

Preparing Regional Weather Data Analysis Project

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1 Background

1.1 Project Goals

Create a public product (video) that explains climate change trends in a state; what the state is doing to mitigate climate change; and what the state and its residents could do to improve its efforts to mitigate climate change.

1.2 Project Stages

Project Overview (This Document) A brief overview of the project and the steps to complete it. In addition, this document, when run selects the oldest active station ID for each state (and territory). Students do not need to run this document, but creates an updated list for them each time it is run. In addition, this document explains some of the R code used to create this list as background information.

Guide 1 Data Collection (Download station data from the web and read into R.)

Guide 2 Data Processing (Clean and Pre-process Data)

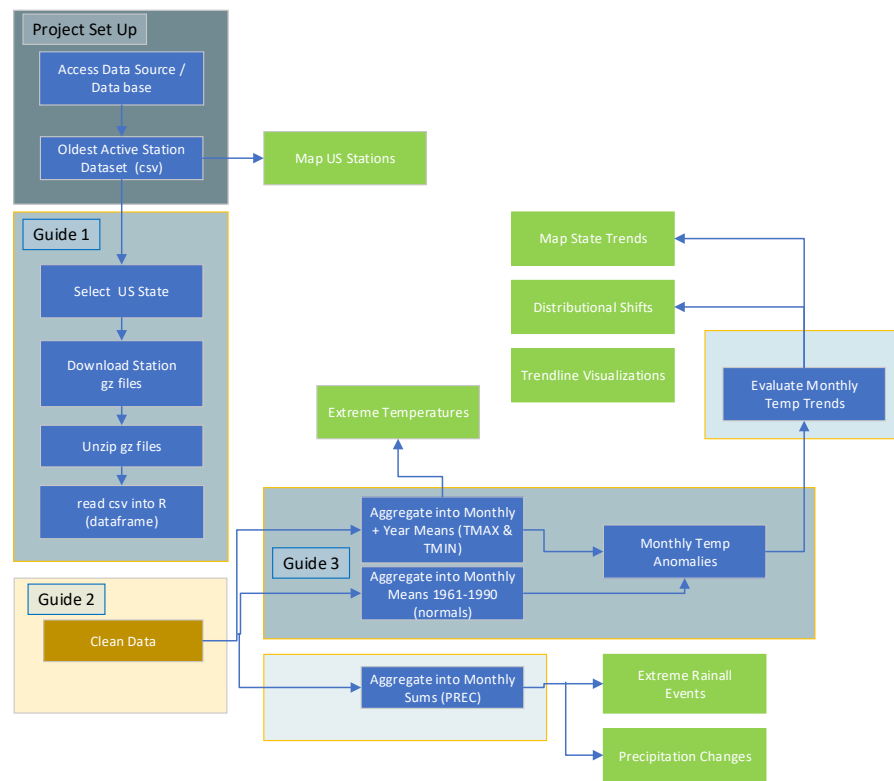
Guide 3 Data Analysis (Use R to analyze data (means, trends, etc))

Guide 4 Data Visualization (Create visualizations of data)

Guide 5 Communicating Project Results (Create a video that explains the data and the results of the analysis.)

At this point, I have created a DRAFT visual flow chart that displays each stage. I will be adjusting this chart as we progress and refine the R code and project guides.

Figure 1: A flow chart of the project stages.



1.3 Approach

I have created several Guides 1 through 4. Each guide is a Rmarkdown document that explains the steps to complete the project. These guides are designed to be completed in order.

This particular document has NO code for you to run, but document the process that I used to obtain the data and create a list of stations from you to select from. So, please read this as an informational document and not something to follow. However, there are some insights here about how to find the data and the code that I used to prepare for the project for the class.

2 Selecting US Weather Station with Robust Records

2.1 Global Weather Station Data

The GHCNd is the primary source of weather station data. The data is available from the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) at the following URL: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/ghcn/daily/>. The data is available in a variety of formats, including .csv, .dat, and .txt.

2.2 Goals for this Document

This document selects the oldest active weather station for each state (and territory) in the US. The station inventory is available as a .txt file. The file is a fixed width file, which means that each column has a specific width. The file is available at the following URL: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/ghcn/daily/ghcnd-inventory.txt>.

But you do not need to follow the steps in this document. This document is for background information only and show how I prepared the list of stations for you to select from.

Note, it maybe that there are too many missing values in one or more of your stations, then we can use this document to find additional stations, if they exist in the database.

2.3 Download Station Inventory

The station inventory is available as a .txt file. The file is a fixed width file, which means that each column has a specific width. The file is available at the following URL: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/ghcn/daily/ghcnd-inventory.txt>.

```
library(here)
```

```
## here() starts at /home/mwl04747/RTricks
```

```

# Get Stations Data (Inventory)
inventory = read.table("https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/ghcn/daily/ghcnd-inventory.txt")

# Define Variable Names because there is no header in the file
inventory_names = c("ID", #          1-11   Character
                    "LATITUDE", #      13-20   Real
                    "LONGITUDE", #     22-30   Real
                    "ELEMENT", #       32-35   Character
                    "FIRSTYEAR", #     37-40   Integer
                    "LASTYEAR") #      42-45   Integer

# Assign Variable Names to inventory dataframe
names(inventory) = inventory_names

# Check the structure of the data
str(inventory)

## 'data.frame': 765236 obs. of  6 variables:
## $ ID      : chr  "ACW00011604" "ACW00011604" "ACW00011604" "ACW00011604" ...
## $ LATITUDE : num  17.1 17.1 17.1 17.1 17.1 ...
## $ LONGITUDE: num -61.8 -61.8 -61.8 -61.8 -61.8 ...
## $ ELEMENT  : chr  "TMAX" "TMIN" "PRCP" "SNOW" ...
## $ FIRSTYEAR: int  1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 ...
## $ LASTYEAR : int  1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 1949 ...

```

2.4 Selecting Active (and inactive) Weather Stations with Maximum Daily Temperature Readings

Selecting the stations that are both active and contain a basic measure of the maximum temperature (TMAX) is a good place to evaluate the quality and quantity of the data.

```

# Subset data for TMAX (Max Temperature) Element
inventory.TMAX = subset(inventory, subset=ELEMENT=="TMAX")

# Check the structure of the data
str(inventory.TMAX)

## 'data.frame': 40428 obs. of  6 variables:
## $ ID      : chr  "ACW00011604" "ACW00011647" "AE000041196" "AEM00041194" ...
## $ LATITUDE : num  17.1 17.1 25.3 25.3 24.4 ...
## $ LONGITUDE: num -61.8 -61.8 55.5 55.4 54.7 ...
## $ ELEMENT  : chr  "TMAX" "TMAX" "TMAX" "TMAX" ...
## $ FIRSTYEAR: int  1949 1961 1944 1983 1983 1994 1973 1973 1966 1973 ...
## $ LASTYEAR : int  1949 1961 2025 2025 2025 2025 1992 2020 2021 2020 ...

```

```

# Subset Active Stations (observations that include 2024 and more recent)
active.TMAX = subset(inventory.TMAX, subset=LASTYEAR>=2024); str(inventory.TMAX)

## 'data.frame': 40428 obs. of 6 variables:
## $ ID : chr "ACW00011604" "ACW00011647" "AE000041196" "AEM00041194" ...
## $ LATITUDE : num 17.1 17.1 25.3 25.3 24.4 ...
## $ LONGITUDE: num -61.8 -61.8 55.5 55.4 54.7 ...
## $ ELEMENT : chr "TMAX" "TMAX" "TMAX" "TMAX" ...
## $ FIRSTYEAR: int 1949 1961 1944 1983 1983 1994 1973 1973 1966 1973 ...
## $ LASTYEAR : int 1949 1961 2025 2025 2025 2025 1992 2020 2021 2020 ...

# Subset Inactive and Old Stations)
inactive.TMAX = subset(inventory.TMAX, subset=(FIRSTYEAR <= 1850 & LASTYEAR<=2023)); str(inactive.TMAX)

## 'data.frame': 3 obs. of 6 variables:
## $ ID : chr "CA006158350" "EZE00100082" "ITE00100554"
## $ LATITUDE : num 43.7 50.1 45.5
## $ LONGITUDE: num -79.4 14.42 9.19
## $ ELEMENT : chr "TMAX" "TMAX" "TMAX"
## $ FIRSTYEAR: int 1840 1775 1763
## $ LASTYEAR : int 2003 2005 2008

```

2.5 Subsetting the GHCN-d Inventory

The inventory has a list of stations and map coordinates (latitude and longitude). However, it's not easy to select a region, like a state, from the latitude and longitude values. Thus, we need to merge the inventory with a dataset that includes state names and merge them based on the station ID.

It's a bit strange, but the dataset, GHCNd includes US states and Canadian Provinces, plus various territories of the US.

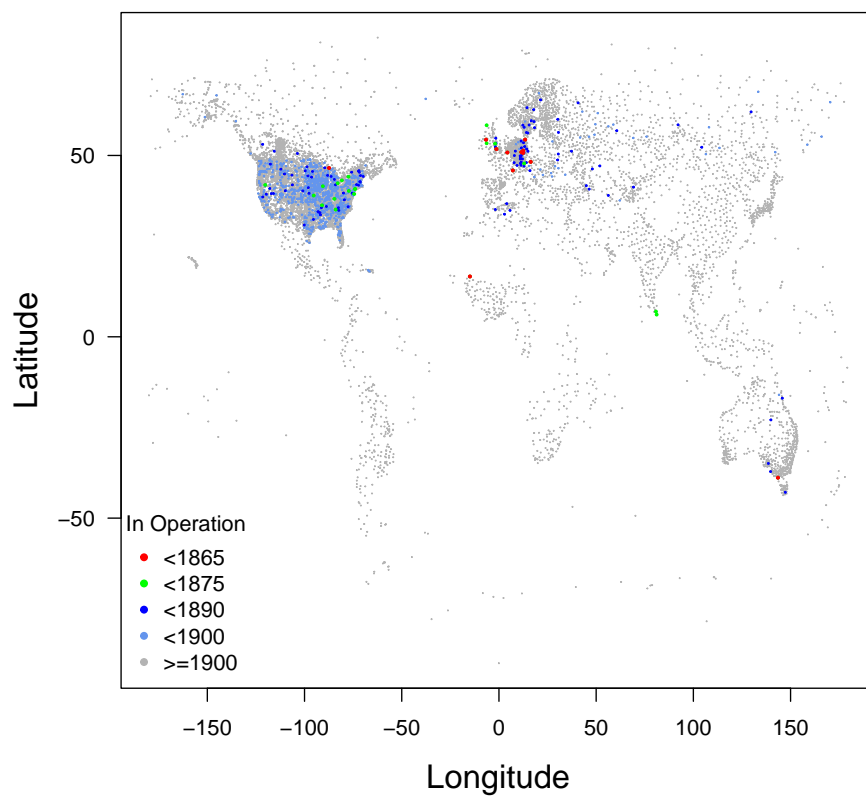
```

station_names = c("ID",           # 1-11   Character 11
                  "LATITUDE",     # 13-20  Real      8
                  "LONGITUDE",    # 22-30  Real      9
                  "ELEVATION",     # 32-37  Real      6
                  "STATE",         # 39-40  Character 2
                  "NAME",         # 42-71  Character
                  "GSN FLAG",      # 73-75  Character
                  "HCN/CRN FLAG", # 77-79  Character
                  "WMO ID"        # 81-85  Character
                  )

# Read ghcn-d-stations.txt with fixed width format
Stations = read.fwf("https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/ghcn/daily/ghcn-d-stations.txt",
                    col.names=station_names, fill=2,

```

Figure 2: A plot of active global weather stations (GHCN-d). Note the increase in stations over time and spatial distribution. It's a story of the industrialization of Europe and the US and colonialiam.



```

widths=c(11, -1, 8, -1, 9, -1, 6, -1, 2, -1, 30, -1, 3, -1, 3, -1, 5 ))

# NOTE: Got to be a better way to get these data!

str(Stations) # Missing State Name

## 'data.frame': 129655 obs. of  9 variables:
## $ ID      : chr  "ACW00011604" "ACW00011647" "AE000041196" "AEM00041194" ...
## $ LATITUDE : num  17.1 17.1 25.3 25.3 24.4 ...
## $ LONGITUDE : num  -61.8 -61.8 55.5 55.4 54.7 ...
## $ ELEVATION : num  10.1 19.2 34 10.4 26.8 ...
## $ STATE    : chr  " " " " " " " " " ...
## $ NAME     : chr  "ST JOHNS COOLIDGE FLD" " " "ST JOHNS" " " ...
## $ GSN.FLAG : chr  " " " " " " " " " ...
## $ HCN.CRN.FLAG: chr  " " " " " " " " " ...
## $ WMO.ID   : int  NA NA 41196 41194 41217 41218 40930 40938 40948 40990 ...

# Now we'll get the state names for the states.
State_names = c("STATE", # 1-2 Character 2
               "STATE_NAME") # 4-50 Character 46
States = read.fwf("https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/ghcn/daily/ghcnd-states.txt",
                 col.names=State_names, fill=2,
                 widths=c(2, -1, 46))

str(States)

## 'data.frame': 74 obs. of  2 variables:
## $ STATE      : chr  "AB" "AK" "AL" "AR" ...
## $ STATE_NAME: chr  "ALBERTA" "ALASKA" "ALABAMA" ...

# Merge the two datasets
StateIDs = subset(Stations, select=c("ID", "STATE"))
StateIDs = merge(StateIDs, States, by="STATE") # Add State Names

temp.TMAX = merge(active.TMAX, StateIDs, by="ID")
# Note: Some outer join would be better, to be completed later.

# Remove Stations that STATE = blank!
stations.USCan = subset(temp.TMAX, subset=(STATE!=" "))

```

2.6 Select Active Stations

To ensure we can limit our data to stations that are active, we need to subset the data to include only stations that have data from 2024 and later, however, if we don't find enough stations on the state you selected, I have relaxed the

criteria to 2023.

How many stations are in the state? `nrow(stations.USCan)!`

```
stations.active = subset(stations.USCan, subset=LASTYEAR>=2023)
str(stations.active)

## 'data.frame': 7398 obs. of 8 variables:
## $ ID          : chr  "AQW00061705" "CA001011500" "CA001012055" "CA001012475" ...
## $ LATITUDE    : num  -14.3 48.9 48.8 48.4 48.4 ...
## $ LONGITUDE   : num  -171 -124 -124 -123 -123 ...
## $ ELEMENT     : chr  "TMAX" "TMAX" "TMAX" "TMAX" ...
## $ FIRSTYEAR   : int   1966 1979 1960 1997 1991 1991 2007 1972 1996 1991 ...
## $ LASTYEAR    : int   2025 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 ...
## $ STATE       : chr  "AS" "BC" "BC" "BC" ...
## $ STATE_NAME  : chr  "AMERICAN SAMOA" "BRITISH COLUMBIA" "BRITISH COLUMBIA" "BRITISH COLUMBIA" ...

nrow(stations.active)

## [1] 7398
```

2.7 Selecting Stations for Each State

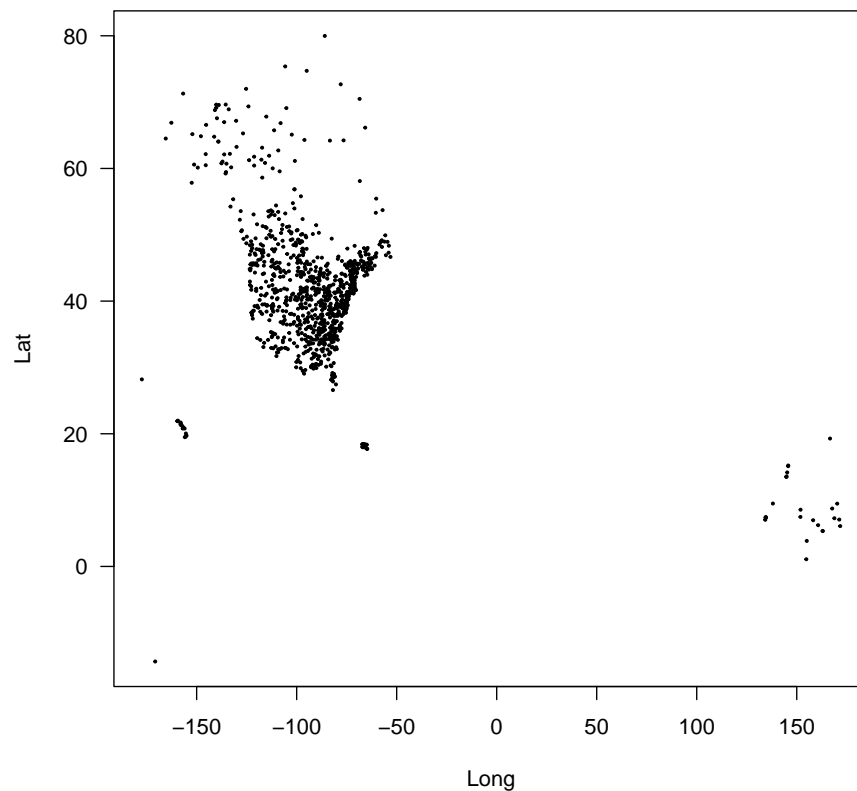
To accomplish this, I created a loop to select the stations from each state. The loop selects the 15 oldest, active stations from each state. If there are fewer than 15 stations, it selects all the stations.

```
# Loop to select 15 stations for each state
stations.active.oldest = subset(stations.active, subset=FIRSTYEAR==min(FIRSTYEAR))
i=10
for(i in 1:nrow(States)) {
  state.df = subset(stations.active, subset=STATE==States$STATE[i])
  if(nrow(state.df) >= 15) {
    state.df = state.df[order(state.df$FIRSTYEAR),][1:15,]
  }
  if(nrow(state.df) < 15){
    state.df = state.df[order(state.df$FIRSTYEAR),][1:nrow(state.df),]
  }
  if(i==1) {
    stations.active.oldest = state.df
  } else {
    stations.active.oldest = rbind(stations.active.oldest, state.df)
  }
}
```


2.8 Plotting Active Stations

At some point, I'd like to “map” the stations with actual state boundaries and a projection that make more sense. For example, what are the stations north of the Equator and 150 E in longitude?

```
plot(stations.active.oldest$LONGITUDE, stations.active.oldest$LATITUDE,  
     pch=20, cex=.4, xlab="Long", ylab="Lat", las=1)
```



2.9 Write the Active Stations to a CSV File

```
# export file to csv  
write.csv(stations.active.oldest,  
          here("05_Regional_Climate_Trends",  
              "stations.active.oldest.csv"))
```

3 Next Steps

3.1 Estimate Time for Project

Based on the [class survey](#) Table 1 estimates the time and resources needed to complete the project.

Table 1: Probably Tasks and Time Estimates for the Project. Time is based on our survey estimates. ¹Guide 1 can take extra time because NOAA data are not consistently formatted. ² TBD.

Task/Guide	Time (min)	Resources (Notes)
Guide #1	x	Rstudio, R code, NOAA website ¹
Guide #2	x	Rstudio, R code
Guide #3	x	Rstudio, R code
Guide #4	x	EPA documents and other literature
Guide #5	x	EA Streaming/Video Booth
Total (hrs)	X	

3.2 Start Guide #1

In Guide #1, we use the **stations.active.oldest.csv** dataset to download the weather data for the “oldest, active stations.”