

THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management

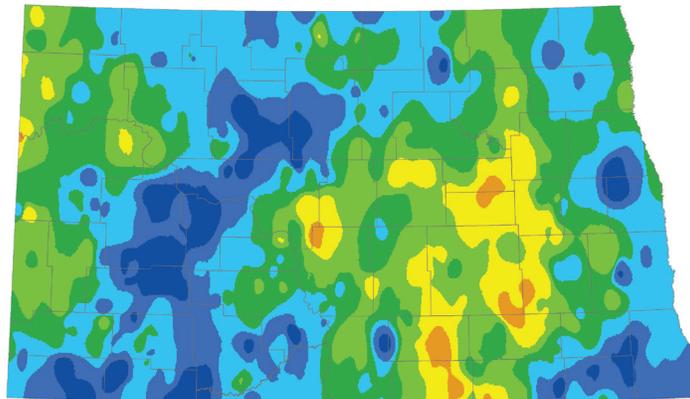
"2013: Another Year For The Record Books"

By Mark D. Schneider

When some locations in North Dakota received their average growing season precipitation during the month of May alone, it became apparent that record books were going to be rewritten. It was astounding to have 10.61 inches of rain in Bowman during the month of May, considering that the average April through September precipitation in southwestern North Dakota is 10 to 11 inches! The previous May record for Bowman was 6.73 inches, so this was an unbelievable milestone. Bowman would go on to break their all-time record annual precipitation of 28.01 inches (set back in 1982), as would the NDSU North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) in Minot with a previous record of 26.99 inches (set back in 1975). As of October 14 when this article was written, Bowman had already received 29.86 inches of precipitation this year and the NCREC reached 30.22 inches. The two weather-observing sites could easily increase their annual totals by a couple inches before the calendar year is over.

Jim Tarasenko, research specialist for the NCREC, reported that, "This is the 10th straight

January - September 2013 Precipitation (in inches)



 < 14	 16 - 18	 20 - 22	 > 24
 14 - 16	 18 - 20	 22 - 24	

precipitation values of just over one inch, this equated to more than 500% of normal for the month.

Of course not everyone in North Dakota experienced an unusually wet 2013. Looking at January through September precipitation (see map), a few locations in eastern North Dakota are actually on the dry side after being missed by some of the

month of above normal moisture for us." Including 2013, Jim has 109 years of precipitation records for the NCREC and this year surely won't be forgotten in the record books.

Also of significant mention are Bismarck, Minot International Airport, and Williston, as all three observing locations have already recorded their sixth wettest years on record. Minot International Airport is approximately six miles north of the NCREC, but because of the variability of storm tracks and convective clouds, it had received almost seven inches less precipitation so far this season.

The first week of September stood out as another unusually rainy period. There were isolated reports of over seven inches of rainfall in Bowman and adjacent Counties and with average September

main precipitation events this year. Jamestown was 2.58 inches below normal and Grand Forks International Airport was 0.68 inches below normal on October 14. Fargo and areas of southeastern North Dakota fared much better, with above average precipitation.

Going into winter, most areas of the state should have good to very good subsoil moisture conditions for the next growing season. Only time and snowpack will tell what the true outcome will be.

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