

new york minute

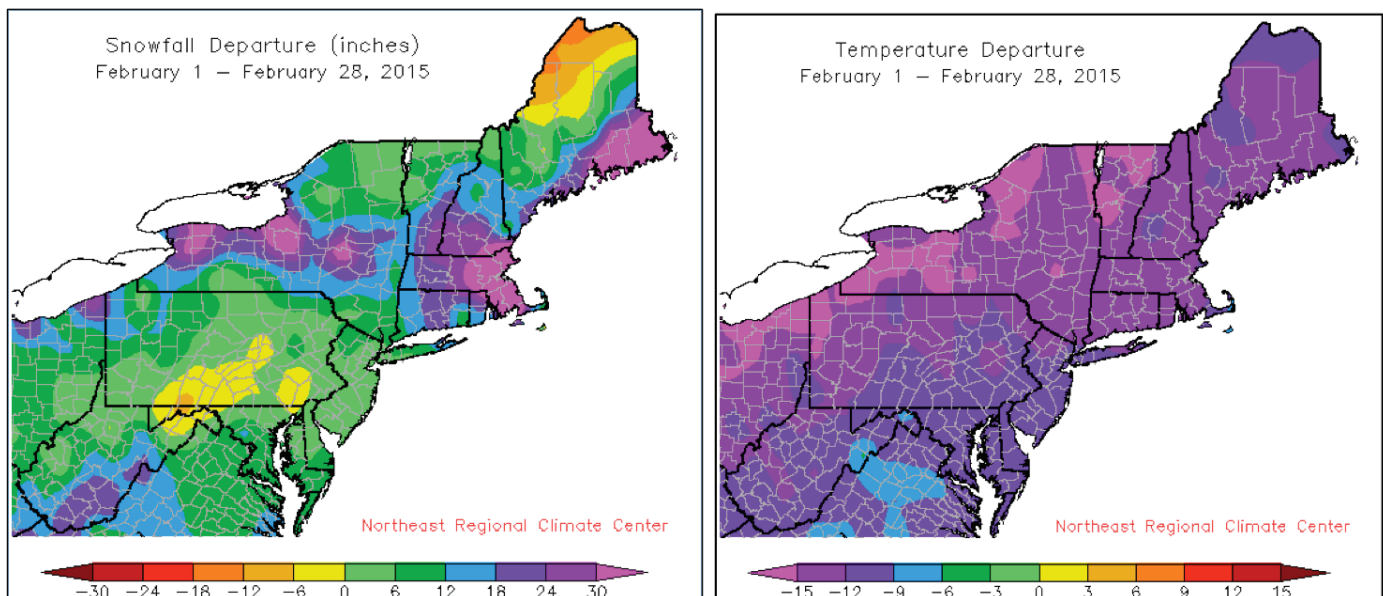
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Community Impacts of Severe Winters

by Jan Vink and Robin Blakely-Armitage, Cornell University

It seems that the topic on everyone's mind in New York State these days is the extremely cold winter weather. NYS experienced significantly colder temperatures *and* more snowfall than normal in February 2015. The Northeast Regional Climate Center¹, located in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Cornell University, created the maps below which show temperature and snowfall departures from average for the month of February. For example, much of western NY experienced temperatures on average 10-15 degrees colder than normal, and many areas across the mid-section of the state witnessed snowfall in excess of *two* feet above average!

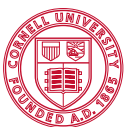
This harsh weather has had significant social and economic impacts on NYS communities, including ruptured water mains, paying road crews overtime, dealing with road salt shortages, personal health and safety risks, and the lost productivity due to business and school closures. While early March has provided a respite from the misery of February, those who subscribe to the wisdom of the Farmer's Almanac are looking ahead to mid-March when "widespread wintry conditions" are again predicted for this region². Local communities may take some solace from history – an article from the Cornell Daily Sun in 1936 discusses the impact on local governments as they shoulder the major cost of snow removal from the state's highways and roads³. Communities can learn more about maintaining roads and bridges in wintry conditions though the Cornell Local Roads Program (<http://www.clrp.cornell.edu/index.htm>)



¹ Northeast Regional Climate Center, <http://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/>

² Farmer's Almanac 2015 Winter Forecast: <http://farmersalmanac.com/weather/2014/08/24/2015-us-winter-forecast/>

³ The Cornell Daily Sun, Volume 57, Number 36, 7 November 1936, <http://cdsun.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/cornell?a=d&d=CDS19361107.2.4&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->



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