

The Pennsylvania Observer

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May 2009 – Pennsylvania Weather Recap

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The month started on a wet note in the Commonwealth as a cold front passed on the 1st dropping over 0.50” (12.70 mm) of rain in much of the state. Cooler air filtered into the region behind the front on the 2nd allowing for several consecutive days of below average temperatures. The rest of the first week of the month featured more soggy weather as waves of low pressure rode along a stalled front near the Mason-Dixon Line. This much needed rain helped ease drought concerns in many areas that experienced a very dry first few months of the year. During the first seven days of the month, 5.16” (131.06 mm) of rain fell in Hatfield, PA while only 1.56” (39.62 mm) fell in State College, PA.

The pattern changed on the 9th as a strong cold front worked its way across the state late that Saturday afternoon. Ahead of the front, temperatures climbed well above average throughout Pennsylvania, including 84° F (29°C) in Philadelphia, PA (KPHL). This warm shot was short lived as temperatures fell back into the 50s and 60s behind the front on the 10th as Erie, PA (KERI) only reached a high of 52° F (11°C). Despite the cool weather, the start of the work-week on the 11th was rather pleasant as a large dome of high pressure kept skies mostly sunny. Cool weather persisted until the 15th when a storm system migrated from the Midwest. Saturday the 16th was a fairly warm and muggy day with readings well into the 70s. The humid air, in conjunction with a cold front, helped to fuel scattered severe thunderstorms in the northern tier and capital region of the state. A tornado warning was issued for Tioga County, although no funnel cloud was reported. Several locales reported downed trees and power lines caused by high winds. Carbon County reported the most rainfall on the 16th with 3.30” (83.82 mm) in Palmerton.

As the cold front pushed east of the state on Sunday, cool air once again took hold of the Commonwealth. For the next several days, temperatures began to moderate and spectacular spring weather was seen throughout the state. Mornings were very chilly in some spots with Bradford, PA (KBFD) reaching a low of 24° F (-4°C) during the early morning hours on the 19th. Daytime highs were mainly in the 60s as warmer weather moved in at mid-week on the 20th. Sunny skies and light winds made for a gorgeous end to the week as residents geared up for the Memorial Day weekend!

The holiday weekend started warm and humid on Saturday the 23rd as tropical air flowed northward from the Gulf of Mexico. Some portions of the state received isolated thundershowers. On the 24th, a weak cold front sagged its way through the region triggering isolated thunderstorms. Although less than ideal barbecue conditions occurred on the 23rd and 24th, Mother Nature decided to give the Commonwealth a fantastic Memorial Day weather-wise. The holiday featured dry conditions with low dew points. Sunny skies returned to the state creating ideal conditions for outdoor ceremonies.

This pleasant weather was also short lived, however as cool and rainy weather returned on the 26th. The remnants of a tropical disturbance, combined with a large disturbance over the Midwest to bring unsettled weather through the 28th. Some places received strong to severe thunderstorms during the afternoon and evening hours on the 28th with Donora, PA measuring penny-sized hail (SPC Storm Reports). Heavy rain also fell with 2.07" (52.58 mm) in Erie, PA on the 28th. Skies began to clear on the 29th with only scattered showers and thunderstorms affecting the eastern sections of the Commonwealth. The final weekend of the month was tranquil, but a bit cool with high temperatures only reaching the 60s in some spots.

For the month of May, temperatures were fairly moderate throughout the state. Harrisburg reported a monthly mean temperature of 62.5° F (17°C) which was only .5° F above normal. As for precipitation, the southern tier and Susquehanna Region saw above average values with Williamsport, PA reporting 4.29" (108.97 mm) which was .50" (12.70 mm) above average. Throughout the western third of the state though, rain totals were slightly below average.

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (**observations taken at 8AM EDT**) during May 2009 from the NWS Cooperative & ASOS Networks. The extremes occurred in the 24-hour period prior to the date listed.

Parameter	Location	Value	Date (8 AM EDT)	County
Highest Temperature	Alvin R Bush Dam	91°F	May 22 nd	Clinton
Lowest Temperature	Chandlers Valley	23°F	May 19 th	Warren
Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Grays Landing	8.99"	-	Fayette
Least Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Dicksonburg	1.40"	-	Crawford

Weather Stories

All that Rain and It's Still Dry

http://www.philly.com/philly/news/breaking/20090512_All_that_rain_and_its_still_dry.html

World's Largest Tornado Experiment Heads for Great Plains

<http://bbsnews.net/article.php/20090510121341852>

The Clean Energy Jobs Myth

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/s_625380.html