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2018 Weather in Review: New River Gorge National River

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 since 1895 reveals an increasing trend in annual average temperature (+0.02 °F per decade) and a decreasing trend in annual total precipitation (-0.01 inches per decade).

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

Temperature

In total, 2018 was the 21st warmest year at the recreation area since 1895, and the spring and summer were particularly warm (Figure 1). Eight months had higher than normal temperatures, with February, May, and September all being more than 5 °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>.

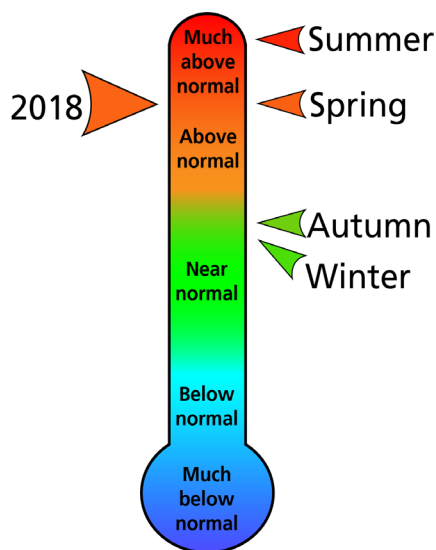


Figure 1. Seasonal and annual temperature rankings. An arrow at the top of the figure would represent the warmest year/season on record (since 1895); at the bottom, the coldest year/season on record. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/rankings>.

Month/ Year	Average temperature (°F)	Departure from average (°F)
January	27.6	-3.9
February	43.1	+9.5
March	38.3	-3.7
April	48.3	-3.5
May	67.0	+6.4
June	69.6	+1.8
July	71.6	+0.3
August	71.4	+1.2
September	70.2	+5.8
October	55.0	+1.4
November	40.1	-2.8
December	37.0	+3.2
2018	53.3	+1.3

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 61.1 inches of precipitation, almost 17 inches more than the long-term average (Table 2).

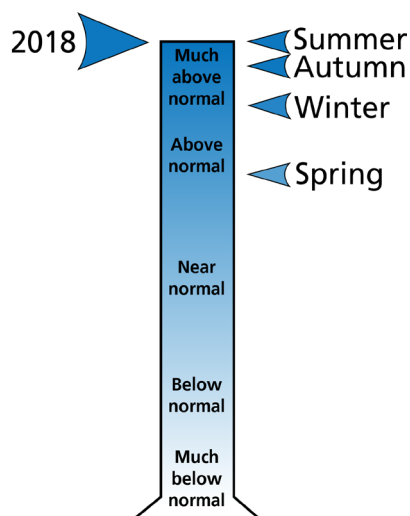


Figure 2. Seasonal and annual precipitation rankings. An arrow at the top of the figure would represent the wettest year/season on record (since 1895); at the bottom, the driest year/season on record. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/rankings>.

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	2.5	-1.1
February	6.8	+3.7
March	4.5	+0.4
April	4.1	+0.4
May	6.0	+1.8
June	4.2	-0.1
July	4.6	-0.3
August	6.3	+2.3
September	8.5	+5.4
October	3.5	+0.6
November	5.4	+2.5
December	4.7	+1.3
2018	61.1	+16.9

Temperature and Precipitation Trends (1895–2018)

Data collected in Fayette, Raleigh, and Summers counties, WV since the late 1800s shows an increasing trend in annual average temperature (+0.02 °F per decade) and a decreasing trend in annual total precipitation (-0.01 inches per decade).

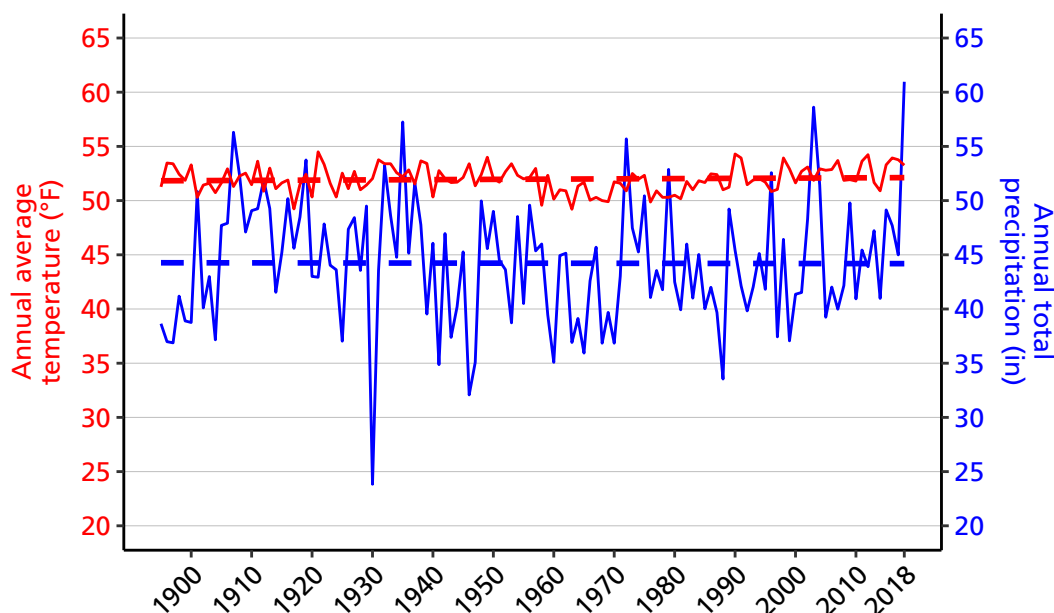


Figure 3. Annual average temperature (°F) and annual total precipitation (in.) from 1895–2018 for Fayette, Raleigh, and Summers counties, WV. Dashed lines represent linear trends. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/time-series>.

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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