

# Some Recent Headlines and News Excerpts Focused on Climate Change, Weather Variability and Tourism

## Lack of Snow Leaves Tourism Out in the Cold

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, January 16, 2003

Milwaukee, WI – “Next week, state Tourism Secretary Kevin Shibilski said, he will declare a ‘no-snow emergency.’ The Department of Tourism will spend about \$1 million in emergency advertising for counties where **winter tourism** is in trouble. ‘This will be a formidable investment in rounding up **tourists** for struggling businesses,’ Shibilski said. ‘For some businesses, this winter has been every bit as devastating as a tornado. It has affected thousands of lives and the economy.’”

“Wisconsin’s **tourism** industry may have lost millions of dollars in the snowless holiday week between Christmas and New Year’s according to state officials. ‘To some businesses, that week is as important as the Fourth of July,’ Shibilski said.”

## Dry Winter Taking Toll on State: Lake of Snow Affecting Lake Levels, Crops

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, January 24, 2003

Milwaukee, WI – “In a state with 700,000 **deer hunters**, perhaps the biggest impact of little snow involved Wisconsin’s burgeoning deer population. ‘No snow means a better survival rate for white-tailed deer, and so we are expecting a bumper crop of deer next year,’ said Tami Ryan, a wildlife biologist with the Waukesha office of the Department of Natural Resources.”

## Warm Winter Trend Poses Questions in Door County

*Green Bay Press-Gazette*, September 21, 2003

Green Bay, WI – “Jeff May is among Sturgeon Bay residents who have no trouble visualizing global warming. It seems to be happening all around him. As winter approaches, **snowmobiles** are packed to the ceiling at May’s Sport Center warehouse outside Sturgeon Bay. May would like to carry about 15 to 20 **snowmobiles** into the next season. This summer, he had 160 leftovers.”

“Mild winters also helped speed the demise this year of Potawatomi State Park’s **ski hill** near Sturgeon Bay, now a rusty memory after 50 years in operation. ‘Obviously, when we don’t have snow on the ground, people don’t get excited about **skiing**,’ said (Mike) Asher. ‘You don’t create that winter wonderland picture in your mind when you have brown leaves and tree stumps that you’re staring at.’”

## State Cherry Growers Feel Effect of Global Warming

*The Post-Crescent*, October 1, 2003

Sturgeon Bay, WI – “Great Lakes **cherry** growers had 10 years of bumper crops when disaster hit in May 2002. A killing frost decimated Michigan’s crop. It produced just 15 million pounds next to 2001’s near-record of 297 million. Frost cut Wisconsin’s crop to 4 million pounds compared with 13 million the year before. The Wisconsin crop recovered last year, but Michigan was hit hard again. The industry was stunned. Growers asked questions.”

## Our Warming World: Effects of Climate Change Bode Ill for Northwest

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 13, 2003

Seattle, WA – “Nowadays, managers of the Summit at Snoqualmie **ski resort** are looking at the sky kind of worried. While the slopes there are the most convenient to Seattle, they also sit at about 3,200 feet above sea level. This makes it the lowest Washington **ski resort**—the most vulnerable to global warming. Scientists already have noted decreases in spring snowpack. With snow levels likely to rise at the rate of 300 feet for every degree of warming, a Snoqualmie **skiing** season that’s now four months long on average stands to shrink to less than three months in 20 years, researchers say. In 40 years, it could be down to two months. Last year’s opening, delayed nearly a month by lack of snow, could be a sign of things to come. ‘We rely 100 percent on natural snow,’ said Jon Pretty, the Summit at Snoqualmie marketing manager.”

'If Mother Nature isn't able to make it snow, we're de facto out of business.' Snow-making equipment may not be the answer, because even that generally requires temperatures to stay in the 20s or below."

## **A Warmer World Could Improve Some Wines**

*USA Today*, November 14, 2003

Yakima, WA – "Global warming may make life more difficult for many people in many places, but at least the **wine** should be better. Researchers from three universities have found that **vintages** improved as temperatures rose over the past 50 years, especially in areas with cooler climates."

## **Global Warming May Be Affecting Isle Royale's Wolf, Moose Population**

*The Detroit News*, March 6, 2004

Detroit, MI – "The **moose** population on a remote Lake Superior island chain is down sharply while **gray wolf** numbers have jumped—a population shift likely caused by global warming, a scientist says. 'What we think is that wolves are cashing in on moose vulnerability that's been induced by a warmer climate,' (Rolf) Peterson said Friday. Their numbers fluctuate nearly every year and the reasons aren't always clear, he said. But the extent of the moose decline appears linked to stress and winter tick infestation brought on by milder temperatures."

## **RV Campground Report: Weather Impacted Site Occupancy in 2003: But Despite Lackluster Performance 2004 Prospects Look Promising**

*RVBUSINESS*, April 2004

"Record spring and summer rainfall in many locations across the Midwest and Eastern Seaboard literally dampened performance in the nation's **campground** sector for 2003."

"Overall, I think 2003 was a flat year for most people,' said Linda Profaizer, president and CEO of the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC). And even though the weather improved significantly in the fall, she said, 'I don't think that too many (**campground** owners) really fully recovered from the rains and the extreme weather that we had."

## **Unseasonably Warm Weather Brings U.S. Ski Season to Disappointing End**

*The Press-Enterprise*, April 17, 2004

Riverside, CA – "Early last winter, when snow was falling on the slopes of area **mountain resorts** like dollar bills, the **ski** season held great promise. Most **resorts** opened early and, heartened by the fast start, came to expect great things. Then extensive rains kept people away during the holidays, usually a boom time for the **resorts**, and drained some of the economic energy. A hoped-for boost late in the season failed to materialize when unseasonably warm weather settled in the first week of March and never left."

"By the time the last area **resort** closed last weekend, what would have been a record year instead had morphed into a disappointing lesson in the perils of running a business that can be so heavily influenced by the weather."

"A thick cap of white snow on the mountains can generate a rush to the slopes, but warm weather kills the buzz, no matter how hard resort operators try to groom the mountain to keep **skiing** at the forefront of people's minds."

## **Effects of Climate Warming Are Here and Now**

*Scripps Howard News Service*, May 5, 2004

"Warmer temperatures, less snow and less lake ice in recent decades have made Michigan's **winter tourism industry** one of the early victims of a changing climate. **Ski resort** operators say the average length of the winter season has shrunk one to two weeks. 'We're fortunate we can make snow,' said Jim MacInnes, president of the Crystal Mountain **ski resort** near Cadillac. 'Whether this is just an anomaly or a long-term trend it's hard for me to know, but I do believe global warming is a real issue.'"

“Some of the most dramatic effects have been on northern lakes. **Water levels** in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, for example, started dropping in 1997 and have experienced their greatest decline in the shortest time since record-keeping began in 1860. Greater evaporation is believed to be the primary cause. Lake Michigan levels are now 4 feet below normal and shipping has been severely hindered. **Marinas** have had to dredge to keep **boats** afloat.”

## Rains Breed Bad Mosquito Season

*The Detroit News*, May 28, 2004

Detroit, MI – “In one word: hellacious. That’s what **mosquito** season promises to be this summer for Metro Detroiters venturing **outdoors** as the hungry pests make a beeline for human flesh. Near record-breaking levels of rain during May have increased tenfold the number of available habitats for the bloodsucking creatures to breed.”

“The Michigan Department of Health recommends spending less time **outdoors**, particularly in the evenings; wearing long sleeves and pants; and using insect repellent.”

## Officials Say Cool Weather Responsible for Diminished Beach Attendance

*The Grand Rapids Press*, July 26, 2004

Grand Rapids, MI – “Ottawa County Park Operations Superintendent Dave Mazurek said attendance at Tunnel and Kirk **parks** also has been low. ‘Our attendance at those **parks** varies directly with the weather, and with this year’s weather being on the cool side, this year’s attendance has been a little lower than usual,’ he said.”

## Water Rises in U.S. Great Lakes After Near Record Low

*Environmental News Network*, August 24, 2004

“Great Lakes water levels have rebounded from near record lows thanks to months of heavy rain, providing a boon to **boat owners**, **swimmers**, and **fish**, scientists said recently. Rising a foot from 45-year lows last year, the five Great Lakes have reversed a six-year, 3-foot drop that exposed broad stretches of **beaches**, left **marinas** high and dry, and bent propellers.”

“After several mild winters that increased winter evaporation rates and reduced the snowpack, water levels rose following heavy rains last fall and a once-in-a-century deluge in May. But that rainfall was an anomaly.”

“That’s what’s worrisome,’ said hydrologist Cynthia Sellinger of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration. ‘What made the lakes rise this year was we had an extremely wet fall and a wet May. What usually gives us a good rise in the lake is ice cover to prevent evaporation in winter, and then a nice snowpack melting in the spring thaw,’ she said.”

“During colder winters, ice covers the lakes and slows evaporation, but this is now rare, said Joel Brammeier of the Lake Michigan Federation, an environmental group. ‘In the long term, no one’s quite sure what the implications for global climate change are for the Great Lakes,’ he said.

“‘The rise in lake levels helps **swimmers** by reducing the number of placid, shoreline pools where bacteria tend to multiply,’ Brammeier said. ‘High bacteria counts have led to numerous beach closings in recent summers.’”

## Cool Season Dampens Fun, Pinches Profits: Summertime Blues

*The Detroit News*, August 27, 2004

Detroit, MI – “Today’s high heat and humidity notwithstanding, it’s been a cooler-than-normal summer. And that has Michigan resorts and tourists hoping that the final two weekends of the traditional tourist season can help make up for lost revenue and lost family time playing in **water parks**, **pools**, and **beaches**.”

“Temperatures have been significantly below average since June, and some untimely rains also had an impact. The consequences: Many **pools**, **water parks** and other **outdoor activities** have seen significant attendance declines. Outdoor events such as the **National Cherry Festival** in Traverse City had lower attendance and less-than-expected sales at concession stands. Some **golfers** are complaining, although some course reported record seasons. **Plants** are confused. Mums were in bloom weeks early, while some summer plants never blossomed at all. **Boating** took a hit, too, partly because of the weather and partly because of rising fuel prices. **Tourist numbers** among Lake Michigan’s **resorts** are off slightly, according to a tourism official. Weather-dependent industries are counting on more warmth between now

and Labor Day to make up for lost time. But they are faced with the fact that many schools have started classes already, limiting the time families have for travel and outdoor activities."

"In Traverse City, rainy weather caused this year's **National Cherry Festival** to lose revenue. Some 500,000 people attended the early July festival, fewer than in some recent years. Sales of beer, brats and ice cream were \$75,000 less than expected."

"**Fruit-picking** that normally takes place at the end of August or early September is already under way at orchards around the region. Above-average temperatures in the spring, and rainfall totals that were all over the map, brought certain varieties of apples, nectarines, pears and peaches out early this month."

## **As School Year Starts, Tourism Interests Bemoan Short Season**

*Detroit Free Press*, August 29, 2004

Detroit, MI – "August used to be our best month. Now it's second-best,' (Petoskey businessman Dudley) Marvin told the Petoskey News-Review for a Friday story. 'Generally the weather is still good in August and the water is warm and our conditions for **tourism** are still very good. This is opposed to June when (the weather) is not as good,' he said."

## **An Endless Summer? It's Officially Autumn, But Weather Hasn't Caught Up With Change of Seasons**

*The Holland Sentinel*, September 27, 2004

Holland, MI – "Mother Nature appears confused. Remember August when people covered themselves with sleeping bags while at the **beach**? Now in September, people are **swimming** in Lake Michigan, **sun bathing**, **flying kites** and **wind-surfing**. The summer we should have had then, we're enjoying now. So far this September, the temperature has reached 80 degrees or higher 13 days. The 85 degree temperature on Thursday was a record high for that date. The rest of September, with the exception of a few days, the high temperatures were in the mid-to-high 70s."

"It's the best September that I can remember,' said Cynthia Neal of Westchester, Ill., who was at the **Holland State Park** with her parents, Terry and Joan Musgrave of Holland. On Saturday, the Musgraves took their 25-foot **power boat** out in the lake. Usually, they take their **boat** out of the water by Labor Day. 'It's officially the fall, but the weather hasn't caught up with the season yet,' Neal said. 'It's milking the summer for as long as possible.'"

"The weather hasn't only been more warmer than normal, it's been dry, too. Holland has only seen 0.11 inches of rainfall this month. A typical September rainfall is 3 1/2 inches."

## **Global Warming Appears to Affect When Pennsylvania Lakes Freeze, Thaw**

*Penn State Live*, November 24, 2004

University Park, PA – "Pennsylvania **ice fishermen** no longer know what to expect. Before the last couple of years, **ice-fishing** aficionados around the state had been complaining that Keystone State lakes were freezing later and thawing earlier than in the good old days, cutting down on the 'hardwater' **fishing** season. But the last two frigid winters have made an already confusing scenario even more confounding. Results of an international study of lakes and rivers in the Northern Hemisphere released in 2001—led by a University of Wisconsin, Madison research who reviewed a 150-year record of freeze and ice breakup dates for lakes and rivers—confirmed the claims of Pennsylvania ice fishermen. A decades-long warming trend had delayed lake freezing an average of about 10 days and hastened thawing by an average of almost nine days. Combined, that's an average of almost three fewer weeks of **ice fishing** a year than in the past."

## **Warming Trend Could Lessen Region's Wildlife Diversity, Report Says**

*Detroit Free Press*, December 15, 2004

Detroit, MI – "From the endangered Kirtland's warbler to fledgling wolf and moose populations, **wildlife** in the upper Great Lakes region will face new challenges from climate change, scientists say. Many species have been migrating northward in recent decades as warmer temperatures--believed caused largely by factors such as greenhouse gas emissions--affect their food and habitat. The trend likely will continue during the next century, said a report issued Wednesday by The Wildlife Society."

"Warmer temperatures could lower **water levels** and dry up crucial wetlands in the Great Lakes region, although others might be created as the lakes recede, the study says. Marshes and other wetlands are vital habitat and breeding grounds for waterfowl."

"Climate change could mean trouble for the moose and gray wolf, two species that had all but disappeared from Michigan's Upper Peninsula but are recovering', said Scott Winterstein, a **wildlife** biologist at Michigan State University. 'Right now the moose in Michigan are about as far south as you're going to see them,' said Winterstein, past president of the state chapter of The Wildlife Society. 'If we get the predicted warming, I don't see how we'll maintain the moose population.'"

## **Snowmobilers Want A Lot More Snow**

*Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 2005

Detroit, MI – "As you read this, a group of lawmakers and **snowmobile** enthusiasts should have been gliding into the western Upper Peninsula at the end of a 400-mile ride to showcase one of Michigan's premier winter activities. It didn't happen. New Year's weekend temperatures as high as the mid-50s in the northern Lower Peninsula, combined with two days of rain, wiped out most of the **snowmobile trails** between West Branch and Sault Ste. Marie. That forced postponement of the Michigan **Snowmobile** Association's annual ride until after the next heavy snowfall. According to the weather forecast, a big snowfall won't hit the northern Lower Peninsula for at least a week. Until then, temperatures in the region will run as much as 15 degrees above normal and there is even the possibility of more rain."

"**Tourism** interests in the area said this winter might be starting out like the last, when the heaviest snowstorms swept across the country south of Michigan, and Detroit often got more snow than Gaylord. Kirk Kotimaki works at the Sled Shed in Gaylord, which sells **snowmobile** helmets, clothing, parts and accessories--but not machines. 'Right now, we're pretty much snowless' on the **trails**, Kotimaki said. 'That makes it difficult, because snow is pretty much a prerequisite for **snowmobiling**.'"

"Twenty years ago, we got the bulk of our snow December through February. Now it seems to start in the middle of January and end in April."

## **OUTDOORS: State's Skiers Welcome Fresh Powder**

*Detroit Free Press*, January 7, 2005

Detroit, MI – "If you're a **cross-country** or **downhill skier**, you would be hard-pressed to find a better weekend to practice your sport than this one, with four to 12 inches of new powder blanketing much of the state."

"At Nub's Nob near Harbor Springs, the **downhill slopes** and **cross-country trails** received about three inches of fresh powder Thursday, and another three inches were expected by this afternoon. 'Right now, everything is good,' said Colleen Forrester, a **ski** instructor at the resort. 'Everything is open, and the new powder is nice. We had some really good **skiing** over Christmas, a couple of weeks ago, but it was a lot colder then. It's supposed to be 37 degrees here on Sunday.'"

## **Early Birds, Early Blooms Show Effects of Global Warming in Michigan**

*Kalamazoo Gazette*, February 7, 2005

Kalamazoo, MI – "Is global warming affecting places with more moderate climates such as Michigan? Yes, scientists say, but in more subtle ways. Many **migratory bird species** are arriving here earlier in the spring and some **flowers** are blooming earlier than decades ago."

"Jeff Price, director of climate-change-impact studies for the American Bird Conservancy, noted in a recent National Wildlife Federation publication that a long-term study in Michigan's Upper Peninsula found that 15 spring migrants, including the rose-breasted grosbeak and black-throated blue warbler, were arriving up to 21 days earlier in 1994 than in 1965."

"Terry Root, of the Center for Environmental Science and Policy at Stanford University and formerly at the University of Michigan, said in a recent published interview that 80 percent of the **bird species** she has studied are arriving in breeding grounds earlier in the spring—consistent with expectations linked to global warming."

## Conditions Tough for Winter Tourism Industry

*Aberdeen News*, March 19, 2005

Lead, SD – “A Northern Hills lodge owner says the lack of winter snowfall has been taking its toll on the **winter tourism industry**. Dan Carsten says his Lead lodge has had a lot of canceled reservations this winter because of a lack of snow for **snowmobilers**. And he says the light winter impacts more than just **motels**, as **restaurants**, **gas stations**, **ski areas** and **snowmobile rental companies** are also feeling the heat. **Ski** conditions have been good of late, Carsten says, but it’s hard to convince people there’s snow to **ski** on when they drive around and see dry ground.”

## Spring Skiing: Spectacular Snow, Empty Slopes

*USA Today*, April 13, 2005

Denver, CO – “**Ski resorts** are starting to close even though some have their deepest bases of the year. ‘People have their **golf clubs** out. Whether we have great snow or not, they don’t want to go **skiing**. They’d rather go somewhere warm,’ said Anne Dougherty, spokeswoman for Ski Cooper near Leadville. The same **skiers** and **snowboarders** who rush to ride on patches of snow in October drift off to **mountain bike** or **garden** on sunny spring days. ‘Our **skier numbers** drop to about a third of what they are during spring break. It’s not worth it to stay open,’ Dougherty said.”

“The skiing is beautiful right now, but the business just isn’t there,’ said Katie Coakley, a spokeswoman at Breckenridge, scheduled to close April 17.”

## Wintry Blast Throws Curve at Farmers

*Lansing State Journal*, April 25, 2005

Lansing, MI – “The weekend’s wintry weather has area farmers crossing their fingers and gardeners worrying about their spring flowers and vegetables. The shift from Wednesday’s glorious 81 degrees to Sunday’s snow and temperatures in the 30s caught some by surprise. Although the late-April cold could damage **farm crops**, destroy spring blooms and slow the **growing season**, no one knows for certain, so for not it’s a waiting game.”

“The last time Lansing saw snow after April 20 was 1976 when 2.5 inches fell on April 26.”

“For raspberries, blueberries and strawberries, Heilig (Ingham County Extension agent) says there could be leaf damage, but the plants should survive.”

## Spring Snow Blankets Midwest

*CNN*, April 25, 2005

Columbus, OH – “An unusual spring storm dumped nearly 2 feet of wet snow on parts of the Midwest and Appalachians, snapping power lines, taking a bite out of **baseball** and rewriting the record books. The two-day weekend storm brought temperatures as much as 25 degrees below the normal of around 60.”

“A week ago we were wearing shorts and tank tops,’ said Misti Hunt, a bartender in the Thumb town of Bad Axe, where some roads were impassable Sunday evening.”

“The **Detroit Tigers** postponed two weekend home games against the Minnesota Twins because of the wretched weather.”