

Explanation of the Lake-Effect Mechanism and its effects on New York – Amanda Reynolds

Snowfall is being measured in feet in parts of western New York today as copious amounts of lake effect snow plagued the area. Lake effect snow typically is observed in November and early December. This is because the lakes are still relatively warm, in comparison to the air blowing across them. The warmer water vapor is drawn up into the atmosphere, which in turn creates clouds that are rich in moisture to create precipitation. What makes this week's storm so noteworthy is something called the fetch. The fetch is the distance that the air travels across the lakes; a longer fetch means more moisture, which means more snow. The wind was blowing parallel to Lake Erie yesterday, which allowed the maximum amount of moisture to accumulate in the clouds. As another system is hot on this one's heels, residents of western New York will just have to keep on digging.