NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SPOKANE
2021 YEAR IN REVIEW
2021 Year in Weather Inland Northwest NWS Spokane

Photo: Spokesman Review-Tyler Tjomsland

Photo: Fires around Nespelem

Photo: Comstock Park/Spokane - NWS

Photo: Stevens Pass-WSDOT
A strong cold front swept through eastern Washington on the morning of January 13th. Widespread gusts of 50 to 60 mph were observed across the Columbia Basin, with 60 to 70 mph winds observed in the Spokane and Coeur d’Alene region. The Spokane International Airport tied its second strongest all time wind speed record of 71 mph.

There was widespread damage, downed trees, and power outages throughout much of the Spokane area and parts of north Idaho. At the height of the storm, an approximate 103,000 households throughout the region were without power.
February, 2021

The mountains of WA and ID received rounds of heavy snow in February.

According to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center 36 avalanche deaths occurred in the U.S. during the 2020-21 season.

Three separate avalanches killed 3 people in Idaho in February. One fatality occurred in Washington due to an avalanche in February.
A strong cold front pushed through the Inland Northwest in late May.

Gusty southwest winds after a prolonged period of dry conditions heightened the threat for blowing dust in the Columbia Basin and Western Plains. Wind gusts to 40 mph were common.

Numerous power outages from the wind were reported.

Visibility down to ¼ mile from Othello to Spokane, and several places along I-90 reported as low as “near zero visibility”.

Issued Dec 2021
Rounds of thunderstorms in the early morning hours produced lightning, brief heavy rain, and hail. In particular northern Idaho saw some of the larger hailstones, 0.75” up to 1.25” in size.

Power outages were reported before 7:00 AM for close to 3 hours.

Southeast Washington north and east into northern Idaho Panhandle experienced several hours of thunderstorms with brief heavy rain and frequent lightning.
INLAND NORTHWEST
2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

Record Heat
June 25-July 4, 2021

Unprecedented heat shattered records, prompted rolling power outages, caused pavement to heave on roads, and contributed to heat related fatalities across the Pacific Northwest.

New All Time Records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>June 29, 2021</th>
<th>Hottest on Record</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omak WA</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>114 - 26 Jul 1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephrata WA</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>115 - 4 Aug 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenatchee WA</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>109 - 28 Jun 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northport WA</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>110 - 28 Jul 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokane WA</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>108 - 4 Aug 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic WA</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>108 - 2 Jul 1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonners Ferry ID</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>105 - 11 Aug 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A round of thunderstorms and associated gusty west winds ignited fast moving wildfires around the Nespelem area.

The Chuweah Creek Fire forced the town of Nespelem to evacuate, destroyed 4 homes, and burned nearly 37,000 acres.

Record breaking heat and extreme drought caused wildfire season to begin several weeks earlier than normal. July and August were particularly active with large fires burning in many areas in the Pacific Northwest and northern California.
Drought

Washington is no stranger to drought, having had areas classified as D2 or D3 in recent years. This year, dryness levels were pushed even further. This was the first time in the history of the drought monitor that Washington reached D4 criteria.

Impacts were felt hardest in the agriculture community with incredibly dry soils and streamflows at near record low flows. A lack of spring and summer precipitation was part of this cause.
A moisture laden warm front surged into the Inland NW producing mild temperatures and locally damaging winds.

Wind gusts of 50+ mph were common which led to numerous reports of tree damage and power outages.

Heavy rain and mountain snow melt produced widespread flooding across British Columbia, NW Washington, and in Okanogan County.
Record warm temperatures kicked off Winter and the month of December.

Several locations broke daily high temperature records including some monthly December high temperature records.

An interesting fact, 6 months prior locations saw temperatures 20-30+ degrees above normal breaking records, and we saw the same in December.