

# CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

## Weird Winter Creates Odd Weather

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There is a stark contrast between the 2022-23 winter season and what the Northland is experiencing this year. We have seen a fraction of the snowfall, higher temperatures, and drier conditions.

Last year brought Superior, Wis., and Duluth, Minn., a record-setting snowfall of 140.1 inches, according to the National Weather Service, compared to the 2023-24 winter season, which has only accumulated a few inches of snow up to calendar spring on Mar. 19.

These changes are due to El Niño, which the United States Geological Survey (USGS) describes when sea temperatures are warmer than usual in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

Unusually warm winters can have devastating effects on the summers that follow. According to Dr. Andy Breckenridge, a professor in the Natural Sciences Department at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, these effects can be detrimental and even dangerous, such as the increased risk of wildfires.

“It’s been warm, and we haven’t had much snow, so we’re going to have a very early thaw...and it will have changes like



With Superior seeing 15 inches of snow some used different methods of transportation.

Photo by Evan Ludwig

birds will arrive sooner (from the south). But we won’t have leaf-out, so we’ll have a longer potential season for wildfires, kind of like what’s going on in Texas right now,” said Breckenridge. “Right now, they’re having the largest fire in Texas ever, and their fire season started earlier this year. Does that necessarily mean we’re (in the Midwest) going to have wildfires this year? No; it depends on whether we get rainfall.”

Breckenridge also discussed the topic of insects that usually die during the deep freezes typically associated with northern Wisconsin and Minnesota’s harsh winters. During an El Niño season, these species survive and then wreak havoc on the ecosystem come summer.

“Usually, when we think about insects, the one that we pay a lot of attention to is the Emerald Ash Borer. Those really cold snaps in the winter

will knock down Emerald Ash Borer, that are wiping out our Ash trees. Given that we never had temperatures cold enough to kill any, I would expect that they are going to do well this summer,” Breckenridge said.

The dry weather of this winter season has sent many states into an early drought season, even in the Midwest. “There was a Red Flag warning down in Iowa last week...we have a bit of a drought, too, in northern Wisconsin and Minnesota, if you look at the Drought Index,” said Breckenridge, referring to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

A Red Flag Warning, also known as a Fire Weather Warning, means that the National Weather Service has determined that fire danger exists and weather patterns that support fire could occur within the next 24 hours.

It’s unlikely, but it wouldn’t be out of the question for the Twin Ports to receive a large snowfall in late March or even April and offset some of the negative reverberations. Last year’s record was set in late April, and it still snowed for some time after that as reported by the Duluth News Tribune.



Old Main looks winter ready in late March.

Photo by Drew Kerner

## Future Teachers Association Club Seeks New Memebers

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University of Wisconsin-Superior is well known for its rigorous and rewarding teacher education program.

The Future Teachers Association (FTA) has been a club for approximately ten years, only taking a hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic. The campus club page site lists 26 members within the FTA.

Anna Senty is the FTA secretary and has been a member for a year and a half. Amaya Wayne is

the historian of FTA and has been a member for two years. Since COVID, volunteer opportunities have taken a hit and are something club members are working hard to restore.

Books With Buzz was an event that the FTA put on annually. At the event there were stations for children to be read to by FTA members. This connected the club to educators and their students in the area. Unfortunately, this year, the club could not make this event happen due to low member-

ship and the busy schedules of existing members.

Wayne said that she would change the current structure of the FTA by having, “more volunteer opportunities and having a rotation of times and days of the week so that people are not excluded due to class, jobs, or other responsibilities.”

“I would change having the organization not be so student-lead heavy. As a student being in charge it is really nice, but also it can be a little too much when all of us have



The greenhouse is open to students at any time the door is propped open in the Barstow Hall lobby.

Photo by Isaiah Wiita

## Campus Greenhouse Provides Northern Oasis

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Located in the heart of main campus sits the UW-Superior Oexemann Greenhouse. Connected to Barstow Hall some could say that although the Greenhouse gives and protects life to the plants inside, it also gives life to the students who visit.

Why is the greenhouse such a great place for students to visit? To answer this, Kate Stone, the manager, and horticultural technician at the greenhouse said, “It’s just gorgeous in there...The plants are all so happy, there’s a climate for everyone if you like it more humid or more dry...It always smells so good.”

The greenhouse has three different rooms inside it, and inside each room is a different climate that is required for the plants inside.

“The majority of the plants in there are foreign because it is a greenhouse setting, so the plants in there are used to having year-round temperate climate,” said Stone.

Many foreign plants call this place home, and it is believed, according to Stone, that the greenhouse is home to the largest orchid collections in the northland.

The orchid collection is in the greenhouse’s

first room, the tropical climate. Stone has been kept busy by planning out the best times to plant so that the plants bloom at the exact time she desires them to.

“Springtime, which we’re in now, is just the peak of planting for plant tax... I started planning that out in winter. So, from November ‘till now I have been planting seeds at certain times so that they bloom at certain times,” said Stone.

Stone stated that the greenhouse has collaborated with the Wellness Center recently, and has set up chairs inside the greenhouse for students to be able to relax, and breathe in the fresh plant air.

The hours that the Wellness area of the greenhouse are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stone is in the Oexemann Greenhouse on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m..

Stone says that you can email and request a tour, or you can just show up while she is there, she would be happy to give a tour.

“No matter what time of year it is, it (greenhouse) smells amazing...It’s just a really calming space, cause humans need nature,” said Stone.



UWS Greenhouse from outside.

Photo by Carter Lansdale

sports, classes, clinicals, homework, a family life, etc,” said Senty. “It would be nice to have more leadership from the instructors that oversee us.”

“Being a part of FTA is a great boost on the resume. With the events that we’ve had in the past, it’s a great way to get your name out into the com-

munity and within the school districts in Superior. It also helps prepare me as a future educator with being involved in the schools,” said Senty.

Despite these complications, Wayne and Senty said that if they were not seniors, they would continue participating with the club.