Colorado Classics - Our Legendary Storms

Nolan J. Doesken
Colorado Climate Center
Colorado State University

Presented at 7NEWS Winter Weather Seminar, Omni Interlocken Hotel, Broomfield, Colo,
November 9, 2005
1888

Colorado Historical Society, Call Number: MCC-3233
1899 January

- Huge mountain snow halted railroad traffic. Resulted in several deaths.
1913 December

- Incredible Front Range snowstorm dumped 30-50 inches of fairly wet snow everywhere from Trinidad to Fort Collins.
1921 April 15th

- Foothills snow-storm dropped 75.8 inches of snow at Silver Lake (above Boulder) in just 24 hours – a North American record!

Total Storm Precipitation April 14-15, 1921 from Paulus (1953).
Mar 28, 1931

- Blizzard near Eads. School bus catastrophe, several children died

School bus where five children and the bus driver perished. March 28, 1931 (Ellis Photo, Alva, OK)

Pleasant Hill Elementary Classes 1931

From [http://www.eadseagles.com/pgtownerbustragedy.htm](http://www.eadseagles.com/pgtownerbustragedy.htm)
1934

- Dust Blizzards and Hard Times!

Dust Bowl Cloud in the Midwest

Photo by John Haynes
1946 November

• Lengthy snowstorm clobbered eastern Colorado with 20-50 inches of snow and high winds. At least 13 people died.

Colorado Historical Society, Call Number: X-12159
1949 January

• Severe cold and high winds accompanied a modest snowfall claiming seven human lives and thousands of animals in northeast Colorado
1951 December 29-31

- Snow blitz

Colorado Historical Society, Call Number: RR-589
1977 March

- Blizzard on the plains which killed nine people
1978 May

• Late snow-storm on Front Range

Trail Ridge Road at elevation 12,000 feet in Rocky Mountain National Park, May 26, 1978.
1979-80

- Big winter of snow for this season
- Wolf Creek Pass record seasonal snowfall of 837.5 inches!
1982 December 24

- Christmas Eve blizzard shut down Denver and parts of northeast Colorado

Photo by James Wiesmueller
1983 November

- Thanksgiving blizzard
1983 Nov-Dec

- Mountain snow blitz
- Snow fell 49 out of 53 days from 11/8 through 12/31 for a total of 214.5” at Berthoud Pass.
1989 February

- Alaska Blaster – heavy snow with subzero temperatures east and west of mountains
1990 March

- Front Range snowstorm was so dense that snow-plows bogged down and many trees and power-lines were downed or damaged.

Photo by Joel Radtke
1994 July 4th

• Mountain snowstorm in July cancels fireworks
1997 October

• Southeast Colorado blizzard

Drift outside Pueblo NWS Office

Satellite image of the Western Plains on October 26, 1997. The image clearly shows a deep snow cover over parts of the central Rockies and across the high plains of Nebraska, Kansas, and portions of western South Dakota and the panhandles of Oklahoma and Texas. Over 2 feet of snow fell in portions of Colorado due to the storm.
2003 March

- Three day snowstorm halted Denver and surrounding area

From Denver-Boulder National Weather Service Office

Photo by Stacey Seseske

Photo by Ron Phillips
Dec 28, 2004 – Jan 11, 2005

- Southwest Colorado snow blitz
1. Which of the following cities has the lowest average annual snowfall total:

Spokane, WA
Billings, MT
Minneapolis, MN
Albany, NY
Colorado Springs, CO
Climate Trivia Question

2) Which of the following Colorado cities gets the most large snowstorms of 8" or greater in 24 hours

- Canon City
- Gunnison
- Monte Vista
- Boulder
- Steamboat Springs
Climate Trivia Question

3) If it snowed like crazy this morning and if there was 4" of snow on the grass by noon, then it stopped and by 7 PM the snow was all gone, would the official snowfall report for the day be

4"
2"
Trace
0.0"
Climate Trivia Question

4) Which of the following Colorado locations receives the most snow in a typical winter

- Pikes Peak
- Wolf Creek Pass
- Vail Pass
- Buffalo Pass (near Steamboat Springs)
- Eisenhower Tunnel
5) How many days did the Vail NWS cooperative weather station report at least one inch of new snow this past winter, 2004 – 2005?
CoCoRaHS
Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network

http://www.cocorahs.org

• Over 1,500 volunteers in Colorado participate in rain, hail and snow measurements.

• More accurate maps, verifies forecasting, radar research, crop damage, drought/flooding, educational purposes.
For more information visit the CoCoRaHS Web site

http://www.cocorahs.org

Support for this project provided by Informal Science Education Program, National Science Foundation and many local charter sponsors.
Colorado Climate Center

Data and Power Point Presentations available for downloading

http://ccc.atmos.colostate.edu
  – click on “Drought”
  – then click on “Presentations”