



OKLAHOMA CLIMATOLOGICAL SURVEY  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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**It Was the Wettest of Times...**

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When Will Rogers coined the old adage “If you don’t like Oklahoma weather, wait a few minutes” he didn’t have the turtle pace of drought in mind. While tornadoes and severe storms hit with a suddenness that leaves the victims of their fury in shock, drought is a creeping hazard. Its effects are often not noticed for months into a particular event. A quick glance lends no secrets, but a hard look at the statistics often yields the first clue; case in point, far eastern portions of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma has benefited from several very slow-moving upper-level storm systems that have parked themselves nearby and produced lots of heavy rainfall. In fact, there have been so many flood warnings across the northwestern two-thirds of the state that animals have been spotted traveling in twos. Despite those portends, however, would it shock you to learn that parts of eastern Oklahoma have been inching their way to a deficit of more than eight inches? The area has missed out on the ample moisture since winter ended. In fact, a wet winter has helped the area stave off any significant drought impacts. That is a turn of good luck after a disastrous ice storm in mid-January left the ground in eastern Oklahoma littered with debris from splintered trees – a veritable tinderbox in the event of drought conditions. It was that ice storm, along with several other precipitation events, that gave southeastern Oklahoma its 17<sup>th</sup> wettest January on record at nearly 2.5 inches above normal.

The statistics spell out the situation. Since February 1, the southeastern and east central sections of Oklahoma are averaging around four inches below normal, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> driest such periods on record for those areas, respectively. During that same time period, the Oklahoma Mesonet site at Burbank in the northeast has led the state with 31.91 inches of precipitation while the southeastern town of Wister has registered a meager 14.63 inches, between 6-9 inches below normal. Of course, there are other dry spots around the state. Extreme southwestern Oklahoma has yet to reach 10 inches of total rainfall since

the beginning of February. And the last 60 days in the Panhandle are the 34<sup>th</sup> driest such period on record for that area.

So keep the dry edges of Oklahoma in mind between the flood and heavy rain reports as we leave spring and enter the long hot summer. The conditions there may be creeping your way soon.