

**National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD)
Snow Accumulation Grids
NWS Product Description
Document (PDD)
September 19, 2014**

Part 1 - Mission Connection

- a. Product Description – The [National Digital Forecast Database \(NDFD\)](#) contains a seamless mosaic of digital weather forecasts from National Weather Service (NWS) field offices and the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP).

This forecast element is currently available for the contiguous U.S. (CONUS) sector at the following locations listed below, Alaska and Hawaii (OCONUS) and the 16 pre-defined NDFD CONUS subsectors.

Southern Region: All WFOs from 30 degrees N.

Central Region: All WFOs.

Eastern Region: All WFOs.

Western Region: All WFOs.

Alaska Region: All WFOs continue in experimental status.

- b. Purpose – In support of the mission described in the *National Weather Service Strategic Plan for FY2005 - FY 2020*, "expanded digital services allow communication of forecast information with greater resolution in time and space and facilitates the integration of data in all service program areas." The NDFD is the primary means by which digital information is available to customers and partners. As part of this digital database, Snow Accumulation grids are available in response to growing user needs for planning purposes and critical safety decisions. Future digital datasets will continue to be developed in accordance with growing user needs.
- c. Audience - The audience for the Snow Accumulation grids elements includes large volume users of forecast information, emergency managers, the media, numerous local, state, and federal government agencies (including NWS field offices), academia, and many other users. They are also for anyone who wishes to decode and explore various potential applications of the Snow Accumulation data, or simply to view, post, or distribute the graphic images.
- d. Presentation Format – As with all NDFD elements, these elements are available in Gridded Binary Data Edition 2 (GRIB2) via file transfer protocol (ftp) or hypertext

transfer protocol (http), eXtensible Markup Language (XML), and as graphics via the web browser.

1. GRIB2 format via file transfer protocol (ftp) or hypertext transfer protocol (http): The GRIB2 files can be decoded and converted to other formats, such as shapefiles, netCDF files, etc. A tutorial to download NDFD elements, decode them and generate images is [available online](#).

These elements are available in GRIB2 from the [NWS ftp server](#) for the CONUS, Alaska and Pacific Region, and/or for the [16 predefined NDFD CONUS subsectors](#).

2. Extensible Markup language (XML): Users can request NDFD elements over the Internet using the NDFD XML Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) server. The response to the user request is returned in XML format. For more information, please refer to the [NDFD XML Service Description Document](#).
 3. Online NDFD graphics: Snow Accumulation images may be accessed from the [NWS homepage](#) by clicking on the [Graphical Forecasts](#) tab. To access these and other NDFD elements, or for further availability and technical information (e.g., temporal and spatial resolutions, forecast projections, and geographic coverage), please refer to the [NDFD technical details page](#).
- e. Feedback Method – Non-applicable as Snow Accumulation grids have been operational for a number of years.

Part II – Technical Description

a. Format and Science:

Definition: Six-Hour Snow Accumulation grids: The expected total accumulation of new snow (in inches) during a 6-hour period.

Issuance: A Snow Accumulation grid will be specified whenever a measurable snowfall is forecast for any hour during a valid period. Valid periods for the NDFD begin and end at 0600, 1200, 1800, and 0000 UTC.

NDFD Grid Availability: Snow Accumulation grids will be available each 6-hour period out to 72 hours from 00 UTC Day 1.

Collaboration Threshold: 2 inch difference for snowfall amounts < 6 inches, 4 inch difference for snowfall amounts < 12 inches; and 6 inch difference for snowfall amounts >= 12 inches. Enforce if at least one WFO has forecast > 2 inches.

See Coordination Memo: <https://ocwws.weather.gov/ndfd/GFE/coordination.htm> (11/17/06).

- b.** Product Availability – See Part 2, Section A for details.
- c.** Additional Information – Detailed information about the NDFD is also [available online](#).