NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Global Warming Bringing More Oddball Winter Weather

Peculiar Winter Weather Includes More Heavy Snowfalls, Disruptions to Local Economies – Map of Recent Oddball Weather Events Reflects Trends of What's Expected in Years Ahead

Washington, DC (January 28) – Global warming is having a seemingly peculiar effect on winter weather in the northern United States, detailed in a new report from the National Wildlife Federation.

"Oddball winter weather is yet another sign of how uncontrolled carbon pollution amounts to an unchecked experiment on people and nature," said Dr. Amanda Staudt, climate scientist, National Wildlife Federation. "While global warming means shorter, milder winters on average, some snowbelt areas will see more heavy snowfall events. Disruptions to tourism and recreation economies will become increasingly common – for example to skiing and ice fishing that depend on predictable conditions. Snow removal, wintertime floods, agriculture, and forestry will also become increasingly more difficult to manage."

To explain the bigger picture and provide recommendations for how to avoid the worst impacts of global warming, *Oddball Winter Weather: Global Warming's Wake-Up Call for the Northern Unites States* details how:

- Global warming will bring more oddball winter weather
- Milder winters disrupt ecosystems in some surprising ways
- Large economic uncertainty and potential losses are in store for many communities
- Natural habitats and agriculture are vulnerable to changing winter weather
- We can reduce the severity of future oddball winter weather and its impacts

"More oddball winter weather is terrible news for skiers," said Chip Knight, project coordinator, National Wildlife Federation and former Olympic slalom skier. "The mountain snow sports that depend on reliable snow conditions provide about $66 billion to our economy -- and the local economies that rely on those dollars are becoming increasingly vulnerable. The extreme efforts necessary to provide snow for the Vancouver Olympics are a startling example of what's at stake."

"When it comes to planning for snow removal, more strange winter weather is likely to strain communities across the country," said Dr. Sheldon Drobot, scientific program manager for the Weather Systems and Assessment Program, National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). "If winters become milder on average but are interrupted by more heavy snowstorms, it will be more complicated to manage the requirements of keeping the roads clear."

While, according to NASA, 2009 ranks as the second-warmest year on record for the globe, cooler-than-average temperatures for most states west of the Mississippi during October through December 2009 make it is easy to lose sight of this long-term trend. When it comes to winter weather, communities need to prepare for the unexpected in the years to come.

From coast to coast, the report details recent oddball winter weather events in regions that are expected to see more of the same if global warming pollution continues unabated.

"We need to take these trends toward more oddball winter weather events into account when planning for snow removal, flood management, and recreation and tourism," said Dr. Staudt. "We can no longer plan based on the climate we used to have."

Important steps to reduce the risks include curbing global warming pollution to minimize future oddball winter weather, accounting for greater variability in snow removal and flood management programs, and safeguarding wildlife, fish and habitats from more unpredictable winter weather.

National Wildlife Federation is America's conservation organization inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

Immediate Release: January 28, 2010

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