



# Storm Preparedness Kits

—by Sparky Smith

**HELLO. MY NAME IS SPARKY SMITH,** and I am an Eagle Scout. First I will talk a little bit about myself. Then I will tell you about how I came up with the idea for my project, and actually show you how to build your own. I will also talk about the constraints and guidelines that I had to deal with while doing the project.

I have always been interested in weather. I went to the very first Mesonet Weather Camp, where I learned more about what kind of disasters occur and what other dangers they bring. A storm kit has to last at least 1 day because many other dangers can arise after storms. For instance, you could be trapped in your shelter by debris or even have your shelter completely buried under rubble. The problem with this is, number one, the average person isn't going to sit down for a good two hours and come up with all the materials for the kit, and number two, some people can't afford it. This is how I came up with the idea for my projects. I tried to include everything needed for kids, pets, adults, and elders. I came up with the list on the next page, and I made 20 storm kits.

The easiest way to get your Eagle Scout project done is to find something that you enjoy doing and would think about doing as a career. I had tried to write up several small projects like birdhouses and things like that, but nothing really "clicked". I googled "Eagle projects involving weather". Nothing came up, so I decided to make my own. My family built a storm kit when I was younger, so I looked that up. There were bits and

pieces everywhere, but never the complete thing. I compiled all the lists and added a few things I thought were needed in every emergency. The best way to get your project approved is to make it relatively inexpensive with easy to obtain materials, and a personal aspect to show that you actually put thought into it.

One of the first things I did was go to a graphics design store and had a nice looking label made to put on the storm kits, so people would know it was more than a five gallon bucket. Thankfully, most of the products were donated, including the label. I made 20 storm kits, which would have cost about \$3000, but it ended up costing about \$1000-\$1200.

Along the way, Jeff George, Fox 25 Chief Meteorologist, heard about my project and wanted me to present it on the morning news. I decided to have my project finished on May 3rd, to remember the big tornado in 1999. I had the kits delivered to a local church, where they were distributed to elderly people and poor families. Not only were some of them used during the Moore and El Reno tornados in May 2013, we received several calls of people wanting more to be made.

My project was completed on May 3rd, 2013, and I went to the first Mesonet Regents Camp that summer. I actually got my Eagle Scout uniform pieces while I was at camp. This year, I came to the middle school Mesonet camp as a peer counselor to help out. ■



# STORM PREPAREDNESS KIT

## SPARKY SMITH'S EAGLE SCOUT PACKING LIST

Being prepared means being equipped with the proper supplies you may need in the event of an emergency. Help protect your family and pets against potential weather disasters and emergency situations by familiarizing yourself with the contents of this kit and storing it in an easily accessible location. This storm preparedness kit is designed for a family of 4 with one to two pets. It is meant to provide for some of the basic comforts and needs encountered in the first few hours after an emergency event. It can be used at home or taken with you in case you must evacuate.

This Storm preparedness kit includes the following:

WEATHER RADIO

BATTERIES 6 AA, 2 C size (Perishable item)

FIRST AID KIT

FLASHLIGHT

WATER BOTTLE X4

EMERGENCY BLANKET X4

BACKPACK

GARNOLA BAR X4 (Perishable item)

PONCHO X4

GLOW STICKS

TOILET PAPER

WHISTLE

HAND SANITIZER

ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (first aid pamphlets, severe storm pamphlets, etc.)

FOR PETS

LEASH

DOG FOOD

CAT FOOD

BOWL

TOY

Perishable item should be changed or replaced once a year (List start date here \_\_/\_\_/\_\_)

After a major disaster the usual services we take for granted, such as running water, refrigeration, and telephones, may be unavailable. Experts recommend that you should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least three days. Please consider adding to this storm kit so that you and your family are better prepared. A few items that you might consider including might be:

Enough of the individual items listed above to accommodate a larger than 4 member family

Any special medical needs

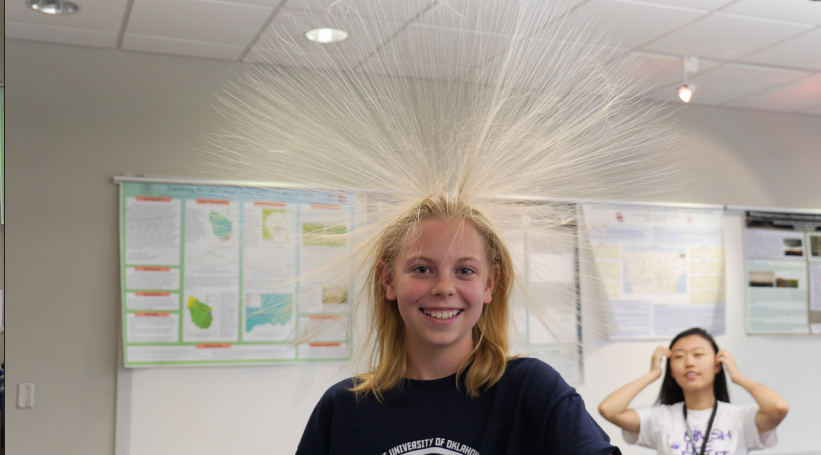
Pictures of pets

Important phone or account numbers

Remember to keep these items in a watertight container that is easily moved and is located in the same accessible area as this kit.

# MESONET IN PICTURES

## Mesonet Weather Camp



# Fourth Annual Mesonet Weather Camp

—by Danny Mattox

**IT'S MOSTLY SCIENCE-Y** with a high probability of learning and a 100% chance of fun: The forecast for the annual Mesonet Weather Camp! For the fourth year in a row, young weather fanatics from around the country descended on the National Weather Center for a week of hands-on, high-energy weather education from the talented staff at the Mesonet. Supported by world-class meteorologists, researchers, broadcasters and pilots working in the Norman/Oklahoma City area, this year's Mesonet Weather Camp made lasting impressions on all the children who attended.

The camp covers meteorology concepts above and beyond what the 12-14 year-old students receive in the classroom, with a focus on demonstrations, models, and activities the students can do themselves.

"We try to break down concepts into physical things students can manipulate rather than analyzing a lot of data," said Andrea Melvin, Outreach Program Manager for the Oklahoma Mesonet.

In addition to classroom activities, the students visited the Storm Prediction Center, the National Weather Service Norman forecast office, the Phased Array Radar facility, the KOCO weather department, the Max Westheimer airport, and Science Museum Oklahoma. On the last day of camp, parents came to the National Weather Center for a tour and the campers showed off what they learned in a "Share-A-Thon" held in the atrium of the National Weather Center.

Due to the popularity of the Mesonet Weather Camp, the selection process is very competitive, with more and more

children applying each year. This year, students from 13 different states (including Oklahoma) were in attendance at the camp. In addition to simply applying, the applicants must submit multiple letters of recommendation from teachers and community members and write an essay about why they want to attend camp. During the day, camp is held at the National Weather Center, and after a day of meteorology and weather-based activities, they return to the dorms for dinner and evening entertainment organized by the OU Precollegiate Program.

Social media played a more prominent role in this year's camp. Parents were informed about the use of social media, which resulted in numerous new followers to the Mesonet Facebook and Twitter pages. Parents knew exactly what their children were doing at weather camp each day and were grateful for the updates.

"We posted daily pictures to Facebook for each of our camps, but this year we actually did some live tweeting with Twitter through some of the lessons. As the kids were learning, we were posting pictures and describing what they were doing as it was happening," Melvin said.

On the last day when all the families arrived, a graduation ceremony was held and a short video about the camp featuring interviews with the students and videos from the week was shown. Dozens of parents approached camp instructors to express their gratitude for the social media updates as well as the video. Many students reported this was the best time of their young lives and they now know what their future holds: OU School of Meteorology! ■





# Resurgent Spring Rains Continue in June

By Gary McManus, State Climatologist

## JUNE WRAP-UP

Although the spring rainy season got a late start in 2014, not arriving in earnest until the third week of May, it continued with sustained vigor through the last day of June. According to preliminary data from the Oklahoma Mesonet, the month finished as the 23rd wettest June on record for the state with an average total of 5.82 inches, a surplus of 1.56 inches. Those records date back to 1895. North central Oklahoma, one of the areas hit hardest by drought since the beginning of the year, saw its fifth wettest June with an average of 8.18 inches, 4.24 inches above normal. On the local level, six Mesonet stations recorded at least 9 inches of rain for the month, all located across northern Oklahoma. Buffalo led the state with 10.44 inches of rain, 6.36 inches above normal. Cherokee and Lake Carl Blackwell reported 10 inches with Alva, Breckenridge and Freedom exceeding 9 inches. Kenton recorded the state's lowest total at 0.83 inches. The Mesonet recorded at least an inch of rain somewhere in the state on 19 days during June. Not all areas were as fortunate with the plentiful moisture, unfortunately. Locations along the Red River fell 2-4 inches below normal for the month. Durant reported 2.44 inches, more than 3 inches below normal. The statewide average temperature was 77.1 degrees, 0.6 degrees above normal and the 54th warmest June on record. Grandfield topped the month's temperature scale with a high of 107 degrees on June 4 and Kenton reached 43 degrees on June 10 for the state's lowest reading. The last few days of June were oppressively hot with heat index values well into the triple-digits across most of Oklahoma.

Except for delaying the wheat harvest and localized areas of flash flooding, the excess moisture was of great benefit to the state. The U.S. Drought Monitor, which had already seen a bit of improvement during the last two weeks of May, continued to portray a drought of lessening intensity across much of Oklahoma. The percentage of the state in at least severe drought dropped from 73 percent at the end of May to 66 percent at the end of June, and the percentage of exceptional drought dropped from more than 26 percent to about 11 percent. The Drought Monitor's intensity scale slides from moderate-severe-extreme-exceptional, with exceptional being the worst classification.

Severe weather was sporadic and generally consisted of high winds and flooding, although there were reports of large hail with some of the stronger storms. The Mesonet site at Beaver recorded the top wind gust of 85 mph on June 30 with Minco right behind at 83 mph on June 23. Much of the Panhandle was hit by damaging winds on June 30. The Mesonet recorded severe wind gusts (57 mph or greater) on 13 of June's 30 days. Preliminary reports from the National Weather Service (NWS) indicate at least four tornadoes touched down in Oklahoma during June. All four were of the weaker variety (EF1 or lower), although the tornado that struck Adair on June 28 damaged several structures, including the Adair Fire Department. The other three confirmed twisters occurred in rapid succession in Beaver County on June 22. That brings the preliminary January-June twister count to 11, the second lowest total for the first six months of the year since accurate records began in 1950. Only 1988's count of 10 is lower. Oklahoma averages eight tornadoes during June, and the average January-June total is 47. All tornado data for 2014 are considered preliminary until verified by NWS personnel.

# 23rd WETTEST

June since records began in 1895

# 5.82"

average statewide precipitation  
for June

# 77.1°F

average statewide temperature  
for June

# 66 PERCENT

of the state in at least severe drought  
according to the U.S. Drought Monitor  
on June 24

## CALENDAR

### JULY

- ▶ 7th-13th: OK-First Online Re-certification Classs
- ▶ 9th-11th: Oklahoma Association of Extension Agricultural Agents Conference, Midwest City
- ▶ 13th-18th: Oklahoma Mesonet Weather Camp
- ▶ 15th: Oklahoma Grape Growers Meeting, Norman
- ▶ 16th-17th: AFRI Grazing CAP Grant Extension Team Mtg, Wichita, KS
- ▶ 21st-24th: National Association of Ag Extension Agents Mtg, Mobile, AL
- ▶ 23rd: State 4-H Roundup, Stillwater
- ▶ 24th: Climate Trends Tool presentation, National Association of County Agricultural Agent Annual Mtg, Mobile, AL
- ▶ 24th-26th: Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association Convention, Midwest City

### AUGUST

- ▶ 7th-8th: Women in Ag Conference, Moore
- ▶ 9th: Southern Plains Beef Symposium, Ardmore
- ▶ 18th: OK-First Re-certification Class at OEMA Conference
- ▶ 19th-21st: OK-First at the Oklahoma Emergency Management Association Conference
- ▶ 19th: Caddo County Irrigation Conference, Fort Cobb
- ▶ 22nd: Cleveland County Master Gardener Training, Norman

### *Tweet of the Month*

@NWSNorman - June 11 - 1101p: Hold on to your hat! 64mph gust measured by Woodward @okmesonet site with that thunderstorm! #okwx

Find us on



## CONTACTS

Accessing recent (within the past 7 days)  
Mesonet data  
Contact: [Mesonet Operator](#)

Instrumentation, telecommunications, or  
other technical specifications  
Contact: [Chris Fiebrich](#)

Mesonet agricultural data and products  
Contact: [Al Sutherland](#)

Mesonet meteorological data  
Contact: [OCS Data Requests](#)

Earthstorm - K-12 educational outreach  
Contact: [Andrea Melvin](#)

OK-First - Public safety outreach  
Contact: [James Hocker](#)

OK-FIRE - Fire management outreach  
Contact: [J.D. Carlson](#)

Not sure?  
Contact: 405-325-2541 or [Chris Fiebrich](#).

## FORECAST FOR JULY

[Click here to view the original maps from the Climate Prediction Center.](#)

