

# *The Pennsylvania Observer*

January 1, 2011



## **December 2010 – Pennsylvania Weather Recap**

Apart from a day at the start and one day in the middle of December and the last couple of days of the month, the vast majority (25/31 days) of the final month of 2010 averaged below normal temperatures. The eastern half of the state tallied from 1 to 4 degrees below average while the western sections were between 3 and 8 degrees below the long-term mean. Precipitation was piecemeal with the central mountains averaging above normal, but solely due to the record rainfall on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Most of the southeast quarter of the Commonwealth was drier than average (around 75% of normal) and this was also true in the counties adjacent to Lake Erie. Snowfall was abundant in the Laurel Highlands and the snow belts of northwestern Pennsylvania. Otherwise the only significant snow fell in the eastern-most counties on December 26-27 with the Northeast Blizzard. Sections around Philadelphia tallied more than 12 inches, but the snowfall tapered off rapidly west of the Delaware Valley.

The month started with a soggy cold front crossing Pennsylvania. A disturbance along the front produced excessive rain on the Allegheny plateau with more than 4 inches of rain falling in parts of Clearfield and Centre counties, making it the wettest December day of record. Flooding immediately followed on all creeks and streams and the west branch of the Susquehanna rose over its banks flooding parts of Lock Haven. Downstream flooding was less severe as rainfall was less than an inch in the eastern third of the state.

A prolonged period of progressively colder weather ensued leading to widespread lake effect snowfall. The Laurel Highlands tallied between 1-3 feet of snow with 2-4 feet of snow in parts of Warren and Erie counties by mid-month. Persistently strong winds caused much drifting and frequent cover-ups of already cleared snow.

A brief warm-up was accompanied by rain and freezing rain on December 13<sup>th</sup>, but very chilly air returned for the next two weeks. A few disturbances tracked northeast near the Atlantic Seaboard bringing southeast Pennsylvania its first measurable snowfall on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Another storm missed the region a couple of days later. The main event of late December was the East Coast post-Christmas blizzard which buried the Delaware Valley with 6-12 inches whipped by 30-40 mile an hour winds. As the bitter chill receded, a short period of freezing rain covered southwest and south-central sections on December 20<sup>th</sup>. New Years Eve averaged the mildest day in nearly three weeks.

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (observations taken at 8AM EDT) during December 2010 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	66°F	December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Philadelphia
Lowest Temperature	Chandlers Valley	-4°F	December 19 <sup>th</sup>	Warren
Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Hawley	6.81"	-	Pike
Least Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Dover	1.79"	-	York
Greatest Cumulative Snowfall	Chandlers Valley	69"	-	Warren

## ***Weather Stories***

Snowfall and ice slam evening commute

[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/pa/20101217\\_Snowfall\\_and\\_ice\\_slam\\_evening\\_commute.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/pa/20101217_Snowfall_and_ice_slam_evening_commute.html)

Unseasonably cold air blasts eastern states

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6BD45Z20101214>

Freezing rain causes havoc for cars, pedestrians

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10364/1114413-100.stm>

Not a blizzard, but snowfall was one for the books

[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/20101228\\_Not\\_a\\_blizzard\\_but\\_snowfall\\_was\\_one\\_for\\_the\\_books.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/20101228_Not_a_blizzard_but_snowfall_was_one_for_the_books.html)

NW Pa. town hits snowfall record for December

<http://www.wfmj.com/Global/story.asp?S=13744357>