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ISSUE 40

Spring

2023



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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.

Looking Back at 2022

By Israel Gonzalez

There were plenty of notable weather events that affected the Tri-state area last year. We experienced two Arctic blasts (late January and late December), FL Panhandle wildfires in March, 19 tornadoes from March-April, two heat waves in June, Panhandle flooding in late May/early-September, Tropical Storm Nicole in early November, and drought conditions to end 2022.



Recapping 2022 Climate Summary

Tallahassee

<p>Mean temp: 69.2° (0.8° warmer than normal) warmest/coldest month: June/January last & first freeze: 3/13 & 10/20</p>	 Temperature
<p>Highest max temp: 104° on 6/24 Highest min temp: 79° on 6/18 Lowest min temp: 18° on 12/26 Lowest max temp: 36° on 12/24</p>	 Precipitation
<p>Annual accumulation: 58.39" (0.42" < normal) Wettest month: July (13") Most consecutive days of measurable rain: 11 (7/18-7/28) Driest month: October (0.22") Most consecutive days of trace amount or lower: 30 (9/12-10/11)</p>	 Temperature
<p>Notable Weather Events and Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Arctic blasts (late Jan & Christmas weekend) FL Panhandle wildfires in March 19 tornadoes from Mar-Apr (28 for the yr, 3 strong) Two heat waves in June FL Panhandle flooding in late May & early Sep Tropical Storm Nicole on 11/10 First widespread freeze of the season on 11/18 Drought conditions in final quarter of 2022 	 Temperature

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NWS Tallahassee

During the 2022 Hurricane Season, we had a close call with Hurricane Ian in early September, that went on to cause catastrophic damage in southwest and central FL. Only one tropical system

(Nicole) directly affected us, but impacts were minimal. For severe weather, there were a total of 28 confirmed tornadoes across the Tri-state area of which 3 were strong. The strongest tornado was an EF-3, 150 mph in Washington-Jackson Co. on 3/31. No tornadoes directly impacted Tallahassee.

Pivoting to annual climatology, Tallahassee was warmer than normal during 2022 with an average mean temperature was 69.2°. The highest max temperature of the year was 104° on June 24th (1° shy of tying the all-time record from June 15, 2011) while the coldest min temperature was 18° on December 26th, lowest since January 4, 2012. June was the warmest month with an average temperature of 83.7° whereas January was the coolest month with an average temperature of 51.1°. The last freeze of the season was on March 13th (late by 5 days), while the first freeze of the season was on October 20th (early by 35 days). Tallahassee saw near-normal rainfall during 2022 with a total accumulation of 58.39". July was the wettest month (usually June) when 13" of rain fell, although June 25th was the wettest day of the year at 3.62". Conversely, TLH only measured 0.22" in October, easily making it the driest month of the year (usually April). The most consecutive days of measurable precipitation were 11 from July 18th-July 28th in contrast to the 30 straight days of a trace amount or lower from September 12th-October 11th; a precursor for the aforementioned drought.

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Winter Highlights *By Israel Gonzalez*

From abnormally warm to bitter cold...December was a roller coaster ride that began with record high temperatures at the end of the 1st week with abnormal warmth ahead of a potent frontal system that brought severe weather to the Tri-state area mid-month. The latter notably produced 3 confirmed tornadoes; the strongest was an EF-2 (120 mph) in Colquitt Co., GA. Thankfully, there were no injuries or fatalities. An Arctic blast then brought bitter cold conditions during Christmas week-end, which was accompanied by multiple record/near-record frigid temperatures that dropped to as low as the teens with some locations staying at or below freezing on the 26th! Wind chill values even dipped into the single digits on Christmas Eve morning! Much warmer and slightly wetter conditions closed out 2022.

Tornadic start to 2023...January had very active convective weather that was responsible for 7 confirmed tornadoes. Fortunately, there were no injuries or fatalities. One prominent storm produced an EF-1 tornado in Henry County, AL on the 12th. Three more tornadoes were confirmed from a severe weather event on the 22nd, most notably an EF-2 in Walton County, FL. An ambient weather station also measured a wind gust of 92 mph, coincident with the Walton County tornado location. The final severe event of the month was from the 24th-25th. The results were several wind damage reports and another 3 confirmed tornadoes, including an EF-1 in southern Leon County, FL that lifted over the forest just southeast of the Tallahassee Airport. Otherwise, January was much warmer and wetter than normal.

Wet weather transitions to unseasonable warmth...February was defined by wet conditions from the 9th-11th and unusually warm weather in the final 6 days of the month. A multi-day heavy rain took place during the 2nd week when a front lingered across the Tri-state area, followed by a large area of low pressure pushing through the region. Observed 3-day rainfall totals were widespread 1-4", with a ribbon of 4-6" across the FL Big Bend and parts of southwest GA. The hardest hit locations were in Madison and Lowndes County, where between 6 and 8" fell. During that time frame, an EF-1 tornado (105 mph) touched down in Walton County, FL on the evening of the 9th. Gusty winds from the 11th-12th finished off the event when numerous inland gusts of 35-40+ mph were reported. The highest peak gusts occurred near Panacea and Horseshoe Beach, FL at 52-53 mph. February concluded on an absurdly warm trend that was responsible for multiple record/near-record daily and monthly temperatures. Tallahassee went on to break or tie 4 daily high temperature records between the 23rd and 28th with readings in the mid 80s! It was the 2nd warmest February on record by average mean temperature at 63.8°, trailing only 65.1° in 2018. The capital city also tied with 2017 and 1927 for the 2nd highest number of 80° days at 10 (1st place is 13 in 1932) with no freezing days observed.

Winter Climate Summary: This past winter (December 2022-February 2023) was slightly drier and much warmer than normal. For Tallahassee, the average temperature was 59.1°, or 5° above normal. The highest max/min temperatures were 88°/70° on 2/28, which made for the warmest February day on record by average temperature. Moreover, that high temperature fell 1° shy of the all-time monthly record from 1948! The lowest max temperature of 36° was observed on Christmas Eve, a daily record coldest high. There were only 12 freezing days, while the sixteen 80° days became the 3rd highest number on record for the winter season. The coldest temperature was 18° on 12/26, a new daily record low and the 1st such reading since 1/4/2012. Shifting to precipitation, Tallahassee had a seasonal accumulation of 12.66", or about a quarter-inch below normal. The normal Spring (March-May) average temperature/rainfall is 67.9°/12.13".

Winter Climate Summary Tallahassee 2022-2023

	Actual	Normal	
Average temp	59.1°	54.1°	
Highest temp	88°	82°	
Lowest temp	18°	20°	
Total rainfall	12.66"	12.93"	
Freezing days	12	22	
80-degree days	16	5	
Spring Normals	67.9°	12.13"	

Goodbye
WINTER

National Weather Service Tallahassee

Staffing Update by Felecia Bowser

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

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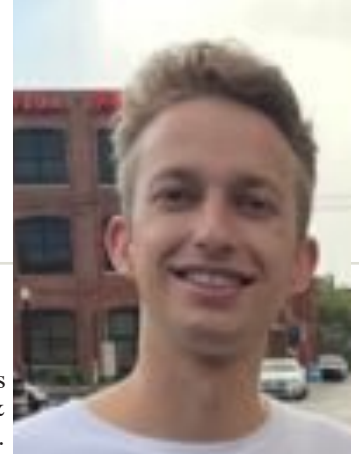
mark.wool@noaa.gov



The main staffing update was the promotion of Molly Merifield (*pictured left*) to Lead Forecaster in January, which fills in the vacancy from the departure of former Lead, Jessica Fieux. She is also working hard to receive her M.S. in Emergency Management, which she will complete later this year. Molly is our Diversity/Leadership/BLAST Team Lead, Tropical Co-Lead and part of several teams (Science Team, SDM Team, Student Volunteer Team, just to name a few. Molly is passionate about diversity and inclusion, and in creating a happy and healthy office environment. Molly's promotion now opens up a Meteorologist spot that we hope to fill soon. We are also looking forward to getting another ET on board some time this year.

Employee Spotlight: Joe Worster

We are focusing on meteorologist, Joe Worster (*pictured right*), who joined us late last year. He hails from Ohio as a Buckeye alum and brings his enthusiasm for weather to our office. His synoptic & mesoscale meteorology expertise combined with a great attitude makes for a nice addition to the team. Get to know Joe better in the Q&A section below.



1. How did you become interested in meteorology? I really became interested in meteorology during my second year of college at the University of Dayton when I realized how unbearably bored I was with electrical engineering. My roommate's friend from home mentioned that he was a storm chaser and shared how he would use Pivotal Weather to forecast, so I started playing around with it during my spare time and was hooked once again. A few months later that summer, I decided it was time to change majors to meteorology which Dayton did not have, and I transferred to (the) Ohio State University to pursue this dream.

2. Who were the people that helped you pursue a career with the NWS? The first two I can think of would be Ariel Cohen, the MIC out in Los Angeles, and Harry Weinman at the Storm Prediction Center. I met Ariel right after I transferred to tOSU when he came to our meteorology club to host a severe storm forecasting workshop. During this, he mentioned that he was from the same Columbus suburb that I grew up in which immediately led to some awesome conversations about what growing up in Worthington was like for us. Ariel was basically my mentor throughout college and still helps me with so much to this day. I met Harry through Ariel in 2020 and he has also been a spectacular mentor throughout my career. Aside from being great mentors, they have also been amazing friends to me over the past few years and I am so glad that I met them. However, we cannot forget the "Ohio State Flood Chasers" squad which formed after High Street flooded to the point where it was nearly impassable. Mitchell Lazarow and Geddy Davis are pretty much the best type of people you could meet in your undergraduate career. It's quite rare that you come across two people who are as supportive, motivational, and fun as these guys and I probably wouldn't be here without them always pushing me to be the best that I can be.

3. What is it like to storm chase? Storm chasing is definitely not for the faint of heart and I don't think anyone can actually predict how they'll react when they see something intense. Most of my chases have been about 95% driving with a "success" rate of about 16% since I've been on maybe 12 chases or so? Granted not all of them were "tornado days", but I think that most believe that you'll actually see something most of the time when that's not really the case. When you actually do get to see a tornado, lots of different emotions and feelings hit you like an absolute truck. It makes you feel so insignificant in the larger scope of things and makes you really feel the true power that nature can unleash, and there's nothing quite like it (when you're a safe distance away). While it's cool for a brief moment, it's also pretty unnerving when you come to the realization of how it can impact life and property, introducing fear into the millions of things you may feel when seeing a tornado. Thankfully neither of the two tornadoes I saw were fatal and did extremely minimal damage, but it is important to understand that we need to be sensitive and understanding to those who live in the risk area and ready to offer assistance if needed. That probably doesn't make it sound too fun, but trust me when I say that there's nothing like seeing a dusty stovepipe over open fields.

4. How does Ohio compare to Tallahassee? Well, it's a lot colder and there's a lot more corn up there (see: Frantz Park Corn Sculptures). Tallahassee is definitely different from Columbus and the Florida I knew during the brief time I lived in Orlando, but you really can't beat the weather down here. I'm a huge fan of winters that don't get cold, so I am having a great time living here. It's also nice being within driving distances of multiple beaches for once and no, Lake Erie does not count.

5. Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests? I have been playing volleyball for around 9-10 years now so I'm always trying to find somewhere to play indoor ball or hit up the sand courts at Tom Brown. If I can't find anyone to play, I'll either play some frisbee golf or I'll hit the gym so I can make sure I'm staying as active as possible. I am a pretty avid gamer and like playing MMO's and racing games like Need for Speed and Forza, but my first love was Pokemon all the way back in first grade and I still play them to this day. Lastly, I love photography and I wish I was able to do it more (hopefully I'll get some cool shots in May!).



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
Blair Scholl
Andy Haner
Karleisa Rogacheski
Molly Merrifield

Forecasters

Lance Franck
Wright Dobbs
Eric Bunker
Israel Gonzalez
Kristian Oliver
Jasmine Montgomery
Cameron Young
Joe Worster
Vacant

Pathways Interns

Becca Darish
Sophie Bignault

Electronic Technicians

Aaron Basti
Vacant

Winter Outreach Efforts

By Mark Wool

Meteorologist-in-Charge, Felecia Bowser gave a weather briefing to the Apalachee Local Emergency Planning Committee (ALEPC) on December 1st. The office participated in the annual SKY-WARN Recognition Day on the 2nd and 3rd. On the 6th, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Mark Wool briefed the Big Bend Healthcare Coalition (BBHCC) and then drove to Montgomery, AL to be a panelist at the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers' Winter Weather Workshop. On the 7th, forecasters Lance Franck and Cameron Young briefed at the quarterly FL Region One meeting of emergency managers (EMs). Forecaster Andy Haner attended a similar meeting of Alabama Division B EMs. The next day, Andy and Mark presented a StormReady recognition certificate to Dale County, AL's Emergency Manager, Willie Worsham at a county commissioner's meeting. On the 16th, Mark and forecaster Jasmine Montgomery manned a booth at a chilly Christmas in Dixie event in Dixie County FL. On the 19th, several staff from the NWS office toured the air traffic control tower, the Doppler radar and automated surface observing system at the Tallahassee International Airport.

In January, we invited EMs from FSU and FAMU to tour the office. Mark gave a tour to a family on the 11th. On the week of the 16th, Mark attended a Hazardous Materials Symposium in Daytona Beach, FL where he received the Thomas Yatabe Award for excellent service to the ALEPC. On the 19th, forecaster Blair Scholl briefed EMs at a Georgia Area 2 meeting in Thomasville, GA.

In February, Fire Weather Program leader, Andy Haner briefed at the annual Florida Forest Service Cooperators' Meeting in Bay Co. on the 2nd. On the 3rd, Mark was interviewed by WTXL on the *Picture Climate Change* Photo Contest. From the 6th-10th, the office observed Severe Weather Awareness/Preparedness Week with several interviews, social media posts and even tornado drills on the 8th. Mark briefed the BBHCC on the 7th in Havana, FL. On the 16th, Mark and Jasmine conducted Basic Spotter Training for a Wakulla Co. ARES group in Crawfordville, FL. Finally, the week of the 27th, our office worked with NWS Mobile to observe the 3rd Annual Gulf [Coast Rip Current Awareness Week](#).

The Hurricane Awareness is Tour Coming

HURRICANE AWARENESS TOUR



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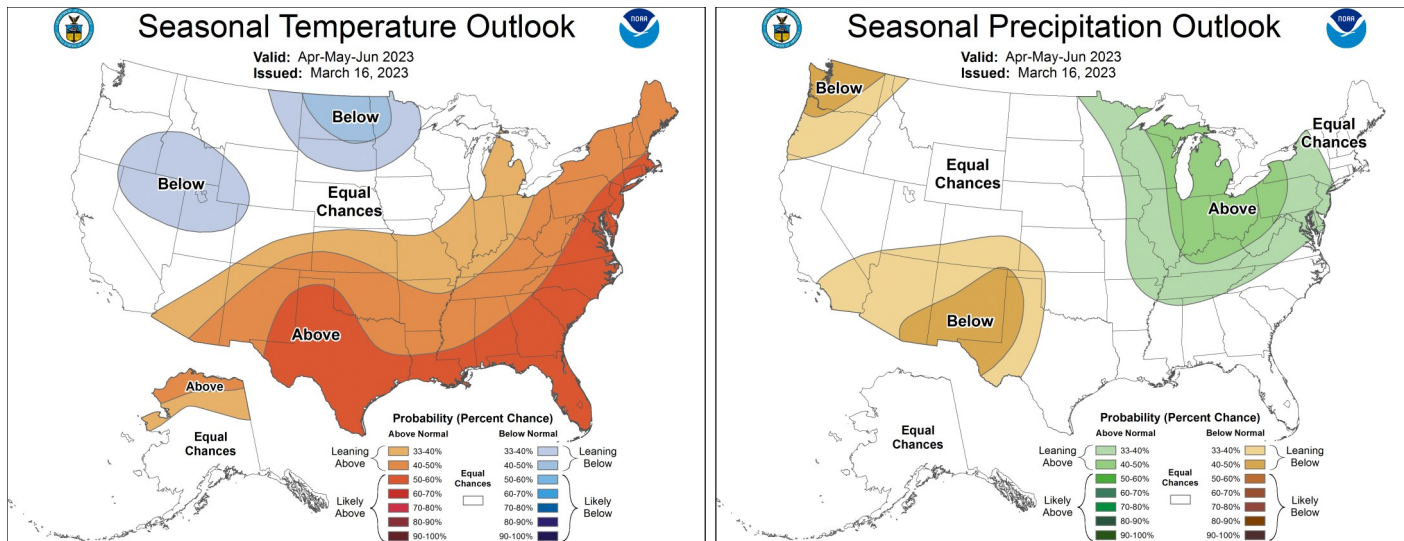
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- ☞ Learn about hurricane preparation and safety!

Thursday, May 4th, 2023

Don't miss out on your chance to tour hurricane hunter aircraft when the Hurricane Awareness Tour comes to Tallahassee International Airport on Thursday, May 4th! See our website for details. [Hurricane Awareness Tour - Tallahassee](#)

State of ENSO and Climate & Drought Outlook for Spring 2023, by Israel Gonzalez



After nearly being continuous for more than 2 years, the La Nina signal characterized by cool sea-surface temperature (SST) anomalies in the Equatorial Pacific has weakened below advisory limits [as of March 9th](#). Conditions are now ENSO-neutral, which look to persist this spring through at least early summer, with elevated chances of El Nino (warm SST anomalies) developing thereafter. The latter usually favors below-normal Atlantic hurricane activity as prevailing vertical wind shear tends to increase across the basin.

Looking ahead towards the Spring months, the Climate Prediction Center has probabilities favoring above-normal temperatures (*upper-left figure*), particularly along/south of the FL state line at 50-60%. Meanwhile, equal chances, or 33%, are in place across the Southeast US for above/below/near-normal precipitation (*upper right figure*). The normal high/low temperature at Tallahassee during the Spring is 80.6°/55.3°, while the seasonal rainfall accumulation is 12.13". On average, Spring is the 2nd warmest and driest season of the year. Much of the climate is modulated by frontal systems, the position of surface high pressure, and thunderstorms. Severe weather should also become more prominent over the next couple months.

So far this year, the lowest percent of normal for precipitation is concentrated across the FL Panhandle, around the Tri-state border, and the Suwannee Valley. Such conditions have prompted the re-introduction of moderate drought to those locations. However, the US Seasonal Drought Outlook (*bottom-right figure*) has drought removal likely through June. These are welcoming trends, but like most droughts, it sometimes takes flooding to cause improvement. The latest [Spring Outlook by NOAA](#) has placed the region in a risk for minor flooding at some point (or 50% chance, *bottom-left figure*) through May. Currently, Apalachicola River—Blountstown, and parts of the Flint River are in minor flood stage from recent heavy rains. Looking at the long-term flood risk from April-June, there all rivers have a below 50% chance of flooding.

Lastly, we are in the midst of a distinct period of severe weather season in the early spring months of March and April when stronger cold fronts occasionally move through and provide the wind shear necessary for severe weather in the form of tornadoes and damaging wind gusts. Therefore, it is imperative that you [stay prepared](#) as all modes of severe weather are worth preparing for!

