Quarterly Climate Impacts and Outlook

Midwest Region

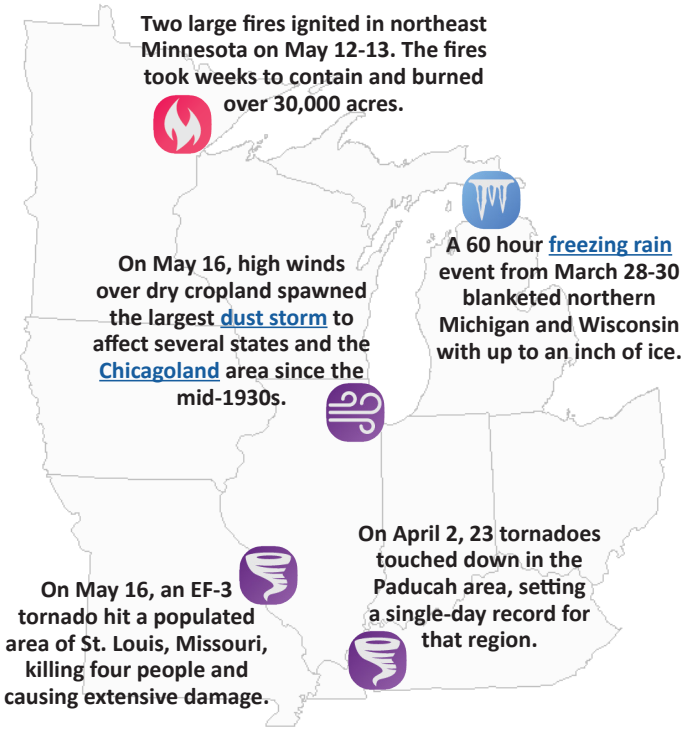
June 2025

Midwest Significant Events – *March - May 2025*

Blizzard conditions brought 6-10 inches of snow and 40-50 mph winds across Iowa and Minnesota on March 4-6. On March 13-15, a deadly severe weather outbreak spawned at least 47 tornados across the lower Midwest. A long-duration ice storm March 28-30 crippled northern Wisconsin and Michigan with up to an inch of ice.

An intense weather system spawned at least 75 tornadoes across the lower Midwest on April 2-3, with drenching rain in the east and 8-15 inches of snow in Minnesota. Continuous storms battered Kentucky April 2-6, with rainfall totaling 6-16 inches. April was notably windy across the northwestern half of the region. Madison, Wisconsin, logged 13 days with gusts over 30 mph.

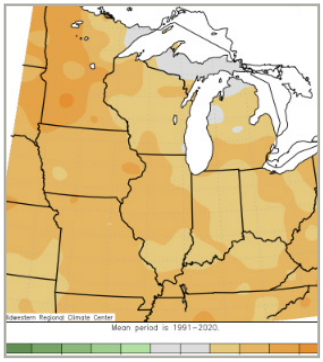
A 12-17 day stretch in early May of hot, dry, and windy weather created high wildfire risk across Minnesota and Wisconsin. The highest fire risk was from May 11-14 when temperatures surged across the northwest. International Falls reached 96°F on May 11, setting an all-time record for the month. Severe weather outbreaks on May 15 (upper Midwest) and May 16 (lower Midwest) dropped large hail, high winds, and at least 47 tornadoes across the region.



Regional Climate Overview – *March - May 2025*

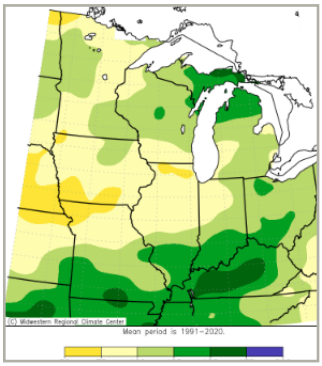
Spring Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



Spring Precipitation

% of Normal



Spring temperatures were above normal across the entire region, with the greatest departures from normal across Minnesota. Overall, the Midwest tied for the 13th warmest spring on record. March had the most notable warmth, with the region achieving the 9th warmest March since 1895. April was slightly above normal while May was slightly below normal.

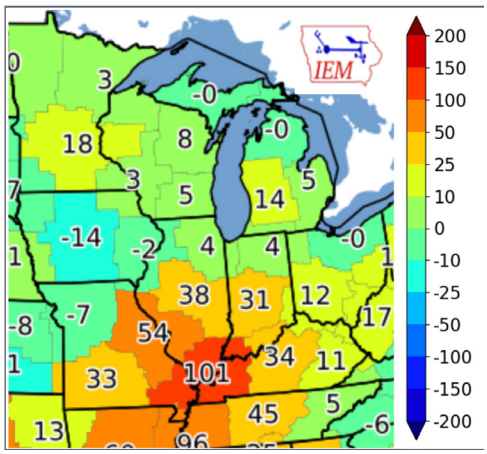
Spring precipitation was near normal for the region, with notable wetness across the far southern Midwest and northern Michigan. Kentucky had its 4th wettest spring since 1895. Precipitation was variable from month to month across the region. Michigan had its 2nd wettest March. Kentucky had its 2nd wettest April.

Drought improved across the region during spring. The lower Midwest ended spring completely free of drought or dryness. Isolated pockets of drought remained across the upper Midwest.

Many states had above-normal tornado activity. In the first five months of the year, preliminary tornado counts for Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Missouri exceeded their typical annual tornado count. Conversely, Iowa had few tornadoes so far this year, including no tornadoes during the month of May.

Spring Tornado Warnings

Departure from Average (count)
Period of record: 2002-2025



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Regional Impacts – *March - May 2025*

Deadly Tornadoes

The March 13-15 tornado outbreak resulted in at least 10 fatalities in Missouri. The St. Louis area alone recorded 12 tornadoes, making it one of the area's most active outbreak days on record. The May 16 tornado outbreak across the lower Midwest resulted in at least 26 fatalities, with a long-track EF-4 storm in eastern Kentucky accounting for 19 deaths. An EF-3 that struck St. Louis that day, killing four, also left an estimated $1 Billion in damages to the city.

State Hwy 450 in Graves County, Kentucky (Credit: J. Siedel)

Kentucky Flooding

Multiple waves of thunderstorms and 6-12 inches of heavy rain battered Kentucky from April 2-6. The Marshall County Kentucky Mesonet station recorded 15.59 inches of rain in just four days. Flash flooding and river flooding inundated central and western Kentucky. Many locations had their worst flooding in over 60 years. Stranded residents were rescued from homes, businesses, and vehicles. Countless roads became impassable from flooding and landslides, and many roadways were closed for weeks as the flooding persisted into mid-month. At least seven flood-related fatalities were reported statewide.

Agriculture

Wet conditions resulted in delayed row crop planting in the southeastern Midwest. By late May, corn (soybean) planting was 19% (10%) behind the 5-year average in Ohio and 12% (5%) behind in Kentucky. Conversely, planting was ahead of average in the northwestern Midwest.

Dust storm near Bloomington, Illinois (Credit: J. Borchardt)

About 30,000 gallons of Michigan's maple syrup (one third the annual yield) was lost due to fallen trees during the March 28-30 ice storm. Pine trees in Wisconsin were hard hit by the ice and snow.

There were reports of extensive crop damage in northwest Indiana and northeast Illinois due to the May 16 dust storm

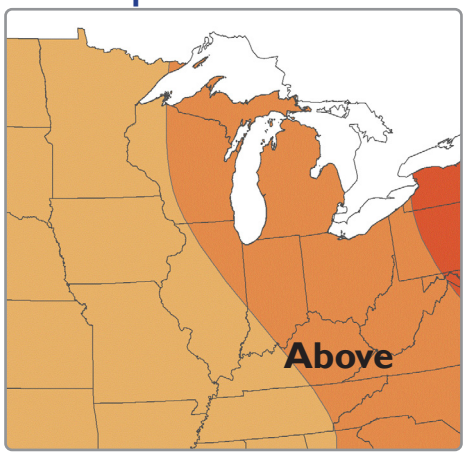
Regional Outlook – *July - September 2025*

NOAA forecasters are predicting increased chances of above-normal temperatures across the region, with greater chances in the east. The precipitation outlook slightly favors a chance of below normal precipitation in the northwest Midwest, transitioning to a slight chance of above normal precipitation in the southeast Midwest. The central Midwest shows equal chances of any precipitation outcome.

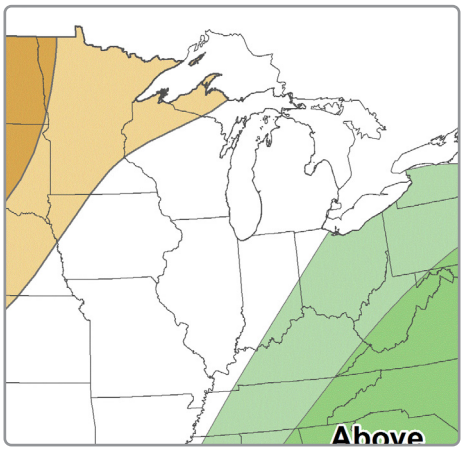
Drought removal is expected in the area around southern Lake Michigan and in central Michigan during summer. Drought is expected to persist in far western Iowa and northern Minnesota.

The seasonal fire risk outlook indicates above-normal risk across the northern half of Minnesota in July and August with normal risk in September. The rest of the Midwest region shows normal fire risk for the entire July through September period.

Temperature Outlook



Precipitation Outlook



Midwest Partners

- Midwestern Regional Climate Center
- American Association of State Climatologists
- National Integrated Drought Information System
- USDA Midwest Climate Hub
- National Drought Mitigation Center
- NWS Climate Prediction Center
- NWS Central Region Headquarters
- North Central River Forecast Center
- Ohio River Forecast Center
- National Centers for Enviro. Info