

## Grandfather Gust Breaks Record

Written by Landis Wofford

Thursday, 27 January 2011 15:52

---

Wind gusts recorded by the sonic anemometer located on the Mile High Swinging Bridge at Grandfather Mountain reached 114.7 mph on Wednesday, January 26. This three-second gust clocked in at 4:58 p.m.

The previous highest three-second gust on Grandfather was 106.95 mph recorded February 11, 2008. "While North Carolina doesn't have an official state wind gust record, this 114.7 mph at Grandfather is one of the highest wind speeds ever recorded in the state," said State Climatologist Ryan Boyles.

In November 2010, Grandfather Mountain upgraded to the new state-of-the-art anemometer to measure wind speeds. Instead of measuring how fast cups spin in the wind, the Vaisala WS425 FG Ice Free is a sonic anemometer that measures how fast particulates in the air speed past its electronic sensors.

"It uses ultrasonic technology to measure wind speed and direction, so there are no moving parts," said Dr. Baker Perry, Assistant Professor of Geography at Appalachian State University. "No moving parts is a big plus anywhere -- but particularly in an extreme location such as Grandfather Mountain."

The new anemometer also has a 150 watt heater which is advertised to keep it free from ice buildup (rime or glaze) even in the most demanding conditions. The instrument is networked with the State Climate Office, a step that addresses the gaps in data that plague Grandfather on occasions when winter conditions prevent employees from reaching the summit.

For more information on the 55 years of weather data from Grandfather Mountain, see the interactive weather database at [www.grandfather.com](http://www.grandfather.com).