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2019 Weather in Review: Gauley River National Recreation Area

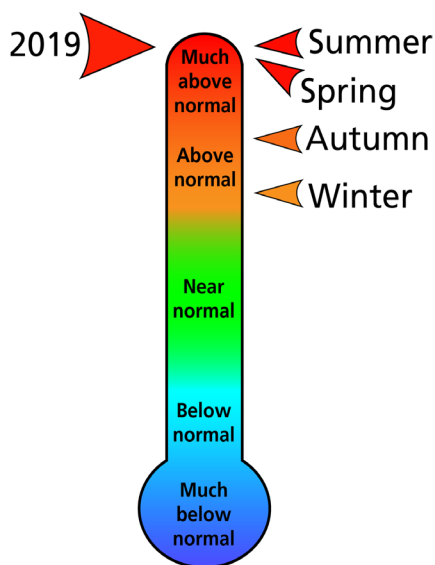
In all, 2019 was extremely warm but had normal precipitation. The year ended as the 3rd warmest and 61st wettest since 1895. Weather data collected from surrounding areas from 1895–2019 show increasing trends in annual average temperature (+0.07 °F per decade) and annual total precipitation (+0.10 inches per decade).

Information in this brief represents county-scale weather data averaged from all of the counties surrounding the park. These include Fayette and Nicholas counties, West Virginia. Individual weather station data may vary from what is reported here.

Temperature

In total, 2019 was the 3rd warmest year at the park since 1895, and all seasons were warmer than long-term averages (Figure 1). Nine months had higher than normal temperatures, and February and September were more than 6 °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 2019 average temperatures to relevant averages from 1895–2018. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/time-series>.



Month/ Year	Average temperature (°F)	Departure from average (°F)
January	31.8	+0.9
February	39.6	+6.6
March	39.6	-1.8
April	55.5	+4.2
May	65.3	+5.2
June	66.6	-0.8
July	73.3	+2.4
August	71.1	+1.1
September	70.4	+6.2
October	57.7	+4.2
November	38.9	-3.7
December	38.5	+4.9
2019	54.0	+2.5

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, 2019 was normal year for precipitation. That said, the summer was extremely dry while the autumn was very wet (Figure 2). The year ended as the 61st wettest year at the park since 1895 (Figure 2), with the area receiving 48.1 inches of total precipitation (Table 2).

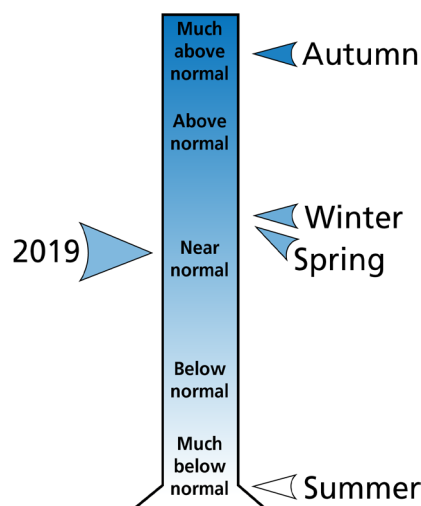


Figure 2. Seasonal and annual precipitation rankings. An arrow at the top of the figure would represent the wettest year/season on record (since 1895); at the bottom, the driest year/season on record. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/rankings>.

Table 2. Monthly and annual total precipitation and departure from long-term averages. Departures from average are based on a comparison of 2019 precipitation to relevant averages from 1895–2018. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/time-series>.

Month/ Year	Total precipitation (in.)	Departure from average (in.)
January	3.7	0.0
February	5.4	+2.1
March	2.7	-1.6
April	3.5	-0.4
May	6.1	+1.6
June	4.4	-0.4
July	4.1	-1.4
August	3.5	-1.0
September	0.6	-2.9
October	6.1	+2.9
November	3.1	-0.2
December	4.9	+1.3
2019	48.1	0.0

Temperature and Precipitation Trends (1895–2019)

Data from 1895–2019 for Fayette and Nicholas counties, WV show increasing trends in annual average temperature (+0.07 °F per decade) and annual total precipitation (+0.10 inches per decade; Figure 3).

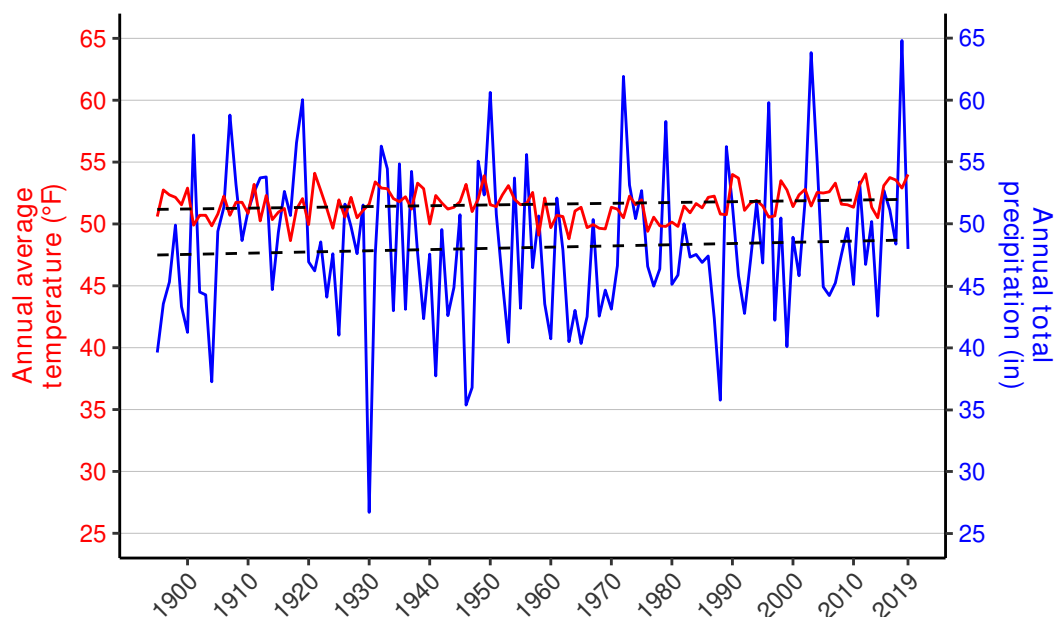


Figure 3. Annual average temperature (°F) and annual total precipitation (in.) from 1895–2019 for Fayette and Nicholas counties, WV. Dashed lines represent linear trends. Data are available at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/time-series>.

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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