

# Is Midwest Weather/Climate Really Changing?

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Over their lifetimes, residents across the Upper Midwest (especially in Wisconsin and Southeastern Minnesota) have experienced a variety of memorable to extreme weather events, including droughts, floods, cold waves, and heat waves. How have these weather patterns changed over the last 50 years? Does the weather observational data collected over this time-span support the claim of a changing climate? Has the Upper Midwest's growing season lengthened? Are Midwestern winters becoming warmer? Has the region gotten wetter or drier over time? What do these changes do to agriculture across the region? What can we expect in the future - this spring, and out into mid-21st century? Terms such as weather, climate, climate variability, and climate change will be described.



Ed Hopkins is the Assistant State Climatologist for the State of Wisconsin. His area of interest is in Wisconsin's climate, climatic change, and science education. He has contributed to the operation of the State Climatology Office for more than ten years. In addition, he has at least twenty years of experience teaching the introductory level meteorology courses, both at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and at Northern Illinois University.