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Tallahassee topics

NEWS AND NOTES FROM YOUR LOCAL NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE.

The National Weather Service (NWS) office in Tallahassee, FL provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for Southeast Alabama, Southwest & South Central Georgia, the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend, and the adjacent Gulf of Mexico coastal waters. Our primary mission is the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the local economy.

Spring 2022 Severe Weather Review By Israel Gonzalez

The first notable severe weather event occurred on 3/18 when an extensive squall line brought damaging winds and a [couple tornadoes](#) (including an EF-2 in Panama City) to the Tri-state area. The EF-2 (120 mph) tornado began as a waterspout that came ashore onto St. Andrews Bay and produced a path of damage that spanned over 10 miles, with one inland house getting shifted about 4 ft from its foundation.

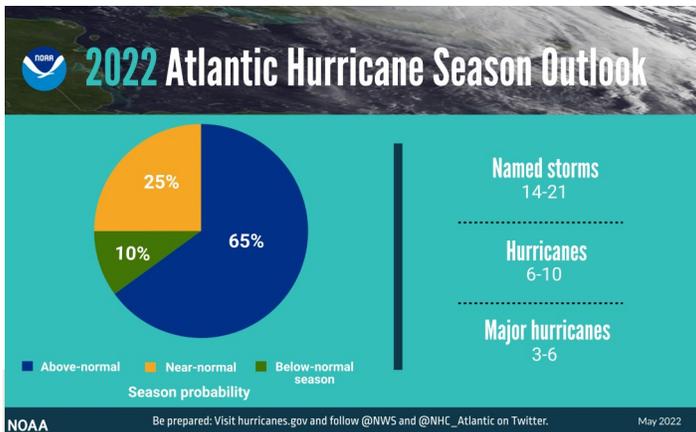
The second event occurred from 3/30-3/31 when an intense squall line moved into our Central Timezone counties in the early-morning hours of the 31st and produced 2 tornadoes; one of which was an [EF-3](#) (150 mph winds) that crossed through Washington and Jackson County, FL near I-10. Unfortunately, there were 2 fatalities and 2 injuries. A couple of well-constructed homes (including a brick house) suffered significant damage, which largely contributed to the tornado's high rating.

A multi-day severe event took place from [4/5-4/7](#) that spawned 11 tornadoes that were a mix of EF-0 and EF-1 intensity! Another intense squall line was largely responsible and produced damaging winds as well. Five tornadoes occurred in portions of southwest AL and adjacent southwest GA on 4/5. The following day, a few storms initially produced large hail in the northernmost southwest GA counties. Some supercells later developed to spawn [6 more tornadoes](#) across southwest GA. Overall, the NWS Tallahassee forecast area had 19 confirmed tornadoes for the season.



2022 ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON OUTLOOK

On 5/24, there was a [NOAA press release](#) on the outlook for this year's hurricane season, which is officially underway as of 6/1. The prediction (*figure*) shows a 65% chance of above-normal activity with 14-21 named storms, 6-10 hurricanes (3-6 major). Tropical Storm Alex, the first named storm of the season, formed on 6/5 over the west Atlantic. Continued La Nina conditions and above-average sea-surface temperatures over the next few months favor these predictions. Hurricane season officially runs through 11/30. A mid-season updated outlook will be released by NOAA around 8/1, just before the peak of the season begins. On a somewhat related note, former Director of the National Hurricane Center, Ken Graham was appointed the new Director of the National Weather Service on 6/7. He is the successor to the recently retired Louis W. Uccellini. Ken brings nearly 30 years of NWS experience from various positions across several forecast offices in the past. We look forward to his leadership going forward.



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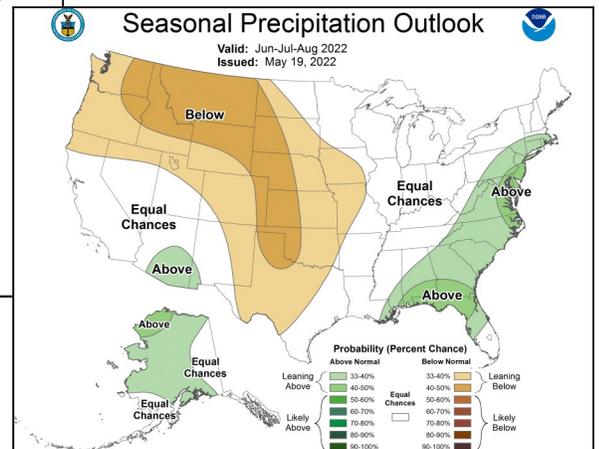
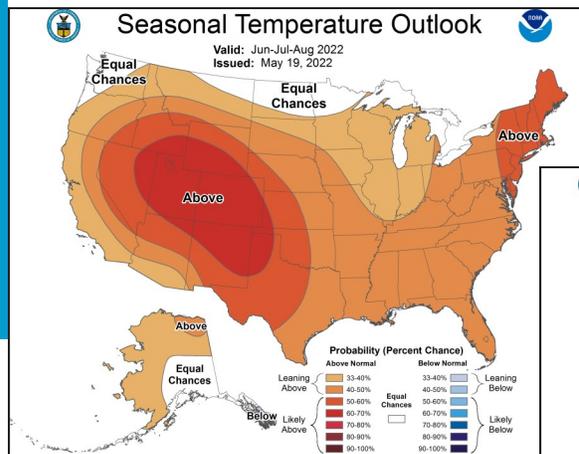
weather.gov/tae

Spring Highlights *By Israel Gonzalez*

March began very dry; so much so, that dangerous fire conditions materialized early in the month for portions of the FL Panhandle, particularly where the highest concentration of tree blowdown from Hurricane Michael (2018) exists. Red Flag Warnings were issued, the first since 2020! Wet weather thankfully arrived mid-month to temporarily alleviate the fire concerns for a good chunk of the Tri-state area before fire concerns were renewed, but in southwest GA, which largely missed out on the beneficial rainfall. Red Flag Warnings were consequently issued for those locations on the 26th. Tornadoes in the Panhandle were another major story in March. A total of 6 were confirmed: 3 on the 9th, 2 on the 18th, and 1 on the 31st. Two tornadoes were significant - an EF-2 (120 mph winds) in Panama City and an EF-3 (150 mph) in Washington county that then traveled into Jackson County. The EF-3 tornado formed in a portion of an intense squall line overnight that sadly resulted in 2 fatalities and 2 injuries. A myriad of other hazards were also in place during and after the event in the form of very gusty winds, high surf, gale conditions, and coastal flooding in Apalachee Bay.

The beginning of April was very active. Multiple rounds of severe storms spawned 11 confirmed tornadoes (mix of EF-0 & EF-1) across the Tri-state area from the 4th to 7th! Large hail occurred in portions of southwest GA on the 6th, mainly west through north of Albany. Very windy and dry conditions followed the multi-day event, prompting Red Flag Warnings for portions of the Panhandle, plus Wind Advisories elsewhere. Peak wind gusts at or above 40 mph occurred over the Florida Big Bend region and south-central Georgia. Outside of overnight severe weather along the Panhandle and central Big Bend on the 17th — during which a few instances of thunderstorm wind damage were reported — we saw an extended stretch of warm and mostly dry conditions.

May was highlighted by warm conditions, a severe weather event at the end of the 1st week, and a wet period spanning several days late in the month. Scattered severe storms traversed the Tri-state area on the 6th that mostly notably produced 2 confirmed tornadoes in St Marks (EF-0, 85 mph) and Perry (EF-0, 75 mph), FL. Fortunately, there were no injuries or fatalities. Other storms were responsible for multiple wind damage and strong gust reports throughout portions of north FL, southeast AL, and southwest GA. The most notable report came from storm surveys east of Perry, FL where straight line winds of 80-90 mph resulted in snapped trees, a destroyed shed, and roof damage. Meanwhile, a handful of observations in the Panhandle and Leon County measured gusts in excess of 50 mph, with FAMU and FSU gusting from 40 to 42 mph. Rainfall ramped up from the 24th-26th thanks to a tropical airmass persisting over the region. Hardest hit locations were in the Panhandle (6-8", isolated 10"+), particularly in Gulf County where some spots such as Cape San Blas experienced 3-day totals in excess of 13"! These amounts resulted in localized flash flooding, with multiple validating reports.



Spring Climate Summary & Summer Outlook: From March 1st - May 31st, Tallahassee was warmer and wetter than normal. The mean temperature was 69.3° (+1.4° anomaly) while the 3-month rainfall accumulation totaled 14.77" (+2.64" anomaly). The highest and lowest temperature readings were 94° (5/18 & 5/30), and 32° (3/13), respectively. A wet March contributed to the above-average precipitation, with the wettest day of the spring occurring on 3/18 when 2.21" of rain fell. As of 5/19, the CPC Outlook (*figures above*) shows odds for above-normal temperature and precipitation (40-50% probabilities) from June through August. On average, the summer high/low temperatures for Tallahassee are 91.5°/72.3° (mean temperature of 81.9°) with a 3-month rainfall accumulation of 22.5". Climatologically, seabreeze-driven thunderstorms and tropical systems are the biggest rainfall contributors across the Tri-state area.

Staffing Update by Israel Gonzalez



The latest staffing news begins with the departure of Marty Riesen (*right picture*), one of our Electronic Technicians as he accepted a position in his hometown of Jacksonville. We wish him well in the next chapter of his career and thank him for his invaluable services to operations. Meanwhile, we recently chose a new Pathways Intern, Becca Darish (*left picture*), who was a virtual FSU meteorology student volunteer with us this past spring. She began her internship on 6/21 and will be a senior this coming fall semester. We are also in the process of selecting a (general) Meteorologist to round out the team in the near-future. As for the Employee Spotlight, we're focusing on meteorologist Cameron Young (*bottom-right picture*), a FL Panhandle native

who joined the team last year after a stint with Emergency Management. Get to know him better in the Q&A section below:

IS THERE A TOPIC YOU'D LIKE US
TO COVER? SEND US AN E-MAIL:

israel.gonzalez@noaa.gov

mark.wool@noaa.gov



Employee Spotlight - Cameron Young

1) What got you interested in meteorology? It was late September of 1998, and Hurricane Georges was approaching the Gulf Coast. I may or may not have had an inkling of weather interest at this point, but not enough to definitely say it was my career of choice yet. I remember sitting in my grandmother's bedroom watching John Hope on the Weather Channel giving the latest advisory information. Pretty much as soon as he finished, our power went out, our house started shaking, and we heard the infamous roar of a tornado. We (including our dog) all ran to our interior bathroom and waited it out for what seemed like forever. Being nighttime and without electricity, we decided to ride out the rest of the storm in our hallway and bathroom after we found little damage to our home outside of missing shingles and some branches down. Other parts of our neighborhood were more heavily damaged. That tornado was rated an F1 (old Fujita scale). That left quite a mark on 4-year-old Cameron, and ever since I never deviated from wanting to study weather.



2) Joining NWS Tallahassee is somewhat of a homecoming for you, isn't it? It sure is! I grew up near the Fort Walton Beach area, just over our service area's border. Growing up, I would frequently read discussions from both the Mobile and Tallahassee forecast offices to get a good idea of the setup and forecast for the next few days, especially during active weather. I'm very familiar with the area having spent my entire life on the Gulf Coast, and it is truly a privilege getting to forecast for many of the areas I know and love and for many friends and family that live in the area.

3) How did your previous position in Emergency Management prepare you for NWS? I've had the unique experience of working as an NWS partner prior to joining the NWS workforce. Prior to working in the NWS, I worked for the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) as one of their meteorologists. The objective of both jobs is the same—provide detailed weather support for our partners to aid their decision-making. While working for FDEM, I built up bountiful experience providing decision support services, both written and verbal. I worked numerous EOC activations, both weather and non-weather related, some of which were concurrent. Notable activations include Hurricane Michael, Hurricane Dorian, COVID-19, Hurricane Sally, Hurricane Eta, and the building collapse in Surfside. I've also provided weather support for incident management teams, strike teams, and task forces deployed to other states (namely North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Louisiana). And this does not include the support I've provided (whether meteorology or operations) for tropical storms, wildfires, flooding, environmental incidents, terrorism, and others. All of these events tested my meteorology, situational awareness, emergency management, and communication skills. Even working in the Florida State Watch Office, where I spent blue-sky days, my day was filled with customer service, situational awareness, briefing command and general staff on day-to-day weather across the state, supporting operations, training, guiding interns through the intersection of meteorology and emergency management, and any other tasks set before me that day. And it was not just weather all the time; I did some GIS and exercise design projects while at FDEM as well. I am forever grateful for my EM experience as it gives me a deeper understanding of partners' needs and their decision making process, which enhances my ability as an NWS meteorologist to provide the specific support they need.

4) What are your hobbies outside of work? So we will start with a couple normal hobbies. I enjoy walking around the many parks and lakes Tallahassee has to offer and I'm always up to explore new parks and scenery from around the area. I also have played piano for over 20 years. It sounds a lot more impressive than it is. I only took formal lessons for a year and my family taught me for a couple years prior, but I mostly just dabble and learn songs that I want to learn. I'm an FSU fan, born and raised. Also, I'm a Carolina Hurricanes fan, which weirdly enough came through video games. I also occasionally do some PC gaming. Most are city simulation and role-playing games, but I'll sneak in an indie game or racing game every now and then. I do also still have a couple consoles that I'll break out here and there too. Now, here's where I'm probably going to lose people if I haven't already. I love studying road construction, road signs, and traffic signals. In fact, I frequently will study designs of proposed or ongoing road construction projects and design the road signs and traffic signals for that project, as a hobby. I've even been known to study the Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (and I'm very excited for the new version to come out soon). This and city simulation games somewhat tie into my interest in urban design and planning as well.



Management-Admin Team

Felecia Bowser, MIC
Mark Wool, WCM
Parks Camp, SOO
Doug Sherrick, ESA
Jennifer Nichols, ASA
Brian Coats, ITO
Kelly Godsey, Hydrologist
Ricardo Humphreys, OPL

Lead Forecasters

Don Van Dyke
Jessica Fieux
Blair Scholl
Andy Haner
Karleisa Rogacheski

Forecasters

Lance Franck
Wright Dobbs
Eric Bunker
Israel Gonzalez
Kristian Oliver
Jasmine Montgomery
Molly Merrifield
Cameron Young
Becca Darish (Pathways Intern)
Vacant

Electronic Technicians

Aaron Basti
Vacant

Spring Outreach Efforts

By Mark Wool

On March 1st, the NWS office in Tallahassee was interviewed by WFXL’s Kerri Copello about Rip Current Awareness week. See our spring issue for more details. We also conducted a virtual advanced spotter training course in the evening. On the 2nd, Warning Coordination Meteorologist Mark Wool attended the quarterly meeting of the Apalachee Local Emergency Planning Committee (ALEPC) and gave a spring outlook as well as a fire weather briefing. On the 6th, the office operations staff gave the HAM Net Control group a summary of the previous month’s weather and an outlook for March. On the 8th, Mark attended the Big Bend Healthcare Coalition and discussed the spring and fire weather outlook. On the 18th, Fire Weather Program Leader, Andy Haner gave an interview to the *NY Times* on recent and upcoming severe weather. On the 22nd, the office conducted a tropical exercise with Leon and Jefferson Counties and provided materials for the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany for their table top exercise. We also provided the ALEPC with a dispersion forecast for their HAZMAT exercise on the 23rd.

In April on the 5th, Andy provided fire weather training at the annual North Florida Prescribed Fire Council Meeting. On the 6th, the office participated in the annual #SafePlaceSelfie Day. On the 7th, Marine Program Leader Lance Franck met with Bay County officials to discuss rip current awareness and services. On the 9th, Lance was joined by the NOAA Office of Coast Survey’s Tim Osborn to deliver our annual Weather & Navigation for Marine Boating & Fishing webinar.

In May, the office conducted a social media campaign to promote National Hurricane Preparedness Week. On the 4th, Senior Service Hydrologist Kelly Godsey discussed hurricane preparedness and decision support services for schools in Houston County, AL. On the 6th, Mark did an interview with the *Tallahassee Democrat* on a severe weather threat and safety protocols. On the 18th, Mark gave a hurricane season interview to News Service of Florida’s Tom Urban. Several Hurricane Season briefings were conducted in the 2nd half of the month. On the 19th, Mark briefed Madison County, FL, while Kelly and lead forecaster Jessica Fieux briefed leadership at the Tallahassee International Airport. On the 20th, forecaster Molly Merrifield gave two briefings to the FL Dept. of Health. On the 24th, Jessica briefed Leon County. On the 25th, Andy briefed FSU.

Hurricane Preparedness

By Jessica Fieux

We may have dodged the first event of the 2022 hurricane season (Potential Tropical Cyclone One that eventually became Alex); however, the season just started so if you haven’t already, it’s time to get serious about your preparedness! Here are three steps you can take to be prepared: 1) Get a plan; 2) Build a kit; 3) Stay Informed. The first step in preparing for a hurricane is to get a plan. A part of your plan should include determining if you live in an evacuation zone and if so, where you would go if an evacuation order is issued for your location. For those that live in Florida, you can check that via <https://www.floridadisaster.org/knowyourzone/>. Another step in the planning stage is to prepare and strengthen your home - this may include reinforcing your garage door, installing impact-resistant windows or purchasing hurricane shutters, trimming trees, and considering removing trees that may fall on your home. Insurance is another critical step in the planning process.

Get an insurance check-up to ensure your insurance is up-to-date, document your possessions in case they need to be replaced, and consider purchasing flood insurance since that is not included in homeowners or renters insurance. To view more actions to consider in your plan visit <https://www.ready.gov/plan>. Once you have developed your plan, the next step is to build a ready kit - have supplies that will allow you to be independent for seven days, but also have a kit that you can take with you if you need to leave your home quickly. This ready kit should include your important documents, canned food, water, medication, can opener, a flashlight, batteries, a backup cell phone charger and items your pet would need during an emergency (food, medication, leash).

Continued on page 5 →

Hurricane Preparedness

Assemble Disaster Supplies

- Food & water
- Medicine & prescriptions
- Keep gas tank full
- Cash on hand
- Radio, batteries, phone chargers

weather.gov

Hurricane Preparedness (Continued...)

By Jessica Fieux

While it may seem overwhelming to purchase these items at once, consider picking up an extra item or two each time you head to the grocery store. You can view a full list of items to include in your kit at <https://www.ready.gov/kit>.

Before, during and after an event, you need to stay informed. Ahead of an event, visit <https://www.weather.gov/tac/> for the latest forecast, stay tuned to local media, and listen to guidance from local emergency management officials. During an event, make sure you have multiple ways to get warnings such as NOAA Weather Radio, Wireless Emergency Alerts, and via TV. After an event, stay safe by following information from emergency management officials provided via Wireless Emergency Alerts, TV, or social media.

Hurricanes can be stressful and many of us are too familiar with them over the past few years. Take some time to follow these preparedness steps to keep you, your family, and your pets safe and reduce your stress the next time a hurricane affects our region.



Partner Spotlight: David Zierden, FL State Climatologist

By Mark Wool

Earlier this year, we revamped our climate team in the wake of former lead, Tim Barry's retirement last September. As the state liaison office in Tallahassee, one of our goals towards improving the program is to establish official state records for various meteorological variables, particularly those that are more miscellaneous (e.g., largest hail stone, highest wind gust, lowest/highest mean sea-level pressure, etc.). We feel this is achievable with the help of fellow climate leads in other FL servicing forecast offices and state climatologist, David Zierden (*pictured above*). He is happy to assist us and graciously accepted our offer to be in the Partner Spotlight. Get to know him better in the Q&A section below:

1. Tell us a little about your education and how you became the State Climatologist for Florida. I earned a bachelor's degree in Meteorology in 1996 from right here at Florida State University and completed my Master's degree two years later. As I was completing my Master's work and starting a job search, the director of COAPS at FSU and climate expert James J. O'Brien was appointed as the new Florida State Climatologist. He had a vision of strengthening the office and hired me to be his assistant (do most of the day-to-day work). I served as the Assistant State Climatologist through 2005 when Dr. O'Brien retired. I assumed the role of State Climatologist at that time and have served in that role ever since.

2. How many people work at your office and what are some of the routine duties? The Florida Climate Center is a small two-person subgroup under the Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies with me and research scientist and Assistant State Climatologist Dr. Emily Powell. We also rely on help from undergraduate students working at COAPS, and other scientists, especially Dr. Vasu Misra who conducts applied climate research. Routine duties include answering the phone and responding to routine data requests and questions. We also publish monthly climate summaries for the State and a quarterly newsletter. We also maintain a digital presence via our [website](#) which offers a wealth of climate information and data and also through social media.

3. Are there any special projects you have worked on or plan to work on? We just finished a 5-year project led by Dr. Chris Uegio in the FSU Geography department funded by the CDC called Florida BRACE (Building Resilience Against Climate Effects). We cooperated with the Florida Department of Health and various county health departments. We are currently working on a NOAA Weather Program Office project installing soil moisture sensors on the UF FAWN sites. I have long history of partnering with Extensions in Florida, Georgia, and Alabama and participate in many Extension workshops, training, and commodity meetings.

4. Describe your relationship with the National Weather Service. First of all, our office gets tremendous support from the National Weather Service Climate Services Division and from the Southern Region climate lead, Victor Murphy. The Florida NWS WFO's were also instrumental in starting and supporting the CoCoRaHS volunteer rainfall observing network where we have served as State Coordinator. Every week the Florida WFO's participate in discussions on the current U.S. Drought monitor where we come to a consensus on recommendations for Florida. Kelly Godsey and Cameron Young assess the situation in the Tallahassee and Jacksonville CWA's faithfully every week and their input is invaluable. We have also participated in NWS Emergency Preparedness workshops.

5. What do you like to do for fun? I grew up on the bay in Panama City, surfing and fishing, so I always had an eye on the weather. My father was an air force pilot and had extensive training in meteorology. He taught me a lot more than I realized once I started my studies. I still enjoy being out on the water and live part-time on St. George Island.