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NEWS

WILD WEATHER

... "Most meteorologists, being the conservative sort and preferring to analyze a long record, have been reticent about recent weather. But now three government researchers have offered an estimate of just how crazy the weather has been. . . . Three consecutive winters of the past eight—when averaged over the 48 states—were much colder than normal. Less memorable perhaps but still significant were three winters much warmer than normal. Such a combination of six very abnormal winters in 8 years should not be expected to recur for more than 1,000 years . . . according to [Thomas Karl, Robert Livezey, and Edward Epstein (Natl. Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin.)]. The variability from winter to winter in the

late 1970's and early 1980's may be extreme, but the stability of winter temperatures during the preceding 20 years is no less striking, according to Karl. By the standards that set off six of the eight recent winters as extremely abnormal, all twenty winters between 1955-56 and 1974-75 were unexceptional, often by comfortable margins. The unbroken string of relative stability of winter temperatures is at least as unusual as the recent period of high variability. . . ."

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