High Water Mark Sign Project

Rio Grande-Big Bend Partners Meeting

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Terlingua, TX

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History of project

- High water mark (HWM) signs recommended by USGS/NWS Workgroup, 1997.
- NWS's Southeast River Forecast Center began pilot project in 2006.
- First signs installed in Rome, GA (March 2007), Franklin, VA and Tarboro, NC (May 2007).
- First sign installed outside of SERFC service area in SR – Jackson, MS (April 2009).

Goals of Project

- Commemorate historic floods.
  - Best Practice – Unveil HWM signs during historical flood anniversary.
- Raise awareness of local flood risk for newcomers and future generations.
- Provide information on where people may learn more about local flood threat.

Sign Placement Coordination

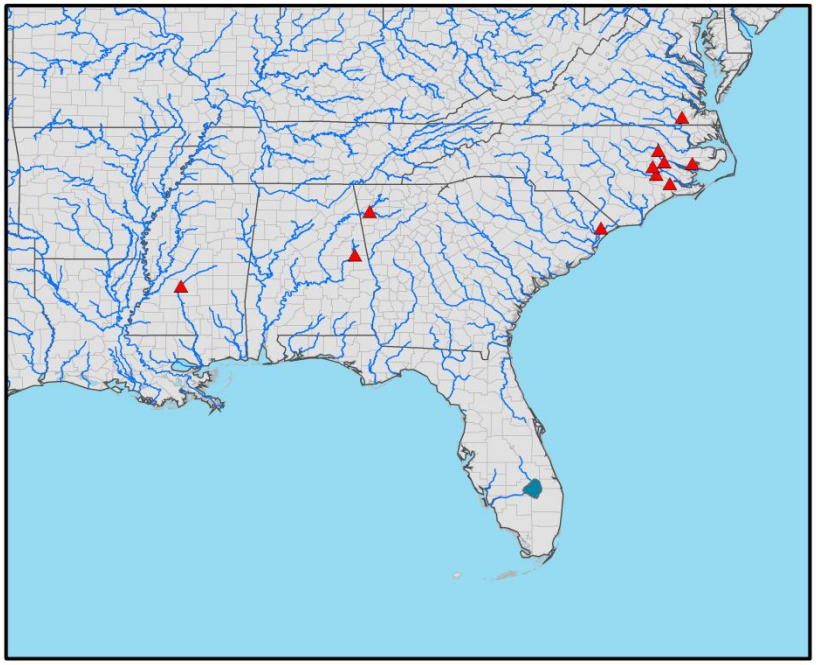
- Local Weather Forecast Office consults with local emergency management officials to determine interest.
- Emergency management officials coordinate with city/county/state government on sign placement.
- Installation easiest on government property.

Sign Installation

- High water mark may be surveyed in from river gauge by USGS and NWS personnel.
- High water mark may be based on local history if height is well-established.
- Signs are generally installed on buildings for maximum impact.
- Signs may also be installed on posts in well-traveled public areas.

Completed Installations in SERFC/LMRFC service areas as of 5/09:

- AL: Wadley
- GA: Rome
- SC: Conway
- NC: Snow Hill, Pollocksville, Tarboro, Belhaven, Greenville, Kinston
- VA: Franklin
- MS: Jackson



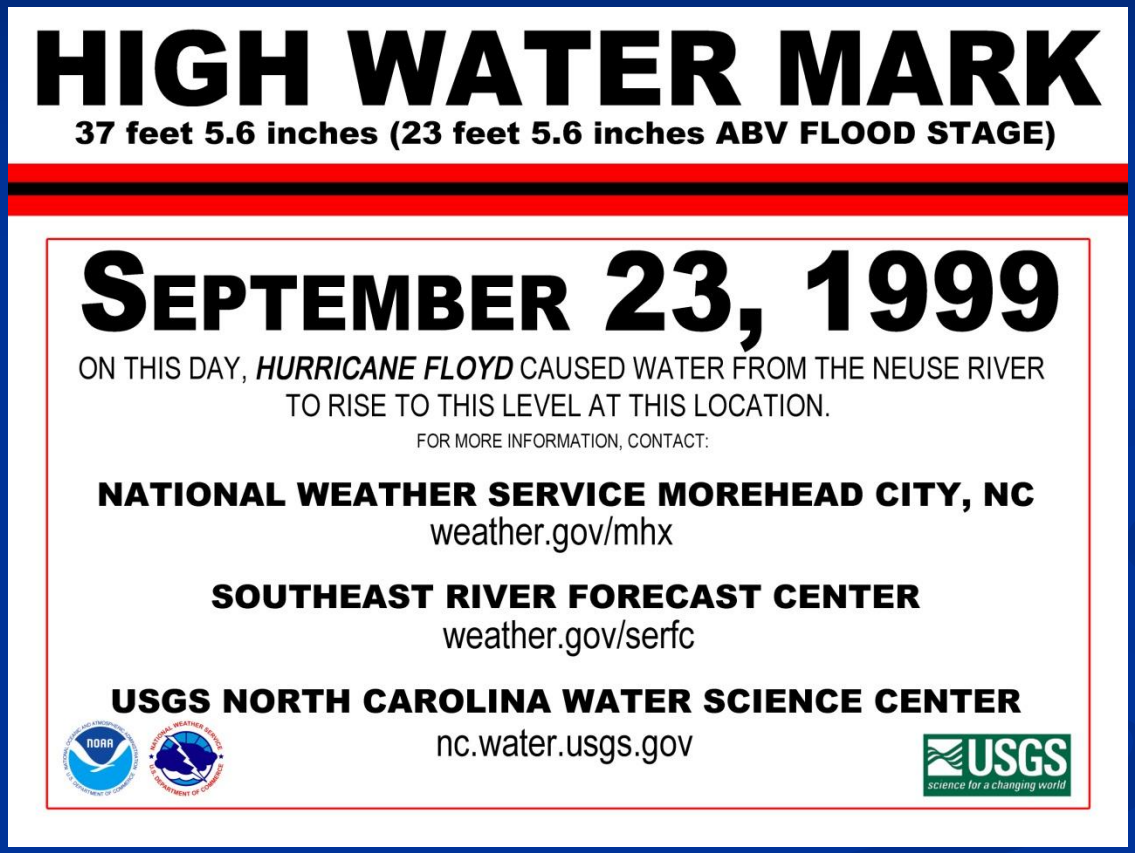
Planned Installation along the lower Rio Grande River

- Rio Grande River at the International Bridge/Laredo
  - Flood of Record – Jan 1, 1965 (62.48 ft)
  - 202 blocks of Laredo business district were inundated
  - Proposed HWM sign location – parking lot of the mall.

Project Outreach

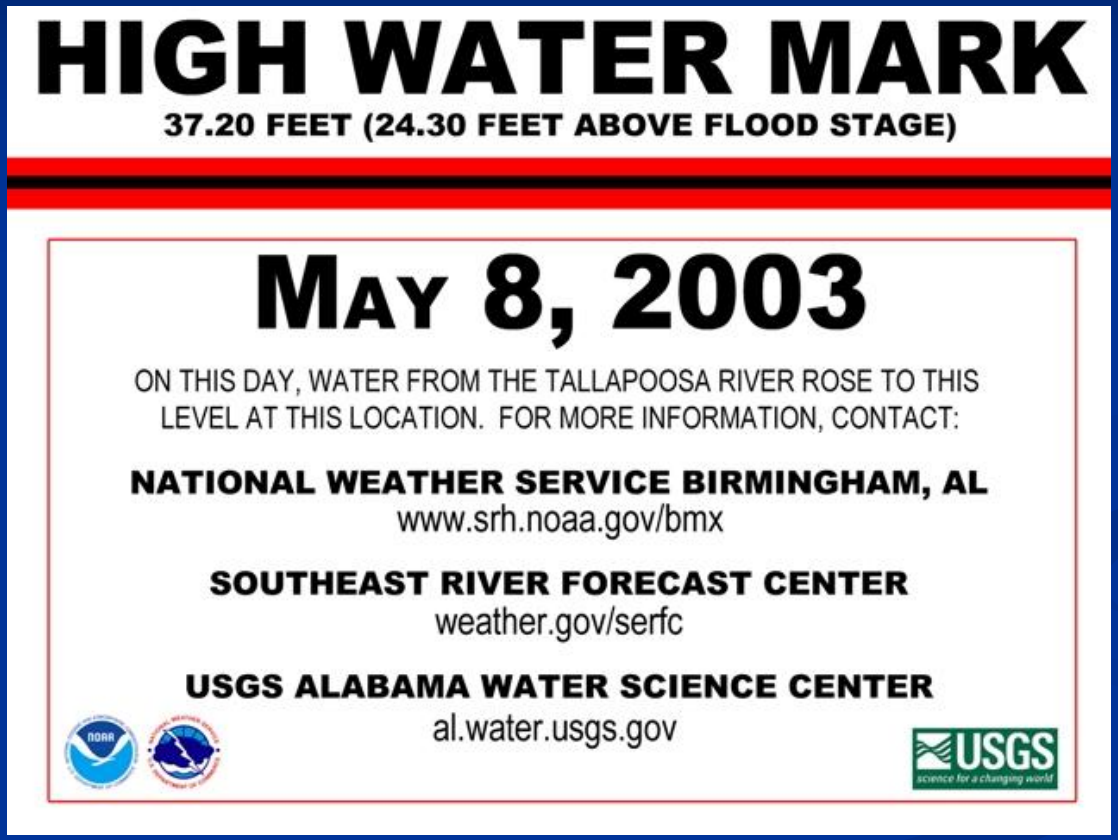
- HWM guidelines/presentation provided to NWS HQ; planned integration with national outreach toolbox.
- National map of HWM installations – coordination with NWS HQ.
- WFO/RFC collaborative outreach project with external customers/partners.

Some signs reference inland flooding from tropical systems:



Kinston, NC

Some signs commemorate non-tropical inland flooding:



Wadley, AL

Location of HWM line flexible so text can be closest to eye level:

Greenville, NC

HWM Sign Unveiling Ceremonies