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2018 Weather in Review: Gauley River National Recreation Area

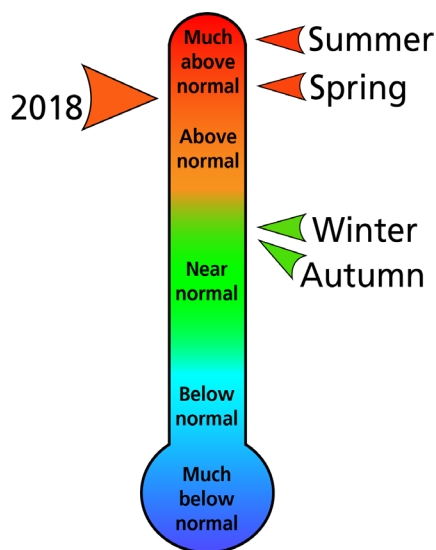
In all, 2018 was warm and extremely wet. In fact, it was a record-setting year for precipitation, with higher totals than ever recorded. Weather data collected in surrounding counties since 1895 reveals increasing trends in annual average temperature (+0.05 °F per decade) and annual total precipitation (+0.10 inches per decade).

Information in this brief represents weather data averaged from counties surrounding the park. These include Fayette and Nicholas counties, West Virginia. More local weather data may vary slightly from what is reported here.

Temperature

In total, 2018 was the 19th warmest year at the park since 1895, and spring and summer were much warmer than long-term averages (Figure 1). Eight months had higher than normal temperatures, with February and May both being at least 7 °F above normal (Table 1).

Table 1. Average monthly, average annual, and departures from long-term average temperatures. Departures from average are based on a comparison of 2018 average temperatures to relevant averages from 1895-2017. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/time-series>.



Month/ Year	Average temperature (°F)	Departure from average (°F)
January	27.4	-3.5
February	42.2	+9.3
March	38.0	-3.5
April	47.5	-3.8
May	67.2	+7.0
June	69.3	+2.0
July	71.4	+0.5
August	71.2	+1.3
September	70.2	+6.0
October	54.8	+1.4
November	39.8	-2.8
December	36.5	+3.0
2018	53.0	+1.4

Figure 1. Seasonal and annual temperature rankings. An arrow at the top of the figure would represent the warmest year/season on record (since 1895); at the bottom, the coldest year/season on record. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/rankings>.

Precipitation

In total, 2018 was a record-setting year at the park — it was the wettest year since 1895 (Figure 2). By the end of the year, the area received 64.8 inches of precipitation, almost 17 inches more than the long-term average (Table 2).

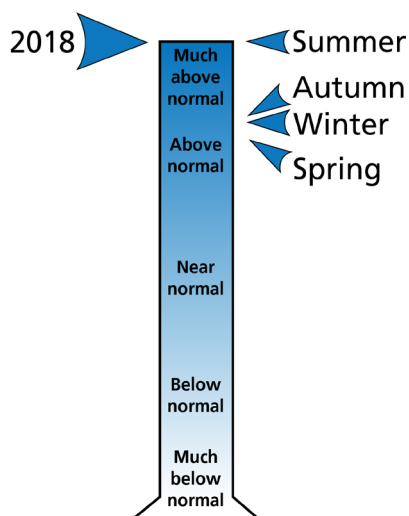


Figure 2. Seasonal and annual precipitation rankings. An arrow at the top of the figure would represent the wettest year/season on record (since 1895); at the bottom, the driest year/season on record. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/rankings>.

Table 2. Monthly and annual total precipitation and departure from long-term averages. Departures from average are based on a comparison of 2018 precipitation to relevant averages from 1895–2017. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/time-series>.

Month/ Year	Total precipitation (in.)	Departure from average (in.)
January	2.7	-1.0
February	6.8	+3.5
March	4.6	+0.3
April	5.0	+1.1
May	6.6	+2.1
June	4.9	+0.1
July	5.6	+0.1
August	6.4	+1.9
September	9.1	+5.7
October	3.6	+0.4
November	5.0	+1.7
December	4.5	+1.0
2018	64.8	+16.9

Temperature and Precipitation Trends (1895–2018)

Data collected in Fayette and Nicholas counties, WV since the late 1800s shows increasing trends in annual average temperature (+0.05 °F per decade) and annual total precipitation (+0.10 inches per decade).

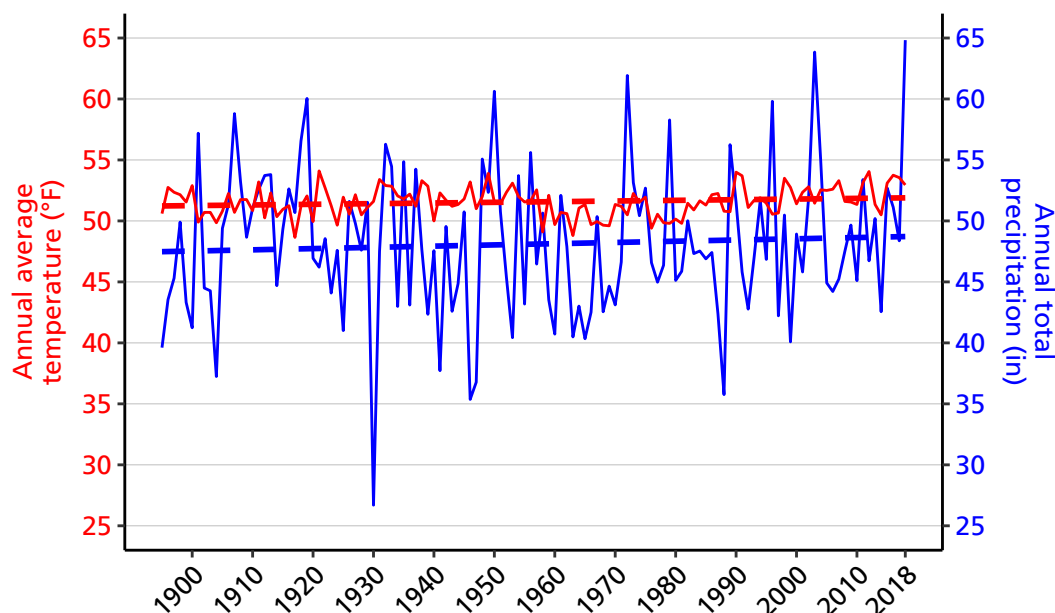


Figure 3. Annual average temperature (°F) and annual total precipitation (in.) from 1895–2018 for Fayette and Nicholas counties, WV. Dashed lines represent linear trends. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/time-series>.

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Parks monitored:

Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS • Bluestone NSR • Delaware Water Gap NRA • Flight 93 NMem • Fort Necessity NB • Friendship Hill NHS • Gauley River NRA • Johnstown Flood NMem • New River Gorge NR • Upper Delaware SRR