



National Weather Service Tallahassee, Florida



In this edition of SkyWarn News:

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- The terrible three : Fay, Gustav, and Ike
- Improving and Enhancing NWS Tallahassee operates

New Weather Graphics come to NWS Tallahassee

Starting September 15th, 2008, NWS Tallahassee began routine issuance of short term and long term forecast images to compliment the already issued point and click forecasts and other graphical images accessible on our website. These forecast images are drawn each morning by NWS Tallahassee forecasters based on an analysis of expected weather conditions. The short term forecast image, titled “Short Term Outlook” focuses on the expected weather for the next 24 hours. The long term forecast image, titled “Long Term Outlook” provides an outlook of the overall weather pattern expected for the next few days. On some occasions, this graphic will display a significant weather event that is forecast to occur during the long term portion of the forecast. This will be particularly noticeable during our severe weather season when a potential severe weather outbreak may be forecast a few days into the future.

Sample short term (left) and long term (right) examples appear below.



Tallahassee Forecast Area Weather Graphics

Local weather forecast by "City, ST" or zip code

To view the images, just click the links below. Clicking on the link image and as clicking on the image will take you to the website.

Short Term Outlook
Long Term Outlook

TLH Radar
Regional Radar
Forecast
Watch/Warning

High pressure will usher in much drier air to the region today through Sunday.

SERFC River Forecast
SPC Outlook
NHC Outlook

Point and Click Forecast

Click on the map below for the latest forecast.

Map of Forecast Area

Last map update: Sat, Aug. 9, 2008 at 5:28:55 pm EDT

En Español

Read watches, warnings & advisories.

Zoom Out

Zoom In

- Red Flag Warning
- Fire Weather Watch
- Hazardous Weather Outlook

Hazardous Weather Outlook

RIVER FL OUT TO 20 NM-
COASTAL WATERS FROM APALACHICOLA TO DESTIN FL OUT 20 NM-
COASTAL WATERS FROM OCHLOCKNEE RIVER TO APALACHICOLA FL OUT TO 20 NM-
COASTAL WATERS FROM SUWANNEE RIVER TO KEATON BEACH OUT 20 NM-
WATERS FROM APALACHICOLA TO DESTIN FL FROM 20 TO 60 NM-
WATERS FROM SUWANNEE RIVER TO APALACHICOLA FL FROM 20 TO 60 NM-
545 AM EDT SAT AUG 9 2008 /445 AM CDT SAT AUG 9 2008/

THIS HAZARDOUS WEATHER OUTLOOK IS FOR SOUTHEAST ALABAMA...
SOUTHWEST AND SOUTH CENTRAL GEORGIA...THE FLORIDA BIG BEND AND
PANHANDLE...AND THE ADJACENT GULF COASTAL WATERS.

.DAY ONE...TODAY AND TONIGHT...
NO HAZARDOUS WEATHER IS EXPECTED AT THIS TIME. IT WILL BE A HOT
AND DRY DAY TODAY AND THIS COMBINATION WILL ENHANCE THE SPREAD OF
ANY WILDFIRES.

.DAYS TWO THROUGH SEVEN...SUNDAY THROUGH FRIDAY...
THE HOT AND DRY WEATHER WILL PERSIST ON SUNDAY. AFTER
THAT...CHANCES FOR SHOWERS AND THUNDERSTORMS WILL INCREASE RAPIDLY
FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE WORK WEEK AND THESE ELEVATED CHANCES
WILL CONTINUE FOR SEVERAL DAYS AS LOW PRESSURE TRACKS ACROSS THE
SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES.

USA.gov

A new webpage has been created to display these weather graphics. You can access this page by either clicking on the "Graphicast" link on our main page, or you can access this website directly by going to:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tlh/fxc>

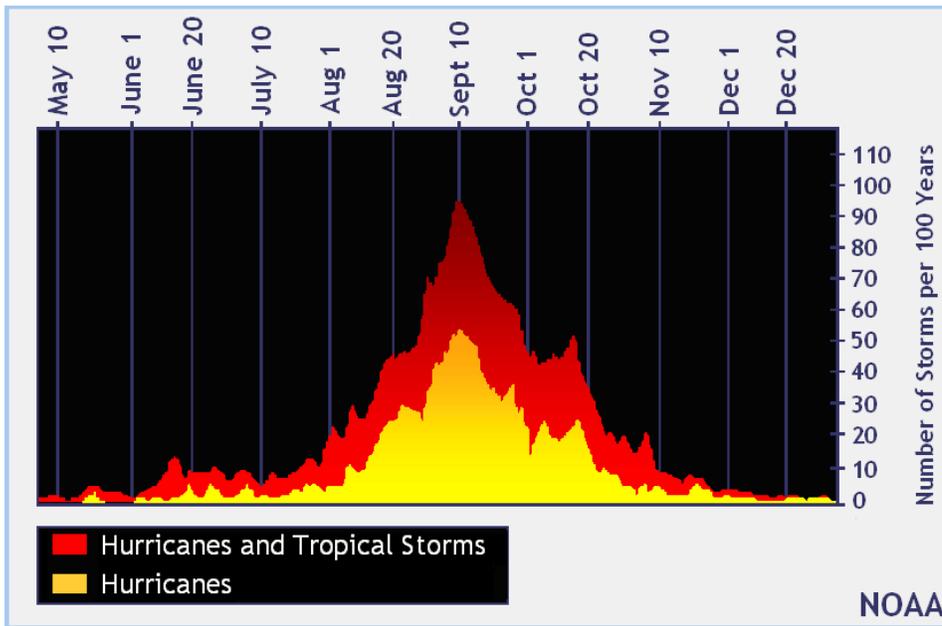
An image of this new page appears at left. By clicking on one of the links at the top or mid point of the page (areas outlined in a red box)...the image in the center of the page (outlined in the yellow box) will change to the appropriate image. From this page, you can quickly see a variety of images that will help you assess the threat for severe weather, tropical weather, or flooding each day.

← This area to the left is the summary map for watches and warning in effect for our region. This map is the same map on the front of the NWS Tallahassee Home Page. If you click on your location on the map, you will receive the point and click forecast for your site.

← This area to the left is where the text version of our daily hazardous weather outlook is displayed.

While our forecasters create the images that appear on this webpage, our Information Technology Specialist, Tony Freeman designed this page.

Tropical Weather Update



Did you know that the climatological peak of hurricane season takes place on September 10th? The image at left shows September 10th is climatologically when there have been the most tropical storms or hurricanes in the tropical Atlantic. The most active period in the Atlantic is typically from August 15th to October 15th. This period accounts for approximately

60 percent of all storms that form during hurricane season. On August 15th and continuing through September 15th, the tropics rapidly heated up with five named storms forming within this one month period. Three of these storms became hurricanes. However, it was the storm that as many of you are aware, Fay, that did considerable damage in our region. The table below shows specifics on the storms that have formed through the middle of September.

Storm Name	Dates	Max Intensity	ACE Units
Arthur	May 3 – June 2	40 mph	0.7725
Bertha	July 3 – July 20	120 mph	28.3675
Cristobal	July 19 – July 23	65 mph	3.0600
Dolly	July 20 – July 24	100 mph	5.3125
Edouard	August 3 – August 5	65 mph	1.5275
Fay	August 15 – August 24	70 mph	6.7150
Gustav	August 25 – September 2	150 mph	18.4550
Hanna	August 28 – September 7	80 mph	10.3200
Ike	September 1 – September 14	135 mph	38.2450
Josephine	September 2 – September 6	65 mph	2.7900
Seasonal ACE			115.5650

If you read last month's newsletter, you remember that ACE units, or Accumulated Cyclone Energy, is a statistic used to compare hurricane seasons that take into account the strength and longevity of a tropical system. In essence, the stronger the tropical cyclone, and the longer it lasts, the higher the ACE of a system. For example, notice that ACE units for Dolly are

just a little higher than Cristobal, but nowhere near the value posted by Bertha. This is because Bertha remained a major hurricane for a couple of days and persisted in the Atlantic as a hurricane for several days. Dolly, though a category two hurricane, was only briefly at that intensity and a hurricane for only a couple of days. Hurricane Ike leads the way this season, so far, for highest ACE units from a single storm. A seasonal ACE value above 103 indicates an above normal hurricane season.

Only one of the storms thus far did not pose any threat to a land area in the Atlantic. Tropical Storm Josephine dissipated over the Atlantic before reaching any of the islands in the central Atlantic. There is ongoing consideration about whether a record for consecutive United States landfalls has been set as Dolly, Eduoard, Fay, Gustav, Hanna, and Ike all made landfall within the U.S.

Pending the end of season analysis, the total for consecutive landfalling systems in the U.S. may be increased to seven. Tropical Storm Cristobal affected the North Carolina coast earlier in the season, but the center of Cristobal remained about 15 miles east of Cape Lookout, North Carolina, and thus at present would not count as a true U.S. landfall. In any event, 9 of the 10 storms that have formed thus far in the tropics have directly affected a landmass.

Tropical Storm Fay, Hurricane Gustav, and Hurricane Ike

These three storms impacted the Tallahassee forecast area in some way all within a three week period. Many of the staff that was present during the hyperactive 2004 hurricane season is still here today, and this three week stretch was very reminiscent of that time. Of the three storms, Tropical Storm Fay produced the most widespread damage.

Fay approached our region from the east, after making landfall as a tropical storm near Daytona Beach. What made Fay unique was the overall slow movement and extremely heavy rainfall. Despite much of our region being in a drought prior to the arrival of Fay, the fast accumulation of rainfall over a short amount of time led to record flooding across portions of the region. In fact, pending verification, the all time 24 hour record for rainfall in Georgia may have been broken by Fay. A spotter in Thomasville, Georgia reported over 27 inches in 30 hours. It is estimated that over 21.5 inches of this fell in 24 hours, which would break the old 24 hour rainfall record in Georgia of 21.1 inches from Hurricane Alberto in 1994. For more information on Fay and her impact on our region, please refer to the following website:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tlh/tsfayrainfall.php>

This link includes damage photos, damage reports, information on the track of Fay, as well as an inside look at forecasters at work at NWS Tallahassee during the height of the storm.

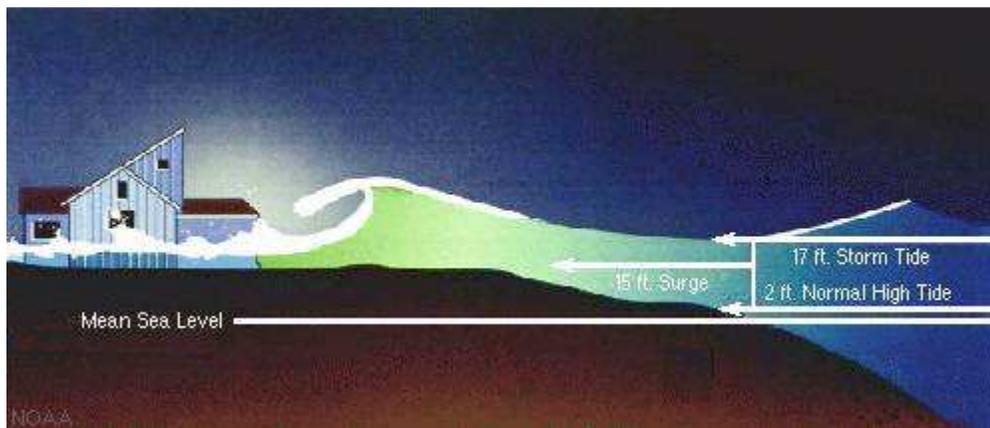
Hurricane Gustav made landfall in Louisiana, but still managed to produce a storm surge as far east as Saint Marks, Florida. This was very similar to what occurred during Ivan in 2004, but lower than what occurred from Dennis in 2005. Hurricane Ike, even though moving further west of our region than Gustav, still created storm surge problems in coastal counties in North Florida. Moreover, the large wind field of Ike generated very high surf along the Florida Panhandle coast. Reports from Panama City and points westward were received of surf heights at the beach exceeding 12 feet.

Both Gustav and Ike brought up an issue that can always lead to confusion for some of our users. Many times, forecasts issued by our office and the National Hurricane Center will reference two important water levels: Storm Surge and Storm Tide. Both of these terms are very important in determining whether you need to make preparations if you live along the immediate coast. Let's look at the definition of these terms.

Storm Surge: the abnormal rise of ocean water on land due primarily to strong onshore winds.

Storm Tide: The total water level rise when combining the astronomical tide and the storm surge.

Consider this example below:



A storm surge of 15 feet is occurring, but the storm surge is arriving at the coast during high tide. The high tide at this location is 2 feet above mean sea level. Thus, the storm tide is 17 feet. Suppose that the storm surge had arrived at low tide and low tide at this location is 2 feet below mean sea level. That would create a storm tide of 13 feet, since the astronomical tide is 2 feet lower than mean sea level. Since astronomical tides vary considerably in height from tide cycle to tide cycle along Apalachee Bay, our office provides both the storm surge forecast and the storm tide forecast so emergency managers and the public alike can make preparations when a storm surge is forecast.

Improving and Enhancing NWS Tallahassee

By: Ron Block, Lead Forecaster

The Tallahassee Weather Forecast Office conducts a wide range of activities in pursuance of its primary mission to save lives and protect property. This includes forecasts and warnings familiar to spotters. However, in order for this office to best fulfill its mission, these products must be issued in a concise, timely and meaningful manner that best conveys its message to you, our users. Our office has developed a set of teams that reviews and enhances the main programs, such as tropical, aviation, marine, and fire weather. Each of these programs is led by one or more meteorologists who ensure that products issued under this program are consistent with NWS Policy.

Many operational concerns overlap more than one topical program. It is our job to listen to our users, like you and develop enhancements to our products that best convey the intended message. To ensure everyone within the office is on board with any changes, our office has an Operations Team. This team's primary goal is to solicit action items from the staff on any issue that impacts (or potentially impacts) office operations, and especially on items where there are differences of opinion and consistency is necessary.

Usually on a monthly basis, action items are solicited, a list is prepared, and a meeting is scheduled (open to all staff) where each item is discussed. These discussions and decisions made by the team are then presented to office management for review and modifications if necessary.

A sample of recent items tackled by this team are: how best to describe hail in a significant weather alert, what wind criteria to use to issue a significant weather alert, how best to reconfigure the office to maximize space, insuring NOAA weather radio proficiency checks, the most efficient methods to compose hurricane local statements, and most notably closely examining our office performance during Tropical Storm Fay and Hurricane Gustav.

This operations team remains one of the core programs and insures that staff are fully invested in optimum service to our users and that this office will continue to provide the most timely and effective products. Remember, we welcome feedback from spotters to improve any facet of our operations.

Do you have any questions about your National Weather Service Office in Tallahassee or about the weather in general? If so, we'd certainly like to hear from you. Also, if you have any suggestions for topics that you'd like to see in the newsletter, please send us an email at Kelly.Godsey@noaa.gov Thank you for all your support for the National Weather Service mission!