

## ***Another Cherry Picking Study and AP Story***

*By Joseph D'Aleo, CCM*

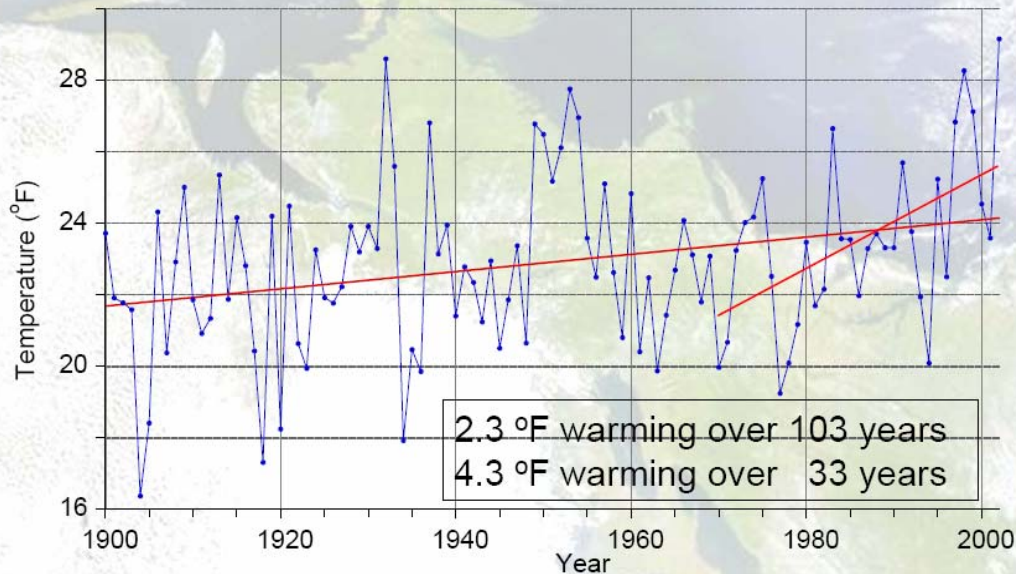
Recently we reported on a [study](#) funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and conducted by the Vermont Public Research and Education Fund purports to show increased extreme precipitation events—rain and snow—in the United States over the last 59 years, perhaps linked to global warming. The first half of the period studied was the last cold phase of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, an ocean current pattern that strongly affects storm tracks and thus precipitation over North America. Half way through the VPIRG study period the PDO flipped to its warm phase. The VPIRG carefully picked a period where it could hardly have avoided getting the higher precipitation frequency that it wanted for maximum shock effect.

A new [study](#) by the University of New Hampshire reported Friday by the AP looks at temperatures and snowfall in the northeast. It conveniently starts in 1965 near the bottom of the last cool period and ends in 2005 near the peak of the latest warm period. Their study of weather station data from across the Northeast from 1965 through 2005 found temperatures from December through March increased by 2.5 degrees over the four decades.

The study extended the following diagram prepared by the Professor of the author, Cameron Wake of the University's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space had prepared for the Union of Concerned Scientists, and who in a prior press release had warned of the imminent demise of the ski industry and the disappearance of maple trees as the region warmed to become more like the mid-Atlantic.

This was a diagram from that prior analysis.

# Winter Temperature in Northeast US & Canadian Maritimes: 1900-2002

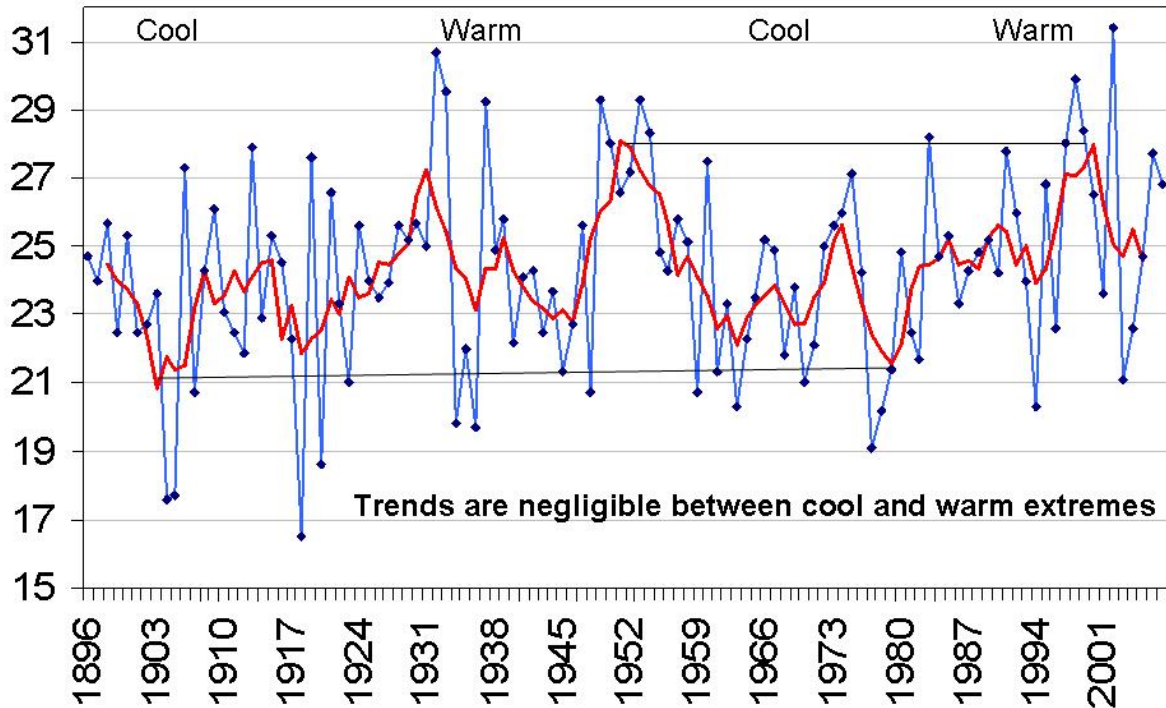


Time-series represents an aerielly weighted average of data from 136 stations.  
Data from the NOAA-NCDC and Environment Canada

The previous study was challenged in a [Union Leader Op Ed](#) by Dr Fred Ward who had a PhD from MIT and was a well known and respected former TV meteorologist and President of Weather Services Corporation who refuted Cameron's proclamations and called the University's study and press release and subsequent news stories based 'globaloney'.

Indeed when you look at the National Climate Data Center data for the northeast region for the entire record since 1895, you see cycles of warming and cooling but no net change from warmest 5 year mean peak (1950 for this region) to next warmest peak (2000) or coldest year (1903) to next coldest year (1980).

## NCDC Northeast Winter Temperatures



### ***THE STUDY LOOKED AT SNOWFALL TOO***

The study showed snowfall totals dropped by an average of 8.8 inches across the region over the same period, and the number of days with at least 1 inch of snow on the ground decreased by 9 days on average.

Now this may be true for the entire region as the 1960s and 1970s we were in the cold Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) mode, which favored more La Ninas and northerly storm tracks which during that cold period meant lots of snow and a delayed snowmelt. We returned to a warm PDO in the great Pacific Climate Shift after 1977 which meant more El Ninos, which shifted the storm track to the coast from the late 1970s to early 2000s.

Boston had the highest running mean of seasonal snowfall in the period from 1992/93 to 2004/05 (over 52 inches) than any such period in its entire record extending back into the 1800s with 5 of its top 12 snowiest winters in that span including #1,3, 5,and 7.

## **Boston's Snowiest Winters**

<i>Season</i>	<i>Snowfall</i>
<b>1995-96</b>	<b>107.6</b>
<b>1873-74</b>	<b>96.4</b>
<b>1993-94</b>	<b>96.3</b>
<b>1947-48</b>	<b>89.2</b>
<b>2004-05</b>	<b>86.6</b>
<b>1977-78</b>	<b>85.1</b>
<b>1992-93</b>	<b>83.9</b>
<b>1915-16</b>	<b>79.2</b>
<b>1919-20</b>	<b>73.4</b>
<b>1903-04</b>	<b>73.1</b>
<b>1886-87</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>2002/03</b>	<b>71.3</b>

Ironically the PDO has shifted back into the cold mode in a big way this year and not surprisingly the snow has returned to even northern areas.

It was a near record or even record snowy December in many parts of the northeastern United States. December's snowfall at Concord, N.H., totaled 44.5 inches, toppling a record of 43 inches that had stood since 1876. Burlington, Vt., got 45.7 inches, far above its 17.2-inch December average, and Portland, Maine, amassed 37.7 inches for its third-snowiest December on record. At the southernmost end of the snowy belt, Boston received a total of 27.7 inches, making this the second snowiest December in the cities snowfall history which extends back to 1890.

The University wisely waited for a thaw and break in the snowfall to issue the release. Ironically another very snowy period will start early Monday in the northeast along with some bitter arctic air.