

# September Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

If you thought September was warm, you were right. In fact, the month broke several records including the warmest average September on record, supported by several daily record highs and a new all-time monthly record of 91 degrees on the 2nd. Not surprisingly given the warmth, the month was also drier than normal overall.

Hot conditions were the rule for the first five days of the month, with highs in the 80s each afternoon, peaking with the new monthly high of 91 on the 2nd. Most locations along the Front Range set record highs and monthly record highs on both of these days. The warmth also helped to prime the atmosphere with plenty of energy. This combined with late season monsoonal moisture to produce some brief heavy rainfall on several afternoons.

The strongest storms produced over a half inch in less than an hour during the midafternoon of the 4th. Brief thunderstorms produced areas of rainfall during the late afternoon of the 5th, then higher levels of moisture produced severe weather on the afternoon and early evening of the 6th. These storms produced more than an inch of rainfall in a short period, especially for areas along and west of I-25. The runoff from this rainfall was even more efficient because the rainfall during the previous days had saturated the ground. This meant significant street flooding and even some minor damage in some drainages. The next two afternoons continued to see rounds of thunderstorms and brief rainfall, then the pattern changed back to warm and dry.

No significant rainfall accumulated for the remainder of the month after the 9th. Temperatures were above normal almost every day, generally fluctuating between the 70s and low 80s. There were a few exceptions. Notably, a cold front moved through during the early evening hours on the 21st. Clear skies, a longer night, and a cooler air mass resulted in our first frost of the season on the morning of the 22nd. Low temperatures reached the low 30s in most locations just in time to start off fall. Another brief break in the record warmth occurred behind a weak cold front that switched winds around from the east/southeast. This allowed low clouds and fog to develop during the evening of the 27th. Temperatures were held down to the low 60s on the 28th as temperatures were slow to warm after morning low clouds and fog.

However, temperatures quickly warmed on the 29th and 30th, with highs back to record levels on the last day of the months, reaching the low 80s. The warm airmass was enhanced by strong southwesterly winds. This also helped exacerbate the fire weather conditions, and not surprisingly a fire broke out south of Salida. The southwest winds then brought the smoke plume right over our region during the afternoon and evening of the 30th. This provided us with a spectacular sunset to end the month.

## A look ahead

October can be an active weather month for the region with our first snowy conditions often experienced. Most years, we seem to get a good snowfall around Halloween, and after a warm and dry September, we could use a wet and cold storm this year. Snow can be heavy at times during any part of October as when over 20 inches of snow fell Oct. 9-10 in 2005, and 2006 saw over 24 inches of snow fall in less than 24 hours on Oct. 26. Of course, the big storm some of us remember occurred during October 1997, when nearly 4 feet of snow and blizzard conditions shut everything down for several days. But we are just as likely to get mild and sunny conditions, so enjoy those sunny days when you can.

## September 2019 Weather Statistics

Average High	77.8° (+6.9)
100-year return frequency value max	77.5° min 63.5°
Average Low	47.4° (+6.2)
100-year return frequency value max	46.7° min 36.1°
Monthly Precipitation	1.25" (-0.55")
100-year return frequency value max	4.34" min 0.40"
Monthly Snowfall	0.0" (-0.5")
Highest Temperature	91° on the 2nd
Lowest Temperature	33° on the 22nd
Season to Date Snow	0.0"

(-0.5", 100% below normal)

(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)

Season to Date Precip. **8.55"**  
 (+0.48", 6% above normal)  
 (the precip season is from October 1 to September 30)  
 Heating Degree Days **99** (-54)  
 Cooling Degree Days **28** (+40)  
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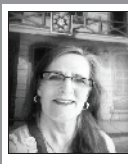
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