August 2006 was the hottest and driest summer month this year by far. Many stations recorded less than an inch of rain. For some it was the third month out of the past 12 where less than an inch of rain fell. Some observers reported their driest August on record (see observer notes for details).

The hottest weather occurred during the first few days. Readings of 100 degrees or higher occurred at many of the warmer locations. Temperatures from the 4th to the 29th were seasonally warm with no extreme heat. Maximum temperatures during the last two days were in the upper 70’s, slightly below normal.

The only tropical storm to affect the region occurred very late on the 31st in the extreme southeastern areas. Details of effects of Tropical Storm Ernesto will appear in the September issue.

The heat wave, which began during the last week of July, peaked from the 1st to the 3rd. All stations east of Allegany County Maryland reported temperatures in the mid 90’s to low 100’s. The hottest temperatures observed by ACON observers were 103° by Joe Manfre of Baltimore 2 SE and 102° by David Roth of Montgomery Village 1 SW, both on the 3rd.

The 4th saw temperatures fall closer to 90 degrees and lower humidity levels.

Humidity levels increased on the 7th as well as temperatures. Scattered thunderstorms during the predawn hours brought the heaviest rains of this dry month to many stations from North Central Maryland southeast to the Maryland Eastern Shore. The heaviest amounts reported by ACON observers were 0.85” at Harbeson 8S DE by Dean Dey, 0.82” by Dan Hanson of Pasadena 3 SW, 0.75” by David Bryant of Annapolis 2N, and 0.79” by Brian Smith of Oxon Hill. For many stations this represented a large percentage of the entire month’s total. Joe Terry of Forest Glen in Montgomery County lost power for 3 1/2 hours as result of the pre dawn thunderstorms.

The coolest period of the month occurred from the 11th to the 13th. Daytime temperatures were generally around 80 degrees while overnight minimums were in the 50’s outside the areas heat islands. The coldest temperatures observed by ACON observers was 47° by Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW, and 48° by Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE. Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock, and Max Hutto of Smithsburg 1.5 SW. Temperatures at NWS Salisbury even fell below 50.

The 14th to the 26th saw warm to hot conditions with some days of high humidity. Scattered thundershowers brought light amounts of rainfall to many but not all on the afternoon and evening of the 20th.

The extreme dryness was broken by heavy thunderstorms from the 27th to the 29th in the northern portions of Maryland and Delaware. Bryon Lawrence of Frederick 3 WWN reported 1.80”, Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1E 1.74”, and Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW DE 1.66”. Amounts of over 1.50” were also reported by Steven Gallaher of North St. Georges DE, Max Hutto of Smithsburg 1.5 SW and Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE. These amounts represented 76% to 95% of their total rainfall for August. The heaviest rains in the region was 2.53” which fell at NWS Wilmington DE.

Rainfall amounts in the southern portions of Maryland and Delaware were much lighter. It had little to no effect on relieving the extreme dryness which has gripped much of the region since July 7th.

Cooler temperatures moved into the region ahead of Tropical Storm Ernesto on the 30th and 31st. Temperatures failed to rise to 80 at many stations for the first time since the end of the first week of July.
OBSERVER COMMENTS FOR AUGUST 2006

Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW, DE
Consecutive day streak with the maximum temperature => 80 degrees ended at 54 days on the 29th. Very dry until the 27th. Yards brown and plants showing moisture stress. First three days hot. Balance of the month seasonally warm with no extreme heat.

Rich Giannola of JHU/APL
Third month within last 12 with 0.11" precipitation or less (March 2006 0.09", & September 2005 0.11")

Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N
Driest August on record.

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW
Second driest August behind 0.61" set in 1989.

Joe Terry of Forest Glen
Extremely dry. 0.82" of rain from July 7th to August 31st

Floyd Abell of Hollywood
7th - Early AM thunderstorm, then fair.

Jeff Stoudt of Laurel 2 E
The heat wave early in the month, when considering the three low 80s min temperatures, was the most severe since at least 2002 or even 1999. A few thunderstorms downpours missed by a short distance, any of which could have brought about an inch of rain.

Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills.
7th - Warm & humid with a few scattered storms.
13th - Mostly sunny skies, breezy, and nice.

Joe Manfre of Baltimore 2SE
3rd - Mostly sunny, very hot, humid. Temps extremes 103 / 85.
31st - Mostly cloudy, breezy, and cool.

Ralph Hartscock of Westminster 4 SSE
7th - Early shower. Sunny and hot. PM storms to the south.
28th - Overnight light rain. PM late showers missed us.

Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE
Summer 2006 Avg Max 83.0 (+1.0), Avg Min 62.7 (+0.6), Avg Temp 72.9 (+0.9) Precipitation 10.43 (-0.47)
Driest August on record (25 years of records)
3rd / A few scattered PM CU clouds. Another soil temp record high.
16th - Clear 100% sunshine.

Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock
Thunder 6th & 10th

Nate Mullins of LaVale
Driest August and driest summer month in 15 years of records. This was also the hottest August on record.

Rich Giannola of Olney 1 S
3rd - Thundershower south 7:45 PM

Stan Rossen of Glenmont 1 NNE
Driest August on record. Old 0.89" in 1989.

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW
Second driest August behind 0.61" set in 1989.

2nd & 3rd - 76° minimum set an August record for the warmest daily minimum temperature. Old record was 75°

Lance Shaffer of Sterling 4 N VA
9th - 62° coolest minimum temperature since July 8th.