian air and lake effect snow. On the 21st, both Philadelphia and Harrisburg broke their record daily snowfall. On the 22nd,

Williamsport tied a record low of 15 degrees. On the same day, Harrisburg reported a high of 34 degrees which was 16 degrees below the seasonal average. A strong high pressure system centered over the Ohio Valley kept the unseasonably frigid air in place through the 23rd. On the 24th, the high pushed east as a low pressure approached from the west. The leading edge of the storm brought snow to many parts of the state, but as temperatures rose into the upper 30s and lower 40s overnight, most places that started as snow, changed to rain. Areas in the south-east quadrant of the state started and remained rain throughout. The 26th and 27th were pleasant days with clouds and sun mixed. An Alberta clipper came through the region overnight on Thanksgiving into Black Friday which brought a few clouds, but ultimately allowed for high pressure to sit over the state. While a little on the chilly side, shoppers who went out early for the good deals, had mostly clear, crisp weather. The 29th was much of the same with high pressure prevailing. This did not last long though because a deep, fast moving low pressure system approached the state overnight on the 29th. Temperatures under the high pressure were well below freezing. As the low approached, temperatures did not initially rise that fast causing precipitation to start as snow, sleet, and freezing rain in much of the central and northern parts of the state. This caused problems on the state's highways which were already crowded with Thanksgiving travelers. As the low moved northeast into the Great Lakes, most places warmed above freezing causing the precipitation to change to rain. November 2008 was quite the month of extremes with temperatures nearing twenty degrees above and below average at times during the month. Precipitation amounts were not enough to make up for the deficit over the last few months causing the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to issue a drought watch for North Central and Western portions of the state.

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (**observations taken at 8AM EDT**) during November 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	New Castle	80°F	November 7 th	Lawrence
Lowest Temperature	Bradford	7°F	November 19 th	McKean
Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Philadelphia	3.51"	-	Philadelphia
Least Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Wolfsburg	1.28"	-	Bedford
Greatest Cumulative Snowfall	Chandlers Valley	37"	-	Warren