



Nevada CoCoRaHS Newsletter

Because every drop counts even in the driest state!

Winter 2014-2015

Dealing With The Drought

Nevada has been dealing with an ongoing drought since the latter half of 2011. Although the past monsoon season brought some relief to parched southern and eastern areas of the Silver State, extreme to exceptional drought conditions continue across western Nevada, especially north and west of the Reno-Carson City area. In mid-October, Lake Tahoe dropped below its natural rim for the first time since the November 2009. When this happened, water stopped flowing out of Lake Tahoe and into the Truckee River cutting off water flow into the Truckee River. Also this year on July 10th, Lake Mead dipped to its lowest level ever since being filled in the 1930s reaching a new record low of 1081.77 feet according to the Bureau of Reclamation.



Lake Mead in July 2014. Photo Credit: Ken Dewey.

CoCoRaHS observers can help keep track of the drought in Nevada in many ways! The basic way is to continue to take your observations even if no precipitation falls and enter your “zero” into the CoCoRaHS report each day for your station. This helps confirm just how long any dry streaks are in your area. Another way is through the “Drought Impacts Reports” section located on the CoCoRaHS website. This can be accessed under the “List/Edit My Reports” section on the left side once you log into your account. Once you enter this page, you can type a description of what the drought is doing in your area

providing any impacts. You can also note any financial losses known about by category, such as agriculture, plants and wildlife as well as water supply and quality. This information helps those tracking the drought to make better assessments as to the drought’s severity as well as informing them of any impacts.

Water supply will continue to be a significant issue for Nevada in the years to come. Helping to monitor this precious resource can help for better decision making.

Hot Times In Nevada!

Nina Oakley
Climatologist, Western Region Climate Center

Has it felt a little warmer than normal in your corner of Nevada this year? Averaging weather station records across the state, January 1-October 31, 2014, has been the second warmest such period since 1895 at an average temperature of 55.9 F (Figure 1). The record warmest year statewide stands at 56.0 F set in 1934. The average temperature for January-October in the Silver State is 52.5 F.

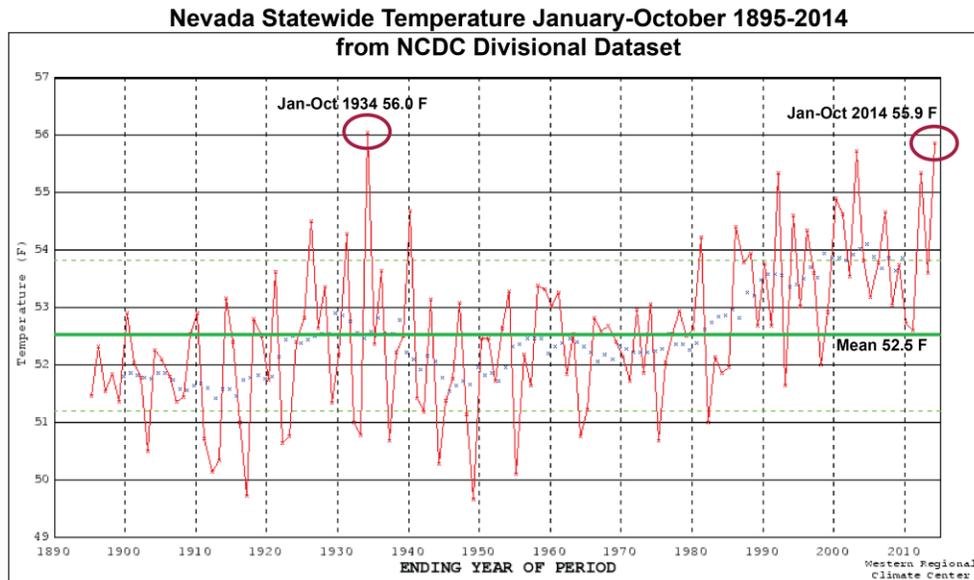


Figure 1: Average statewide temperature Jan-Oct from 1895-2014.
Source- http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/divplot1_form.pl?2602

Above normal temperatures were observed in Nevada throughout 2014, though the largest departures from normal were seen in the winter and the current autumn months. During January through March, much of the state experienced temperatures 2-4 F above normal. Since October 1, nearly all of the state has seen temperatures 2-4 F above normal with large areas 4-6 F above normal (Figure 2). Both the minimum temperatures as well as the maximum temperatures have been above normal from January 1 to present, though maximum temperature departures have been slightly more extreme (Figure 3).

During 2014, Reno experienced its longest run of temperatures above freezing since records began at the airport in 1937. From April 6 through October 26, 204 days, temperatures stayed above 32 F. This beat the record streak of 193 days (April 24-November 2) set in 1992. Further east, Elko's streak of above freezing days was 104 this year, tie for 29th longest since records began in 1888 and far off the record streak of 155 days set in 1980 (April 20-September 21). Temperatures above freezing continue in Las Vegas, currently the 4th longest streak on record at 347 days (as of November 24th) starting on December 13, 2013. The record for consecutive days above freezing was set on 2011-2012 at 378 days (December 8, 2011 through December 19, 2012).

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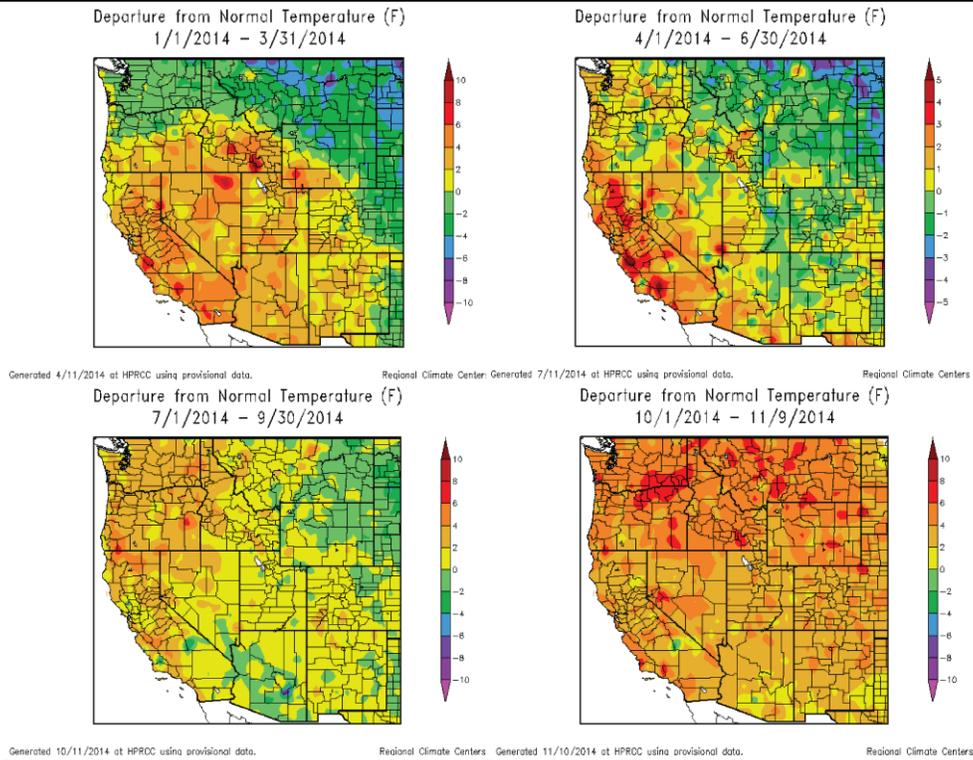


Figure 2: Temperature departure from 1981-2010 normal by 3-month period, except in lower right, October 1 through November 9. Source: <http://www.hprcc.unl.edu/maps/current/>

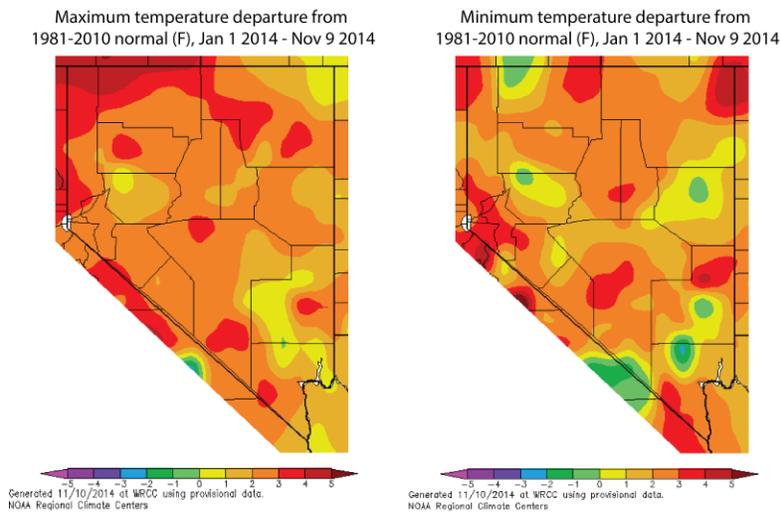


Figure 3: Maximum (left) and minimum (right) temperature departures from 1981-2010 normal for January 1-November 9 2014. Source: http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/anom/nev_anom.html

Above normal temperatures are forecast to persist through the winter for our state, so we may continue to see various types of temperature records broken in the coming months. These warm temperatures further exacerbate drought conditions by increasing both water demand and evaporation.

Weather Wonder: What Are Ice Crystals?

Ice crystals, simply put, are small crystals of ice. They are a barely visible crystalline form of ice that has the shape of needles, columns or plates. Ice crystals are so small that they seem to be suspended in the air and occur at very low temperatures in a stable atmosphere.



Ice crystals on glass. Photo Credit: Wikipedia.

CoCoRaHS Nevada Resources

<http://www.cocorahs.org/state.aspx?state=nv>

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