The Month in Review: January 2021

National Weather Service
Charleston, WV

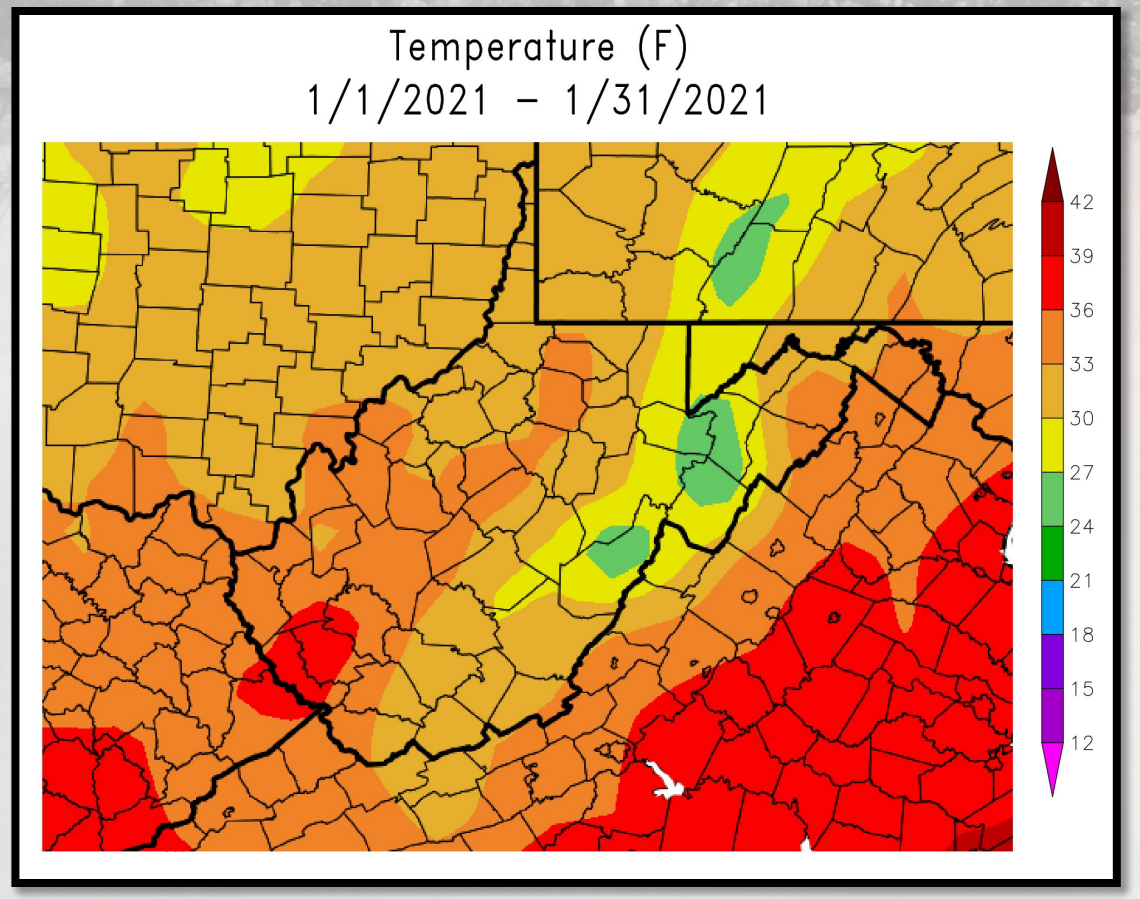
Photo courtesy of the National Weather Service Charleston, WV

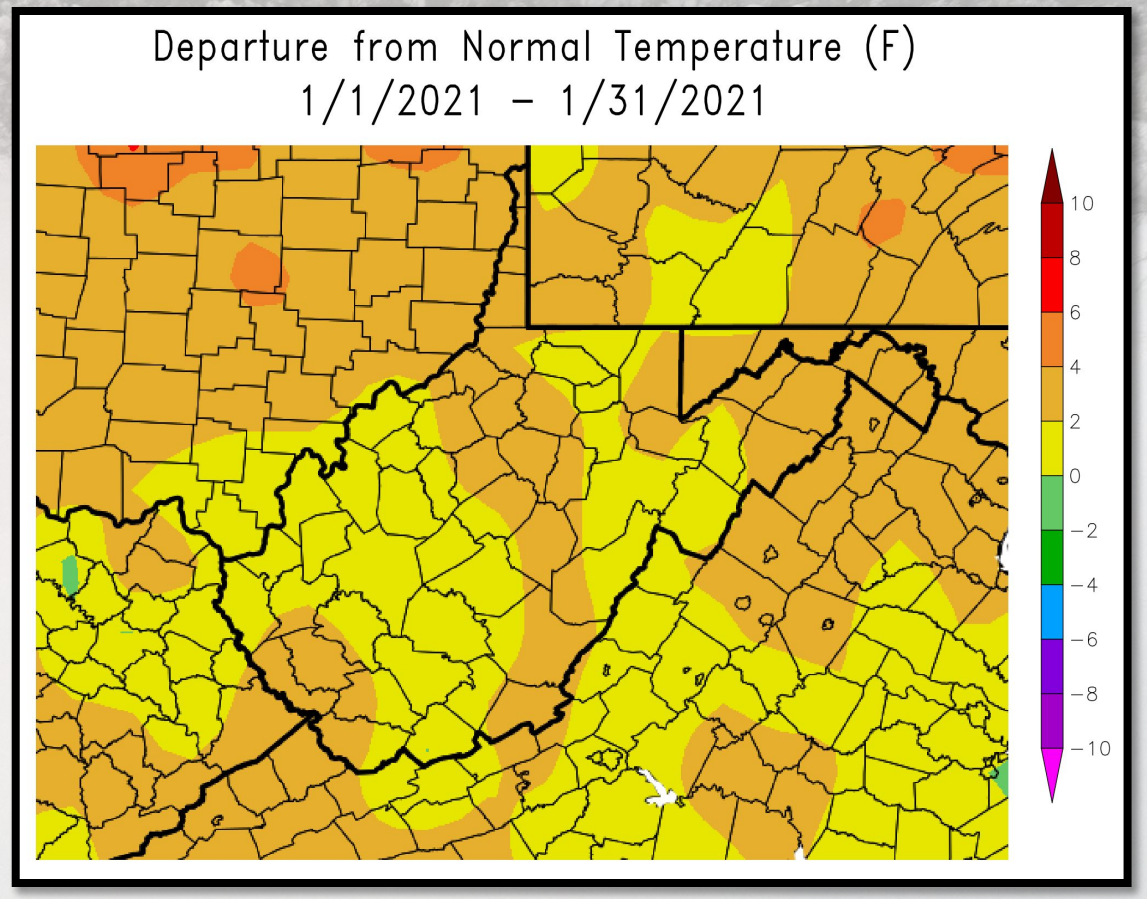
January 2021 Climate Summary

The month of January was characterized by above average temperatures across the region. Precipitation totals varied significantly from north to south, with well below normal precipitation to the north, and slightly above average precipitation for most areas in the Charleston region and to the south. After a slow start to the month, snowfall departures of varying degrees were common across much of the area.

While the first half of the month was relatively quiet, the second half did feature a few noteworthy systems that impacted the area, both in terms of snowfall and significant rainfall. Event summaries for these will be provided, along with temperature/precipitation departures for the month. A record events list for the month of January is also included.

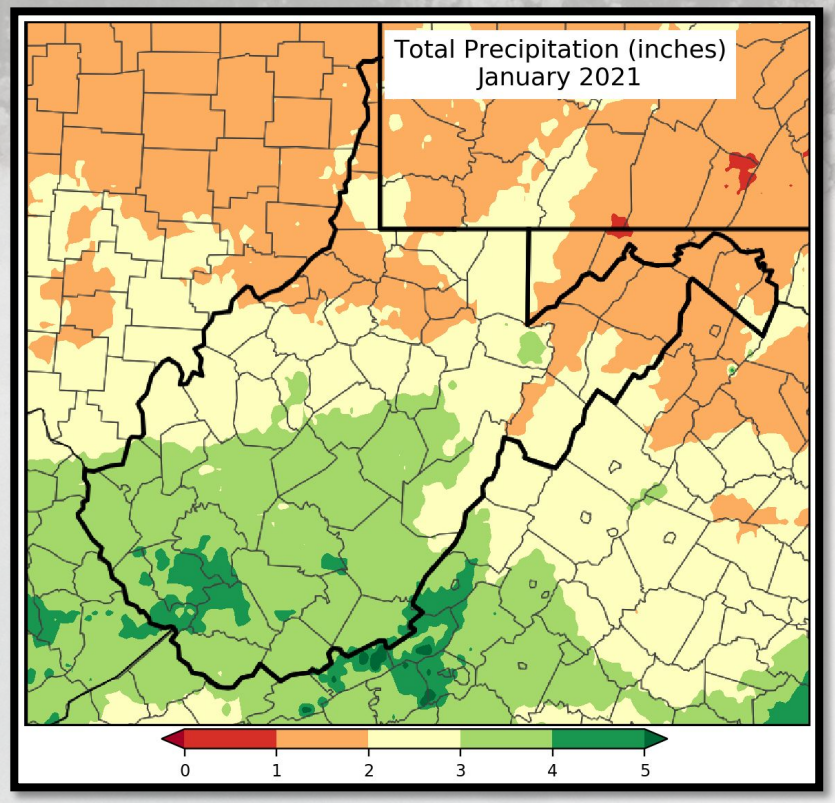
January Monthly Average Temperature/Departure

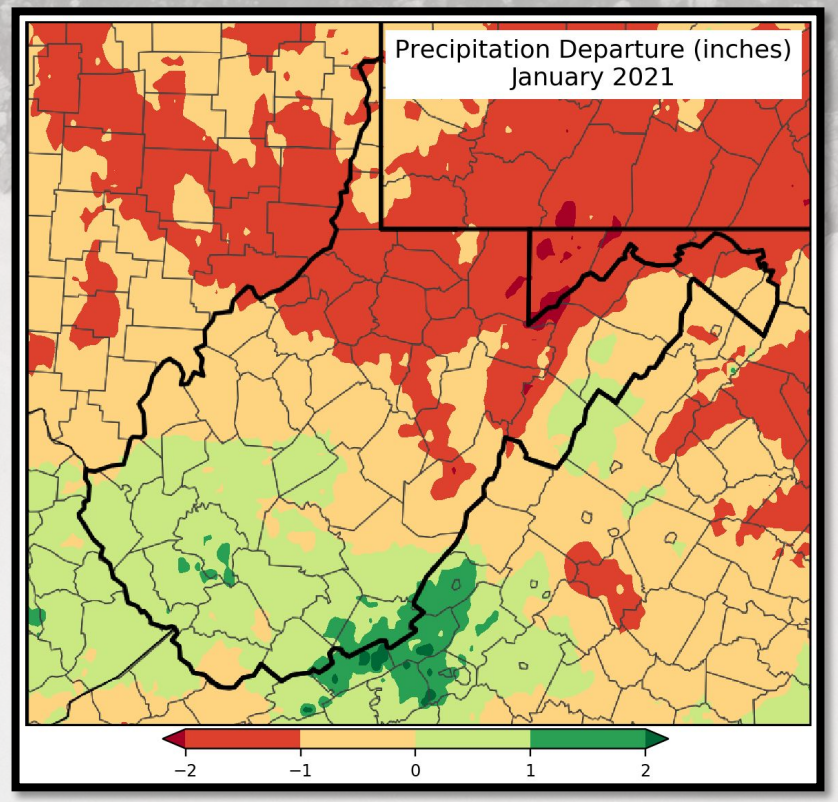


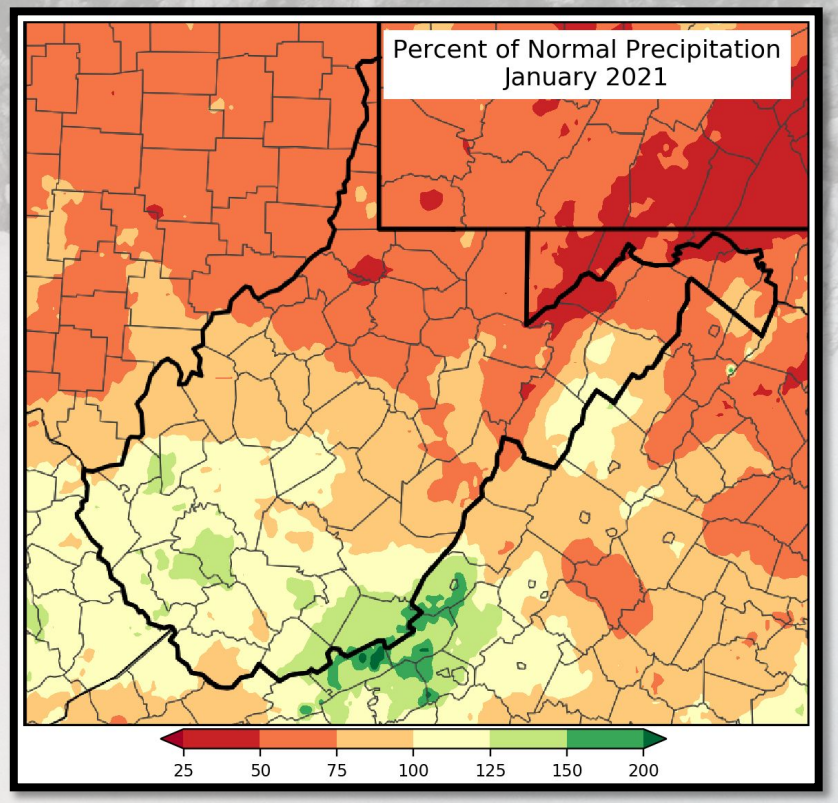


By and large, most of the region had above normal temperatures, with departures from normal ranging from 0 to +4 degrees Fahrenheit.

January Monthly Precipitation/Departure/Percent of Normal

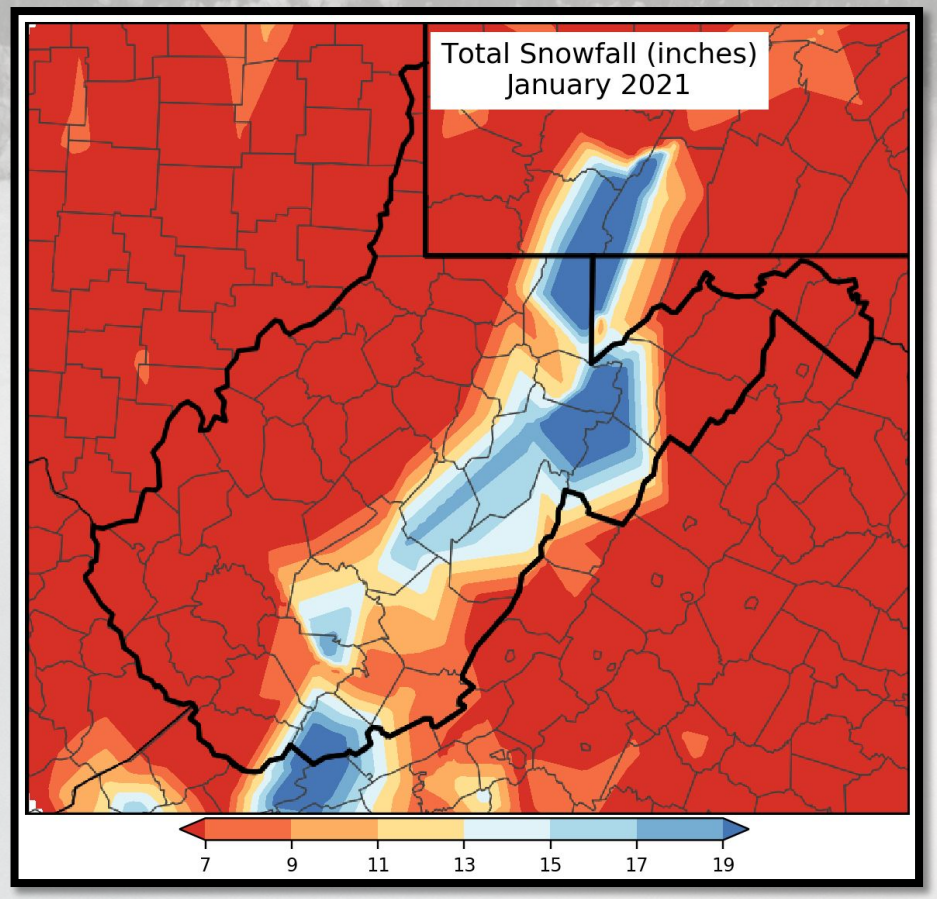


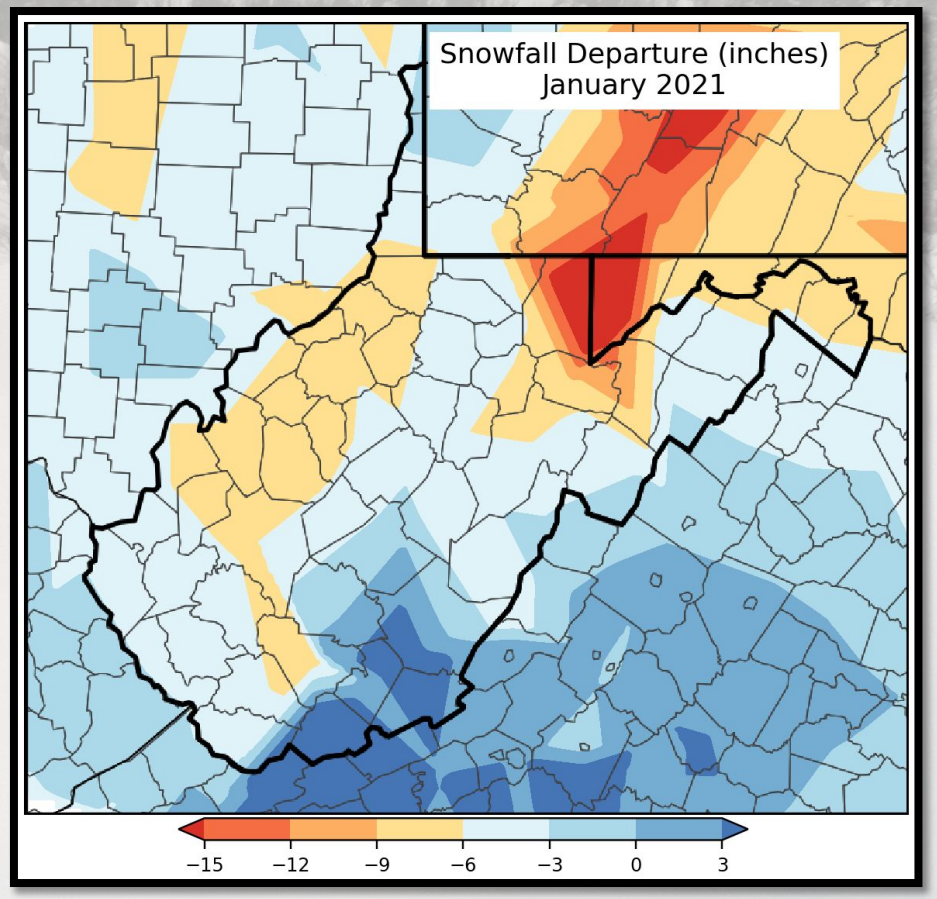




January featured a significant spread in precipitation totals from south to north across the region. Above average precipitation was seen across parts of the central and southern areas with amounts in excess of 3”, while it was quite the contrast to the north, with some areas receiving less than 2” for the month, or approximately 50% of normal.

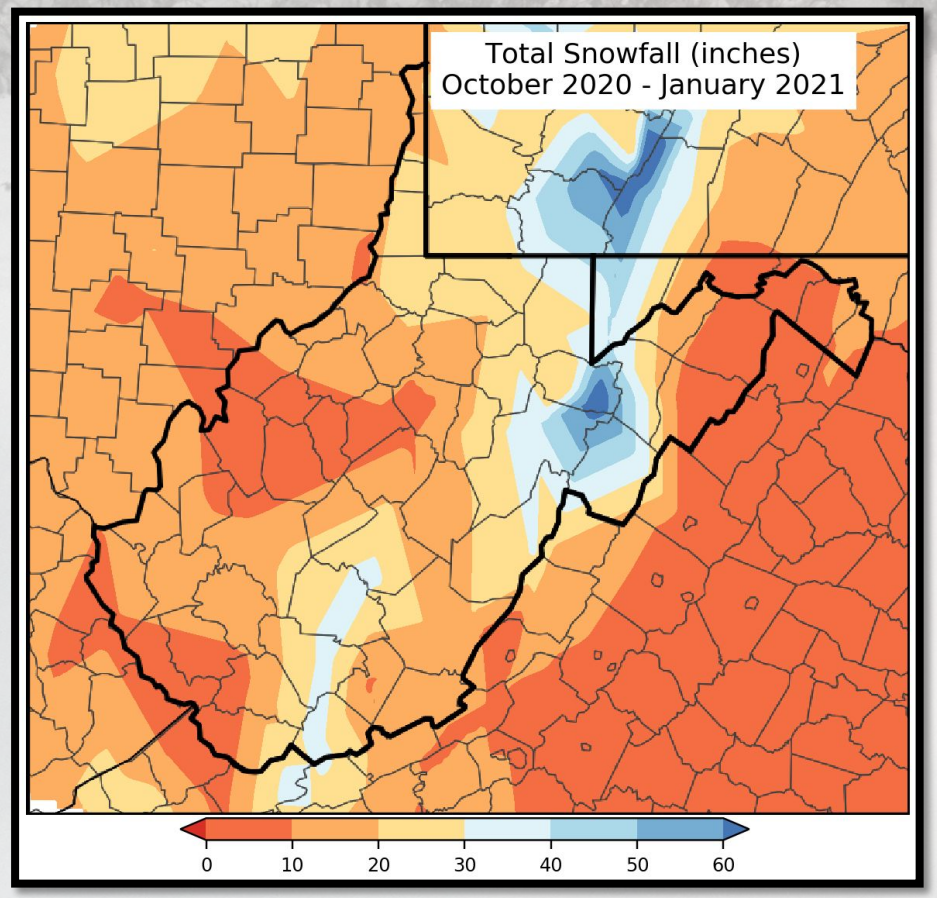
January Monthly Snowfall/Departure

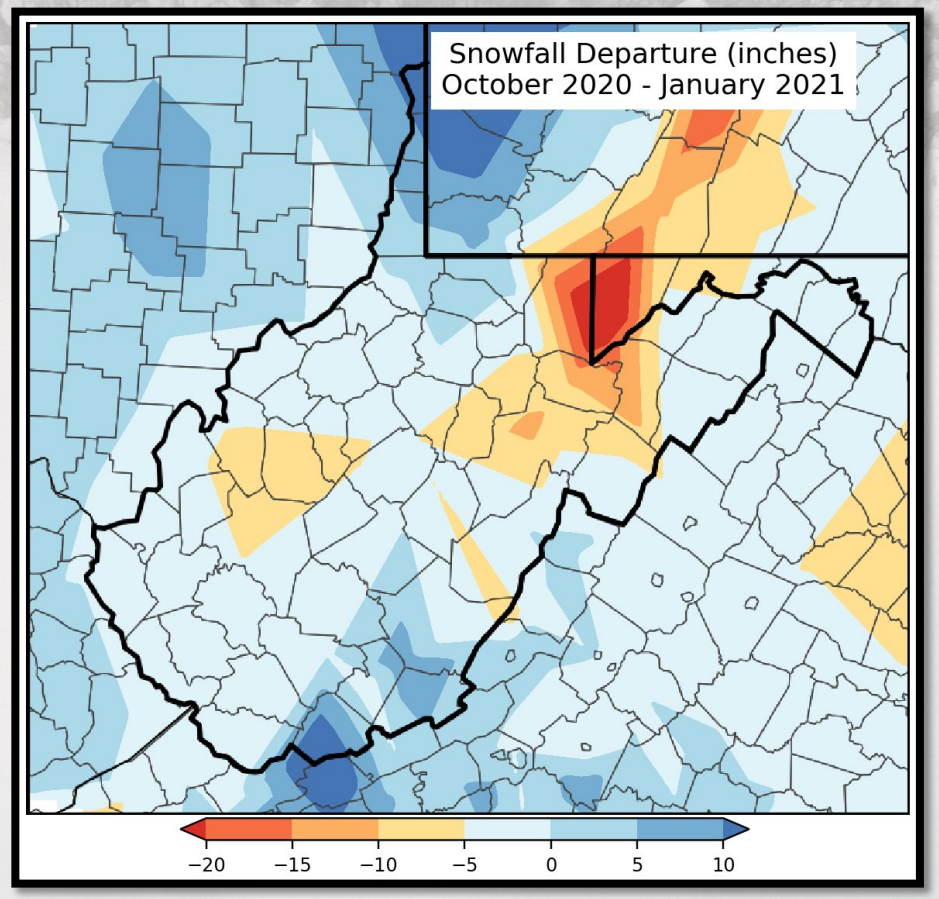




After a slow start to the month, the second half of January was more active in terms of snowfall. Overall, much of the region finished below normal however, with an exception being a few southern areas where slightly above normal snowfall occurred.

Seasonal Snowfall to Date/Seasonal Departure (Through the end of January)





Seasonal snowfall departures vary across the region, with a large portion of West Virginia being below normal, while some neighboring areas outside of West Virginia are in a surplus for the season.

January Temperature Statistics for Selected Cities

	Avg Maximum Temperature	Avg Maximum Temperature Departure	Avg Minimum Temperature	Avg Minimum Temperature Departure	Average Temperature	Average Temperature Departure
Beckley	37.9	-1.5	26.0	3.2	31.9	0.8
Charleston	41.5	-1.0	28.0	1.7	34.8	0.4
Clarksburg	39.4	-0.2	26.4	4.0	32.9	1.9
Elkins	39.0	0.0	22.9	3.5	31.0	1.8
Huntington	41.5	-0.7	28.9	3.6	35.2	1.5
Parkersburg	39.6	-0.2	26.8	3.4	33.2	1.6

Abbreviations: Avg, Average
Notes: Temperatures/Departures are in degrees Fahrenheit

January Precipitation Statistics for Selected Cities

	Precipitation	Precipitation Departure	Snowfall	Snowfall Departure	Seasonal Snowfall	Seasonal Snowfall Dep
Beckley	3.48	0.67	19.1	1.1	33.3	-0.6
Charleston	2.62	-0.38	4.7	-6.6	13.9	-5.5
Clarksburg	1.76	-1.69	M	M	M	M
Elkins	2.95	-0.28	17.8	-6.6	35.4	-11.4
Huntington	2.82	-0.15	2.6	-4.3	9.6	-1.9
Parkersburg	2.49	-0.46	M	M	M	M

Abbreviations: Dep, Departure; M, Missing

Notes: All units are in inches. Seasonal snowfall and the corresponding seasonal snowfall departures include all snowfall tallied from the first snow in the fall, through the end of January.

Record Events for January

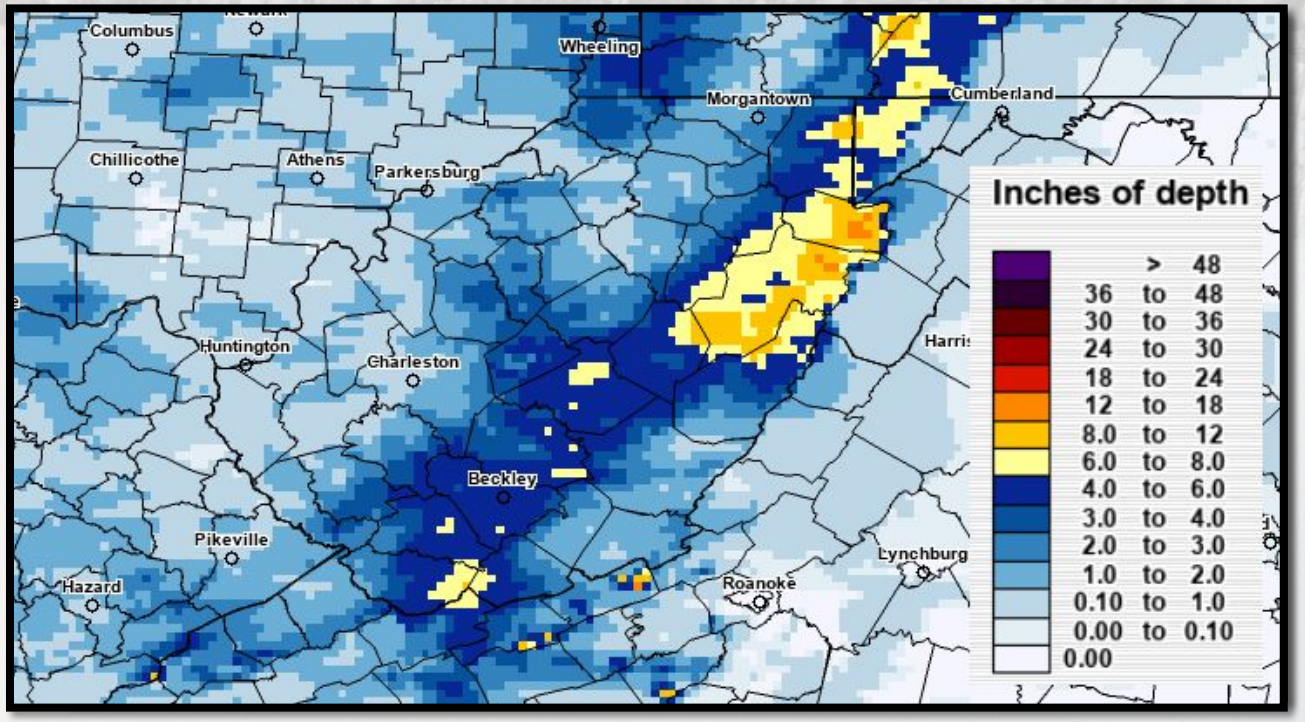
- January 17th: Record daily maximum snowfall set at Beckley, WV. A record snowfall of 4.2” was set at Beckley, breaking the old record of 4.0” set in 1965.
- January 17th: Record daily maximum snowfall set at Elkins, WV. A record snowfall of 5.2” was set at Elkins, breaking the old record of 4.2” set in 2018.
- January 26th: Record daily maximum rainfall set at Beckley, WV. A record rainfall of 1.52” was set at Beckley, breaking the old record of 0.95” set in 1978.
- January 26th: Record daily maximum rainfall set at Charleston, WV. A record rainfall of 1.13” was set at Charleston, breaking the old record of 0.92” set in 1978.
- January 26th: Record daily maximum rainfall set at Huntington, WV. A record rainfall of 1.29” was set at Huntington, breaking the old record of 1.09” set in 1978.

January Noteworthy Events

- January 15-20th Wintry Period
- January 25-26th System
- January 27-28th Winter Storm
- January 30th - February 2nd Winter Storm (Will be covered in February's edition!)

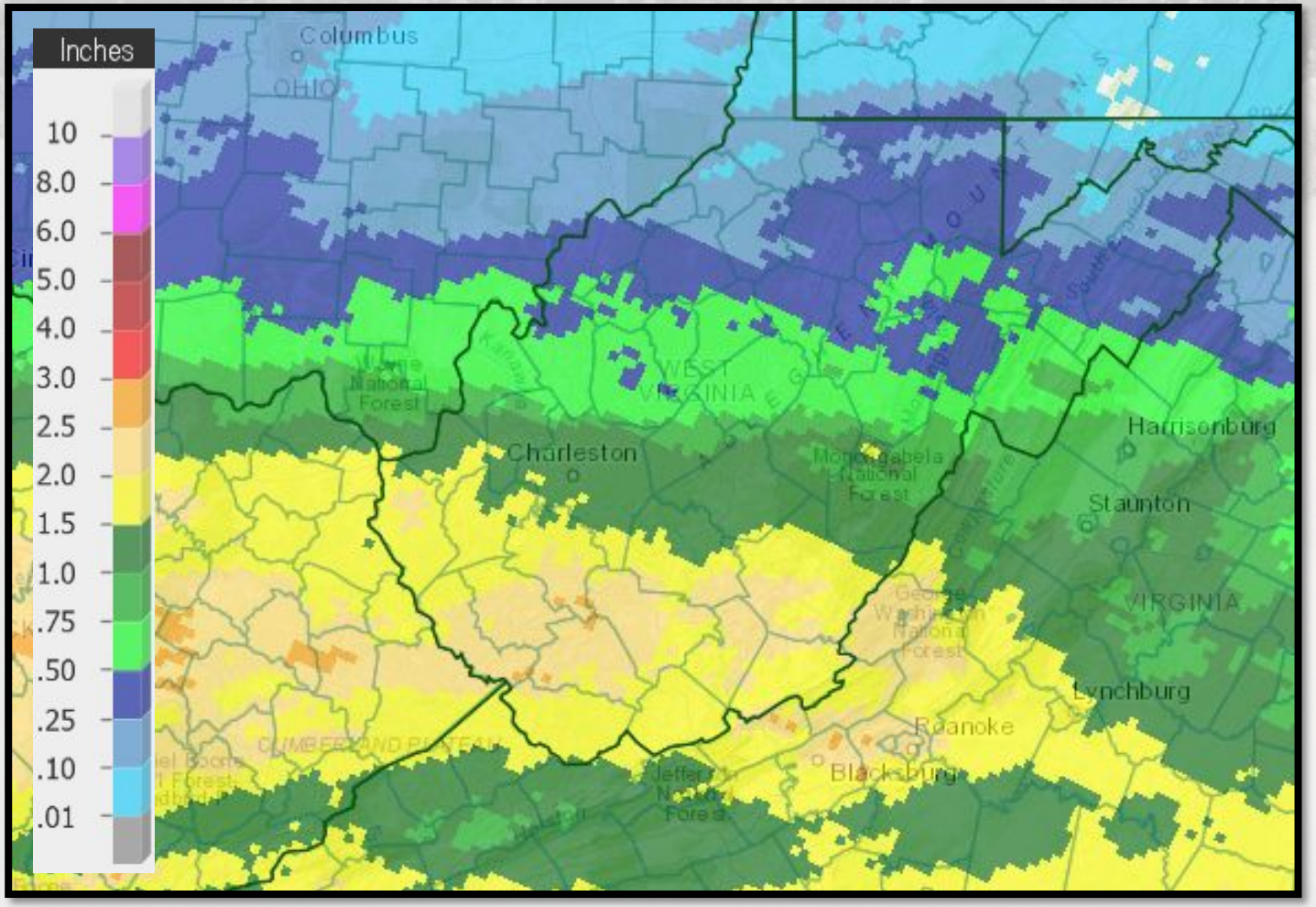
January 15-20th Wintry Period

A period of wintry weather impacted the region, mainly at higher elevations, over an extended period due to several different disturbances moving through the area. While amounts in the lower elevations over the period were on the light side, bouts of snowfall impacted the higher elevations, resulting in totals of 10.7” at Elkins, WV over the 5-day period, with slightly greater amounts being reported in higher terrain. Record daily maximum snowfall was set on January 17th at both Beckley (4.2”) and Elkins (5.2”).



72 Hour Snowfall Ending at 7 am EST January 19, covering the most significant period of snowfall for this timeframe.

January 25-26th System

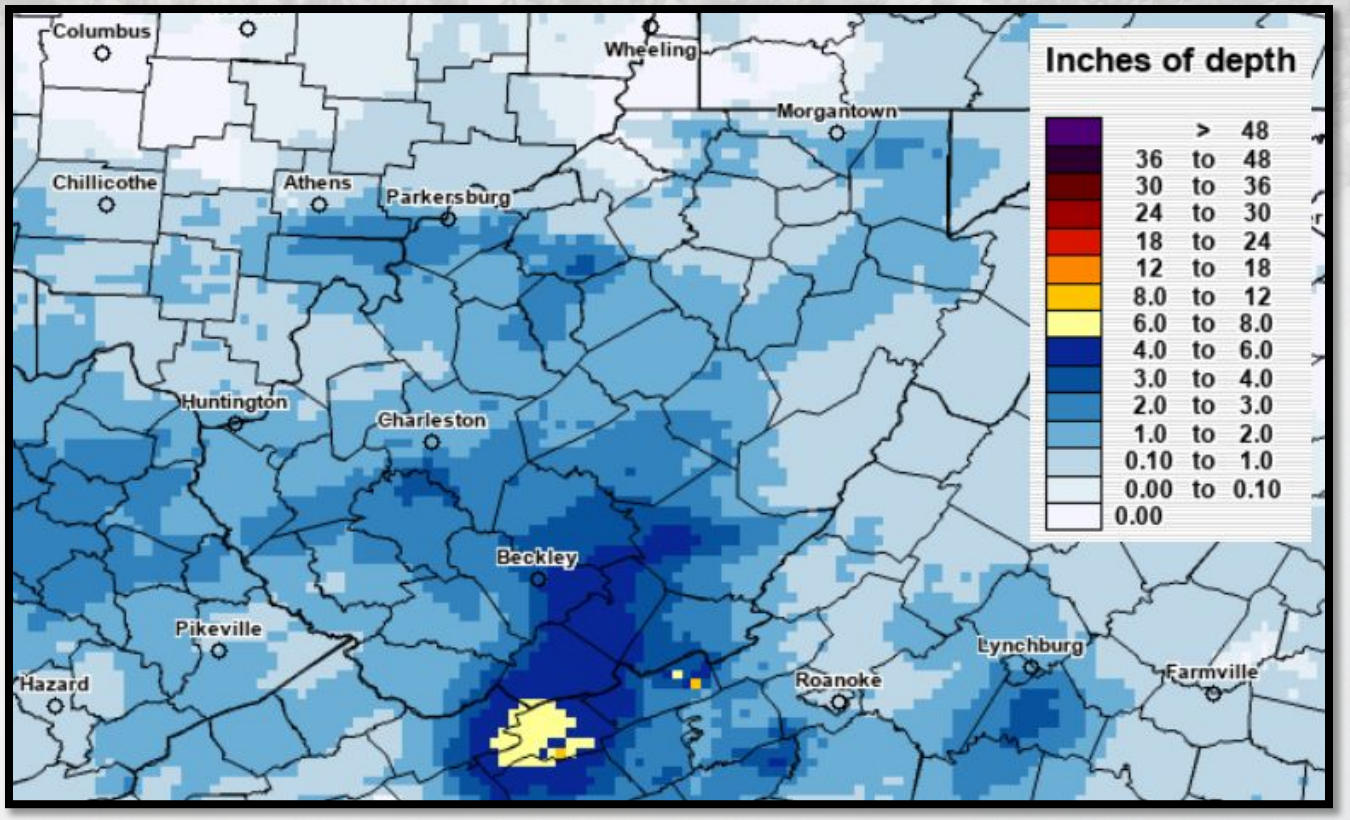


24 Hour Observed Precipitation Ending at 7 am EST January 26

A storm system approached the region on January 25th from the southwest, bringing with it ample amounts of moisture. Despite the time of year, this was mainly a rain event for the region. Precipitation overspread the area throughout the morning of the 25th and would continue through the following morning, providing significant rainfall for some. The heaviest totals would remain to the south of Charleston, with Beckley reporting a total of 1.92”. Some areas received in excess of 2” of rain with flooding being reported. Record daily maximum rainfall totals were set on January 26th at Beckley (1.52”), Charleston (1.13”) , and Huntington (1.29”).

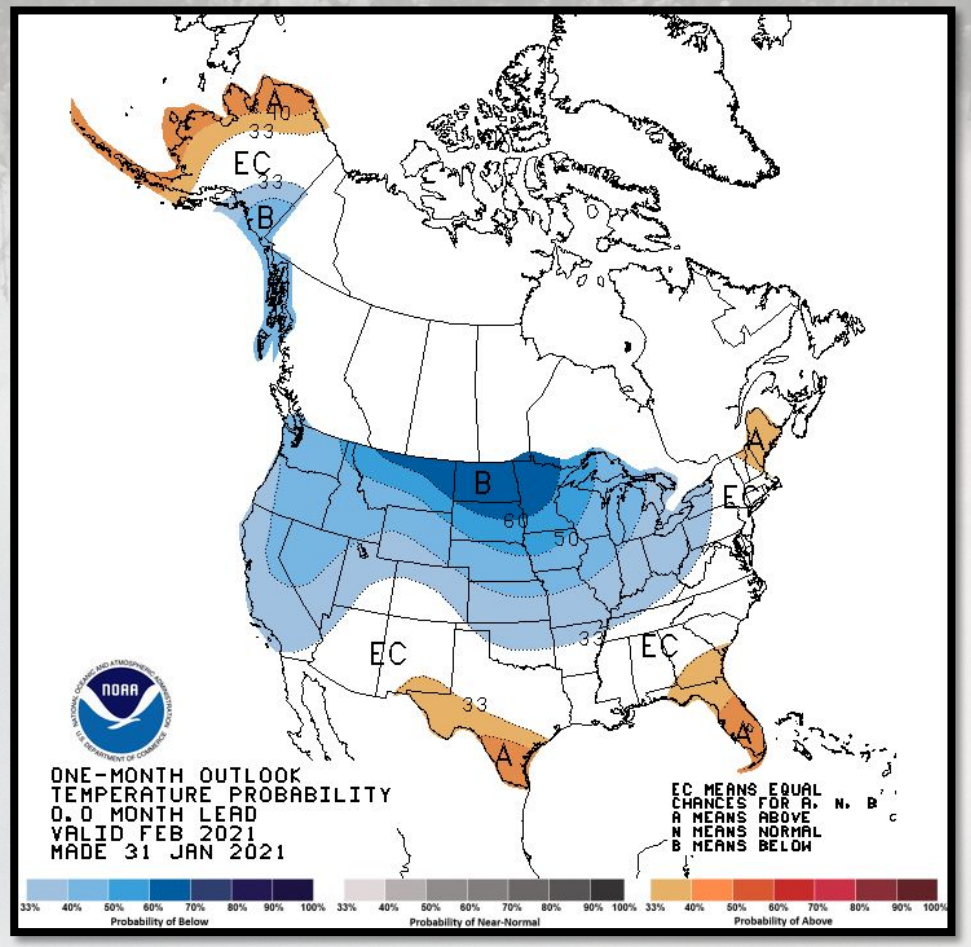
January 27-28th Winter Storm

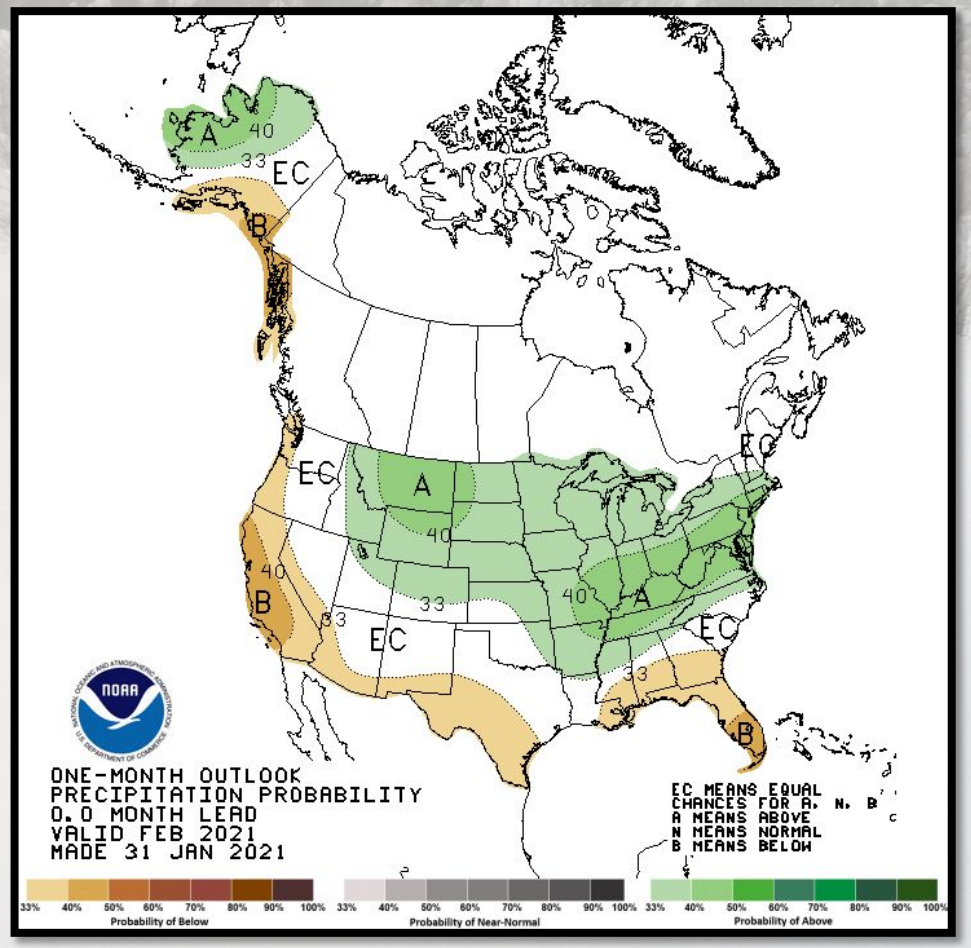
An area of low pressure tracked south of the region during the late evening hours on January 27th. While it was a quick moving system, it did result in a general 1-4” snowfall for a good portion of the area. In its wake, there was some light upslope snowfall throughout the day on January 28th. This was the largest snowfall of the month for Charleston at 2.4”. Isolated heavier totals were received in the southern portion of West Virginia, with 6.2” at Cool Ridge (south of Beckley).



48 Hour Snowfall Ending at 7 am EST January 29

February Outlook





Climate Prediction Center One-Month Temperature and Precipitation Outlook for the United States.

We are looking for volunteer observers!

Are you interested in weather? If so, we would love for you to consider being a volunteer observer for CoCoRaHS! We are always looking for new volunteers across our area. If interested, please see the flyer to the right. More information is available at this website!

Thank You!