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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.

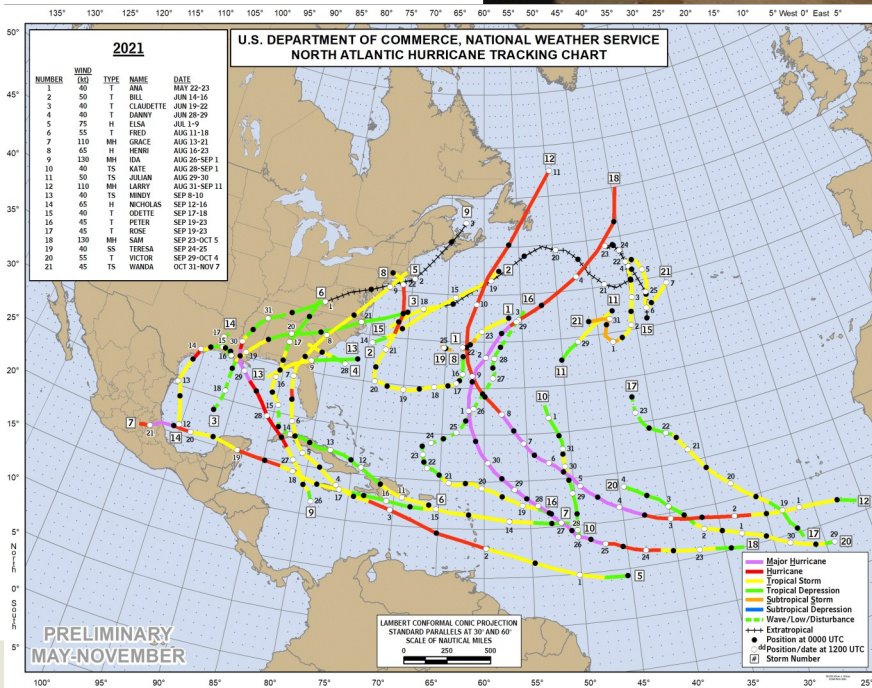
Hurricane Season End Review By Israel Gonzalez

We pick up where we left off on the previous issue of the newsletter by discussing Hurricane Ida, which was by far the biggest highlight this year as it rapidly intensified into a high-end category-4 hurricane in the central gulf before barreling into LA with max sustained winds of 150 mph, eerily on the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall (8/29). Ida carved a damaging path that stretched all the way into the Mid-Atlantic states, where unfortunately 95 fatalities were reported. Ida's remnants were also responsible for three EF-0 tornadoes in portions of our southeast AL counties on 8/31. In terms of records, Ida is the 4th-costliest US hurricane at ~\$65B and tied with Laura (2020) for the strongest hurricane to affect LA. The devastating and widespread impacts will likely earn a retirement of the name by the World Meteorological Organization.



September went on to be the last active part of the season when 9 named storms developed, of which 4 were notable: Larry struck Newfoundland as the first hurricane to strike that region since Igor in 2010; Mindy quickly developed into a short-lived tropical storm just before landfall south of Tallahassee (more on next page); Hurricane Nicholas hit TX and was the last US landfall of the season; Sam became the 4th-longest duration hurricane of at least category-3 intensity (8 consecutive days) since the satellite era began in 1966. The remainder of the season only saw Tropical Storm Wanda form in the north Atlantic on Halloween, exhausting the original name list for the 2nd consecutive year.

The final tally for the season was 21 named storms, 7 hurricanes, 4 major (*figure*), good enough for 3rd place on the activity rankings. The US experienced 8 total landfalls, 3 of which occurred in the NWS Tallahassee forecast area (Elsa, Fred, Mindy). For the 7th consecutive time, we saw premature tropical development prior to the official June 1st start. Overall, this season was very active once again, despite taking an early vacation after Wanda. Until next year...



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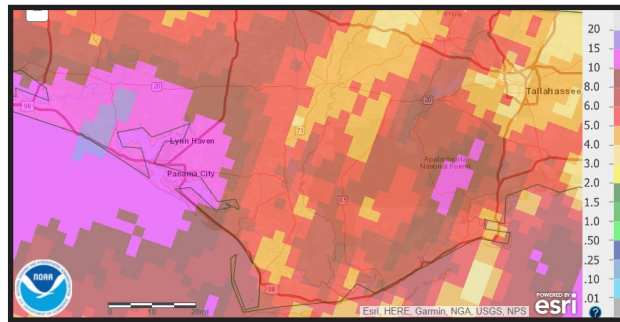
weather.gov/tae

Autumn Highlights *By Israel Gonzalez*

September was highlighted by Tropical Storm Mindy making a “surprise” landfall in St Vincent Island, FL on the 8th (*figure*), wet mid-month weather initiated by the remnants of Hurricane Nicholas from the west, and the first cold front of the season that fittingly arrived on the Autumn Equinox (9/22). The combination of those three highlights contributed to the strongest observed wind (40 mph), total rainfall (8.26”), and lowest minimum temperature (55°) for the month in Tallahassee. The latter was coolest temperature since May! Mindy was clearly the most memorable event of the month. The main impacts, albeit short-lived, were strong/gusty winds and pockets of heavy rain that led to isolated flash flooding in portions of the Panhandle, Forgotten Coast, and Big Bend. The highest rainfall totals in excess of 4” were mainly observed in Leon and Thomas Counties.



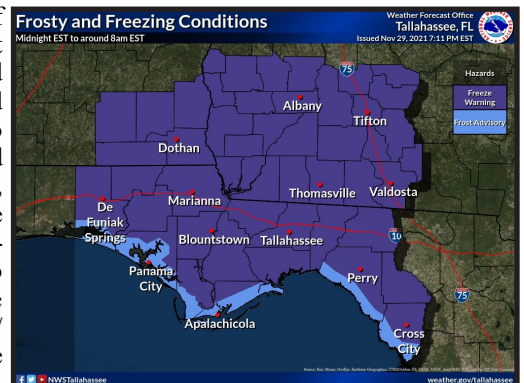
Peak tropical-storm force gusts were measured along and southeast of a line roughly from Cape San Blas to Tallahassee, with the strongest gust of 60 mph at the Tyndall AFB offshore C-Tower. A strong rain band west of Mindy’s center contributed to a 3.39” rain total in Tallahassee. There were also several reports of tree damage and power outages in the Capital City. The Mindy event page can be found here: https://www.weather.gov/tae/tropicalstorm_mindy2021.



October began with prolonged wet weather that led to considerable flooding across the FL Panhandle and was largely responsible for the wettest October on record for Panama City (ECP, *figure*) at 15.96”, which is 12.42” greater than normal! The second-wettest day on record also occurred at ECP on the 7th when 7.11” of rain fell, trailing only April 30, 2014. These events helped push ECP to already experience its wettest year to date at over 87”! Warm and dry conditions followed until a cold front caused a noticeable cooldown mid-month, more akin to autumn.

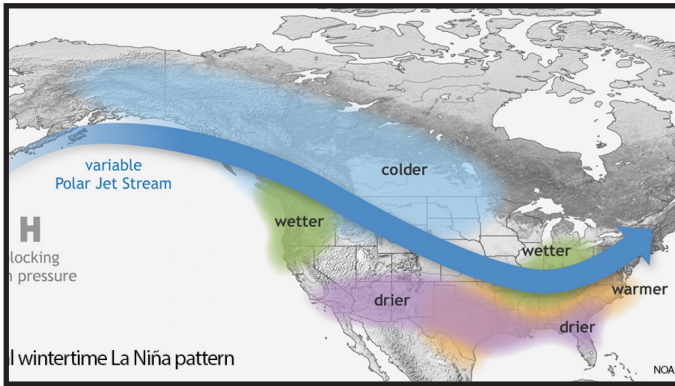
However, a stronger frontal system brought pockets of heavy rainfall to the Tri-state area late in the month, followed by two to three days of cloudiness, scattered showers, and very gusty winds. The latter produced several long-duration hazards that included high surf in the Panhandle, double red flag beach conditions, gale conditions offshore and along the coast, and minor coastal flooding in Apalachee Bay. Tallahassee reported a peak monthly wind speed of 30 mph, with a gust of 36 on the 28th.

November was defined by multiple instances of frost and freeze conditions beginning with the first Frost Advisory of the season generally north and west of Tallahassee on the 13th. The first inland freezes of the season occurred a couple days prior to and after Thanksgiving, with the most widespread freeze observed on the 30th (*figure*). As a result, NWS Tallahassee will no longer issue Freeze Watches/Warnings and Frost Advisories for non-coastal locations until March 15th, but continue to mention frost in the forecasts. We will always issue the more uncommon Hard Freeze Watches/Warnings for temperatures $\leq 23^{\circ}\text{F}$ if conditions are warranted.



Tallahassee November Climate Summary: Tallahassee was cooler and drier than normal during the month by 3° and 2.5”, respectively. The mean temperature was 57.2°. Tallahassee Airport’s lowest temperature reading was 27° on the 24th and 4 days at or below freezing were recorded. The highest temperature observed was at 81°, both on the 12th and 18th. Meanwhile, rainfall was largely absent, with only one day recording measurable precipitation (0.58” on the 5th). The conclusion of November also brought about the beginning of meteorological winter. Tallahassee was cooler and wetter than normal from September 1st-November 30th by 0.83° and 2.88”. The mean temperature was 69.07°, with a rain accumulation of 14.13” during that same span.

Winter Outlook by Israel Gonzalez



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A press release of the 2021-2022 US Winter Outlook by NOAA was published on October 21st and confirmed the return of La Nina conditions: <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/us-winter-outlook-drier-warmer-south-wetter-north-with-return-of-la-nina>. La Nina is defined by cool sea-surface temperature anomalies in the equatorial Pacific Ocean driven by stronger-than-normal prevailing easterly winds. This

ocean-atmosphere pattern favors the development of a persistent area of high pressure in the north Pacific and a variable jet stream in the Pacific NW and near the Great Lakes, thus leading to cool and wet winter conditions in those areas. Meanwhile, the southern US tends to experience warm and dry conditions as they lose influence from the Tropics and the synoptic system weather-makers aren't consistently in close enough proximity to us. Of course, other climatic patterns could offset La Nina, such as the North Atlantic Oscillation, in which a negative/cool phase yields better potential for bringing cooler conditions our way. The Climate Prediction Center has likely probabilities for above-normal temperatures and precipitation in the December Outlook and, for the remainder of the winter season. The normal December high/low temperatures in Tallahassee are 65.9°/42.9°, while the average monthly rainfall is 4.24". Lastly, we will keep a careful eye on rainfall trends as the drought monitor shows abnormally dry conditions for portions of the Tri-state area.

Staffing Update by Israel Gonzalez & Aaron Basti

Our newly appointed Meteorologist-In-Charge, Felecia Bowser officially moved from Jackson, MS to Tallahassee and made her office debut in late October. We look forward to interacting with her more personally as she continues to settle in. Meanwhile, the Information Technology Officer position will finally be filled before 2022 after a lengthy vacancy, and a new selection for a General Forecaster is forthcoming. These fillings will make us fully staffed, which is always good in a round-the-clock service such as the NWS.

The September Newsletter spotlighted one of our newer Electronic Technicians (ETs) and we are continuing the theme to close out this year. Aaron Basti (*pictured*) arrived from NWS Flagstaff, AZ and rounds out NWS Tallahassee's ET team. Get to know him better in the Q&A session below:

What sparked (pardon the pun) your interest in the ET field?

Honestly, I wanted to get into programming and computers, but the military had different plans for me. The Military put me on this track and it's seemed to have worked out so far. I can't imagine doing anything else.

What are some pros and cons to working as an ET?

Pros - Every day is different traveling from site to site encountering different issues. The sense of accomplishment you feel when you fix a tough problem.

Cons - Driving on the highway with trucks, one of these days a truck is going to get me.

How would you compare and contrast living in Flagstaff vs Tallahassee?

There's the obvious stuff like weather, It still feels like summer here and it's almost Christmas. The office environment is very similar and everyone seems to get along, so I've been lucky in that regard. It's definitely a lot cheaper living in Tallahassee and so far the community has been great. There's a lot more going on in Tallahassee, Flagstaff was like being on an island. I do miss all the national parks in the Flagstaff area and being able to ski every weekend. No hiking the Grand Canyon for work or helicopter rides to Supai Falls.



Rumor has it that you're an avid video game collector. Care to share some of your collection with us?

Rumor is true, I'm a nerd. I have over 36 unique home consoles and a few hundred games. I also started collecting/building/restoring Arcade cabinets and I have 4 of them. I would say my most notable is my working Atari 5200 with Wico Controllers. It's not that rare; it's just the first system I ever got as a kid and holds a lot of sentimental value, and it's also the first system to feature a pause button.

What hobbies and interests do you have outside of work?

I like to ski and hike (Tallahassee isn't the greatest for that). I plan on doing the bottom part of the Appalachian trail while living here and hopefully get a trip planned to hike part of the John Muir Trail in the next couple of years. Also promised my kids I would take them on at least one ski vacation a year (this year it's Washington State) Next year I'm thinking Telluride in CO if anyone is interested. I'm also a sports nut, especially baseball, and root for any team from Washington D.C.



Management-Admin Team

Felecia Bowser, MIC
Mark Wool, WCM
Parks Camp, SOO
Doug Sherrick, ESA
Jennifer Nichols, ASA
Pending, 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
Pending

Electronic Technicians

Aaron Basti
Marty Rieman

Fall Outreach Efforts

By Mark Wool

NWS Tallahassee staff conducted several online SKYWARN Spotter training sessions this fall. Service hydrologist, Kelly Godsey, taught two basic spotter training sessions on October 5th and an advanced course on November 30th. Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Mark Wool, and forecaster, Wright Dobbs both taught a basic session on November 3rd and 22nd, respectively. Additional training sessions are planned from late January through mid February. When scheduled, they will be posted to our [SKYWARN page](#).

We shared safety messages for fall severe weather awareness days in AL on October 20th and in GA on November 3rd. We posted winter safety messages during Alabama's Winter Weather Awareness Week in mid November.

On November 15th, Mark gave an interview to News Service of Florida's Tom Urban summarizing the 2021 hurricane season. On November 17th, the office hosted a virtual Integrated Warning Team (IWT) meeting. IWTs bring together meteorologists from the public and private sector (including television), as well as emergency managers and other government partners, to discuss ways to optimize the communication of weather forecasts, warnings and decision support. Over 72 partners participated from across AL, GA and FL. Additional information can be found in the December issue of the [NWS Aware Report publication](#). Finally on November 18th, Mark spoke virtually to a group of 5th-graders from the Tampa Bay area on forecasting hurricanes and what it's like to be a meteorologist.



Partner Spotlight: Ashley Davis

By Mark Wool

Ashley Davis is the very first director of emergency management to be hired at the Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. He is also an assistant vice president. Ashley started at FAMU in September after working for many years Bureau Chief of Response at the Florida Department of Emergency Management. He has also worked at the Florida Department of Transportation. Ashley pursued undergraduate and graduate degrees in Emergency Management at Florida State University. Ashley graciously agreed to be the first colleague interviewed for this new recurring article, Partner Spotlight. We asked him the following questions.

How did you get into emergency management?

The disaster that launched my career—Hurricane Ivan—preceded my professional field work, State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) experience, and disaster service. During the summer of 2004, I lived in Pensacola, Florida and operated a yacht club on the Gulf Coast. When Hurricane Ivan pummeled the city that summer as a strong Category 3 Hurricane, I was left without a home and a yacht club that had, quite literally, washed away. Soon after, I transferred to Tallahassee, Florida where I

studied Emergency Management and Homeland Security at the Florida State University at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In 2005, I was introduced to the SEOC during *Hurricane Wilma* and at that point realized I would dedicate my life to the emergency management profession. In 2006, I started my internship at FDEM.

What has been your most challenging experience in EM?

As we know every disaster is different and we must ensure that we work with all stakeholders pre and post event. In 2017 and 2018, the state of Florida faced severe wildfire seasons and back—to—back catastrophic hurricane seasons with Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Michael, and we stood strong with the support of our partners within the State Emergency Response Team. We focused on the mission to save lives and preserve property.

Describe your current position and how it differs from what you have done in the past.

In my current position, I assist in coordinating an emergency management team to prevent, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against disasters that could disrupt the University's operations. In my previous job, as the Bureau Chief of Response for FDEM, my duties included coordinating with the State Emergency Response Team across and supporting our sister states via mutual aid. There are many similarities at the University level and my vision is to build a comprehensive team of internal and external partners, foster relations with FAMU departments, fellow universities, county, state, volunteers, private sector, and federal partners.

Describe your relationship with the NWS.

In 2008, I worked closely with the NWS as the Hurricane Program Manager for FDEM. The NWS hosted trainings, supported exercises, participated in the hurricane evacuation study meetings, and deployed to the SEOC to support operations during weather events that impacted the state of Florida. The support of the NWS has been vital throughout my career in the emergency management. I have had countless in—depth conversations with the NWS regarding their perspective of the potential impacts of weather events threatening the state of Florida. A couple months ago, we had severe weather in our area during homecoming festivities. The NWS provided weather briefings for FAMU leadership as our university prepared to take protective measures.