

The Pennsylvania Observer

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May 2012 - Pennsylvania Weather Recap

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The majority of the fifth month had temperatures averaging well above seasonal levels with two distinct 'hot spells', one during the first week and the second centered on the Memorial Day weekend. More importantly, May brought an abundance of rain in the central sections and northeast, where in some places, there was as much rain during this month as there had been from January 1-April 30, 2012. Fortunately, flooding was not an issue as the dry winter and early spring meant the creeks and streams were running low. Rainfall was sparse though in the northwestern third of the state as Atlantic moisture struggled to reach west of the Appalachians. The continued effects of an abnormally warm March were noticed in the state's flora and fauna that matured at rates a few weeks faster than normal. The coolest weather of the month came on the mornings of May 11th and 18th when readings dropped into the 30's across the northern half of the state. Sub-freezing temperatures were common in the northern tier valleys.

There were very few severe weather reports for what is typically an active thunderstorm month in Pennsylvania at least until Memorial Day weekend. The first tornado of the year occurred on May 2nd in Potter County where an EF0 moved through some farmland. The Sunday of Memorial Day weekend brought 52 reports of hail and wind damage – mainly in the central part of the state. Record heat and unusually high dew points caused thunderstorms to boil up each afternoon. A cold front finally pushed the tropical air out to sea on May 29th, but not before triggering another outbreak of severe thunderstorms with 67 reports of hail and wind damage. The month concluded on a tranquil note with seasonably mild, dry weather.

Temperatures ranged from +2.5F to more than +7.0F from normal, reversing a cooling trend that had set in during April. Some parts of the central and northeast counties had its top 10 wettest Mays, while portions of northwest Pennsylvania accrued a deficit of more than 1 inch for the month, adding to the drier than usual year so far. In total, 42 reports of hail came in and 102 wind damage claims during May 2012. Other extremes are reported below:

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (**observations taken at 8AM EDT**) during May 2012 from the NWS Cooperative & ASOS Networks of which our office receives routine observations. The extremes occurred in the 24-hour period prior to the date listed.

Parameter	Location	Value	Date (8 AM EDT)	County
Highest Temperature	York 3 Mi. SSW Pump Stn	97°F	May 29 th	York
Lowest Temperature	Oswayo 1 Mi. ENE	23°F	May 12 th	Potter
Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Lehighton 3.3 Mi. WSW	9.84"	May 1 st -May 31 st	Carbon
Least Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Roseville 6.0 Mi. ENE	2.38"	May 1 st -May 31 st	Bradford

Links to Pennsylvania Weather Stories during May, 2012

Frost takes bite out of PA fruit crops

[http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2012/05/frost took a bite out of centr.html](http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2012/05/frost_took_a_bite_out_of_cent.html)

<http://www.goerie.com/article/20120508/NEWS02/305079919/Frost-takes-toll-on-Erie-region-fruit-crops>

Chestnut trees are making a comeback after disease and climate shifts in PA and surrounding states

<http://somed.com/news/headlines/2012/15476.shtml>

Pennsylvania requires insurance companies to state how they will prepare for climate change

http://www.alternet.org/environment/155164/the_world%27s_insurers_brace_for_climate_change--_except_in_america

Flooding causes lake use problems

<http://www.wgal.com/news/susquehanna-valley/lancaster/Equipment-damage-could-lower-Lake-Aldred-water-levels/-/9704306/14164758/-/9tj984/-/index.html>

Reports of West Nile Virus - early

<http://www.wgal.com/news/susquehanna-valley/york-adams/Mosquito-tests-positive-in-York-Co/-/9704248/13554316/-/cemgop/-/index.html>