



SUNCOAST OBSERVER

A quarterly newsletter brought to you by the NWS Tampa Bay Area, FL

Spring 2024

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Weather Impacts on Cruise Ships Coming into Tampa Bay

By: **Christianne Pearce**

On February 22nd, a group of NWS Tampa Bay team members met with members of Port Tampa Bay and the meteorologist for the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line. The main topic discussed was sea fog and its impacts on the Port and cruise ships. Port Tampa Bay discussed their procedures for making decisions in the event of sea fog and the Royal Caribbean meteorologist discussed his role in helping the cruise ship operators come to a decision on what to do when sea fog threatens the area. Team TBW discussed our decision tree on deciding when to include sea fog in the forecast.

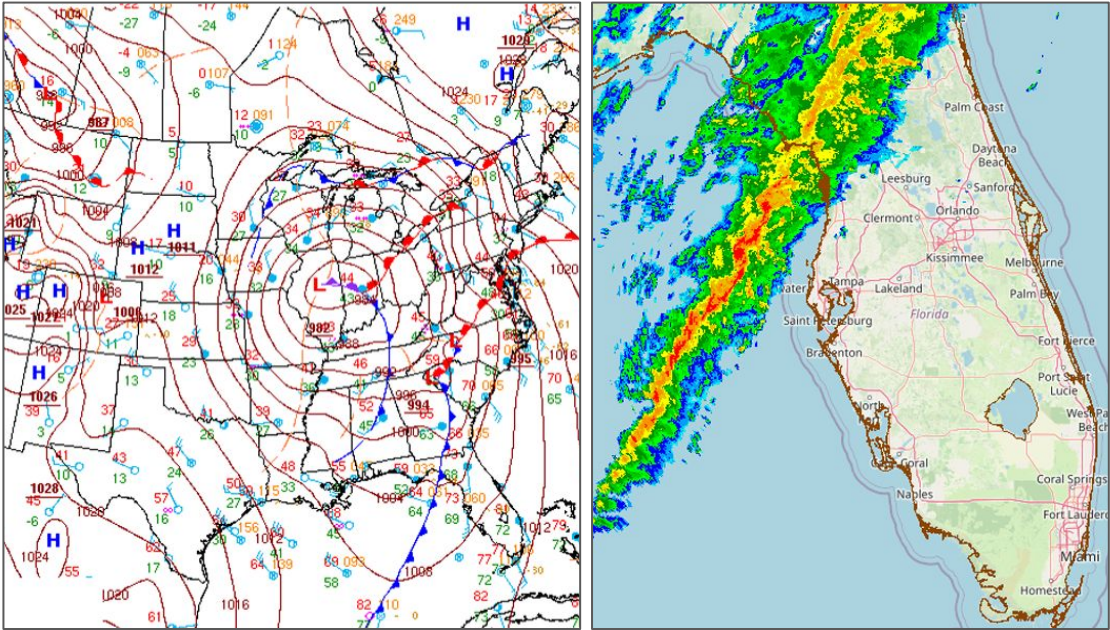
Overall, everyone left the meeting with a better understanding on how sea fog impacts different aspects of activity at the port, and more knowledge on how we forecast for fog here at TBW. After the meeting, everyone from the meeting was invited onto the Radiance of the Seas for a tour of the bridge and a chance to talk with the captain and other officers of the ship. The captain shared how wind in Port Tampa Bay is a big factor when docking their ships which was valuable information to walk away with. It was a very informative meeting with new relationships formed.

January 9th Severe Weather Event

By: Austen Flannery

Event Overview:

On January 09, 2024 a potent storm system moved across the Florida peninsula. As the storm system approached, a warm and humid air mass lifted northward over the state. Just ahead of the cold front, a squall line pushed through the region producing an EF-1 tornado in Northern Hillsborough County, an EF-0 tornado in Pinellas County, and damaging straight-line winds in Sarasota County, FL.



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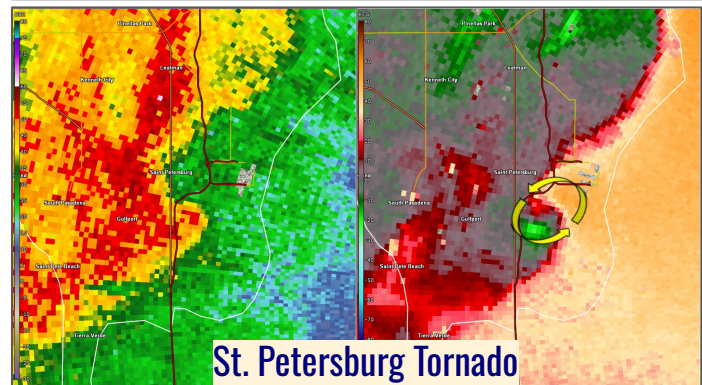
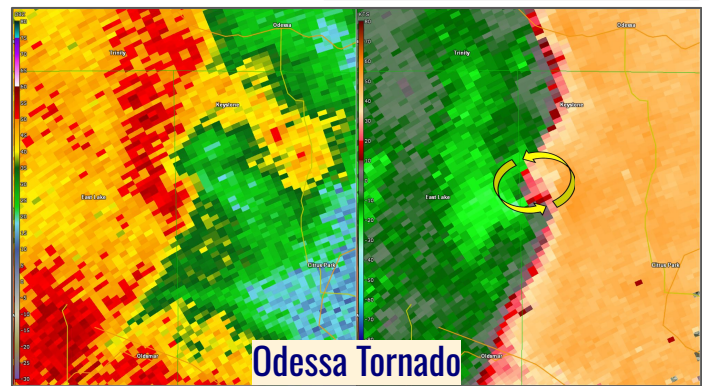


Significant Weather Impacts - Tornadoes & High Wind

As the line of storms moved through, two tornadoes developed, one in Hillsborough County and one in Pinellas County. These tornadoes were rated an EF-1 and EF-0 respectively.

For winter time squall-line events, Meteorologists employ a methodology known as the “three-ingredients” method. If certain features are noted in a favorable environment, Meteorologists will issue a tornado warning for that segment of the line. An important note: strong rotation may not be present when a warning is issued. Despite a clear signature on radar, the St. Petersburg tornado was very brief with a small damage path.

In addition to the two tornadoes, a straight-line wind event occurred in Sarasota County. Peak winds of 75 mph caused damage in the Fruitville area just east of I-75. Unlike the tornadoes, the baseline conditions were met for a severe thunderstorm warning, but the line lacked additional concerning features to warrant a tornado warning.



Administrative Team

Brian LaMarre, MIC
Steve Duaine, ESA
Matt Anderson, SOO
Ross Giarratana, OPL/Met
Jennifer Pierson, ASA
Ernie Jillson, ITO/Met

Senior Meteorologists

Paul Close
Rick Davis, IMET
Jennifer Hubbard
Nicole Carlisle
Tyler Fleming
Eric Oglesby

Meteorologists

Rodney Wynn
Stephen Shiveley
Keily Delerme
Tony Hurt
Austen Flannery
Christianne Pearce
Ali Davis

Electronics Technician Team

Bobby Gianino
Josh Campbell



Staff Spotlight: Eric Oglesby

Meet TBW's newest Senior Meteorologist!

Eric started his National Weather Service career at the San Francisco, CA office in Monterey in April 1993. Not long after his time in California, Eric was promoted to the General Forecaster position at our office in Ruskin in November 1994. In 1998, Eric transitioned to a new role at our office, the Service Hydrologist position.

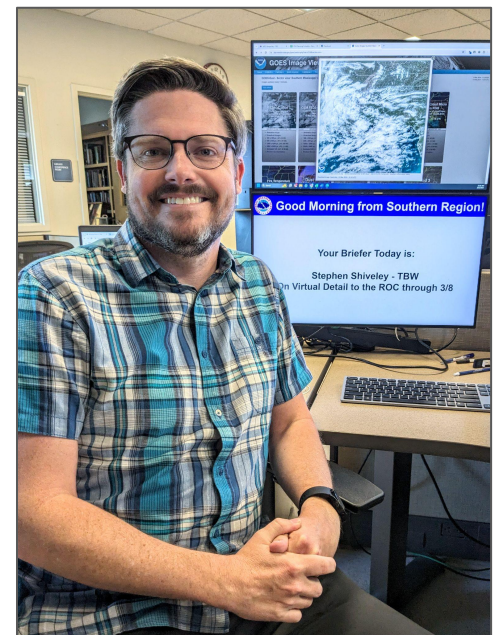
From the time I was in grade school, I always wanted to be a meteorologist and was lucky enough to fulfill that dream. My passion has always revolved around synoptic meteorology. Growing up in southern New England, we had our share of diverse hazards including blizzards, flooding rains, hurricanes, as well as severe thunderstorms. My first job as a meteorologist after graduating college was in the Air Force and included being stationed in Louisiana, Germany, and a remote location in Saudi Arabia, where we had no climatology to draw from. Each location had its own unique challenges, which is what I have always loved about the weather. And then I was on to the NWS in San Francisco, Monterey, and finally Tampa, initially as a forecaster but then as the service hydrologist.

The event I'm most proud of working as the hydrologist was the potential breach of the emergency spillway at the Manatee Dam in 2003. I worked with Emergency Managers and Dam operators for nearly 30 continuous hours until the threat had been resolved. I really look forward to getting back to the met side of the house as my core job, because that is where my passion truly lies. Operational meteorological analysis and radar operations are crucial during significant weather events, and both of these are why I became a meteorologist in the first place.

Virtual Southern Region ROC Duty Officer

For two weeks one of our meteorologists, Stephen Shiveley, was chosen to be the Virtual Regional Operations Center (ROC) Duty Officer for Southern Region. NWS Southern Region makes up one-quarter of the land on the contiguous United States and includes New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the eastern Caribbean. In this large area, 77 million people reside with more than 150 million visitors annually.

His main duties included assisting the 32 local field offices which included any request, problems, or coordination that was needed. He provided support to regional-level partners including state emergency managements and FEMA region 4 and 6. He also supported and assisted with NOAA and NWS leadership. Lastly, he worked on and presented Decision Support Services (DSS) throughout Southern Region including a daily Southern Region Awareness Briefing. In summary the ROC Duty office is the "hub" of communication for Southern Region and we are proud that one of our TBW Meteorologist was able to participate.



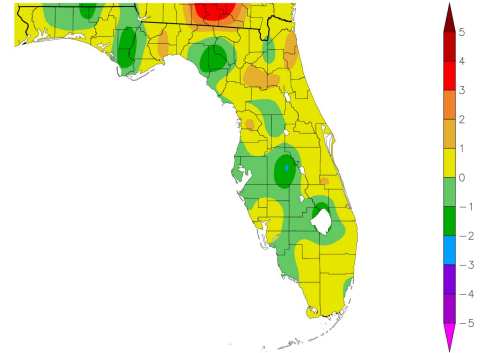
Winter 2023-2024 Climate Summary

By: Paul Close

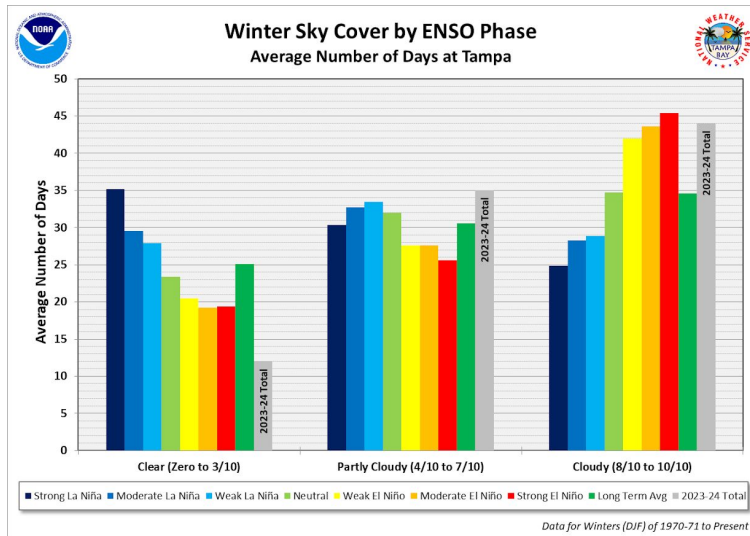
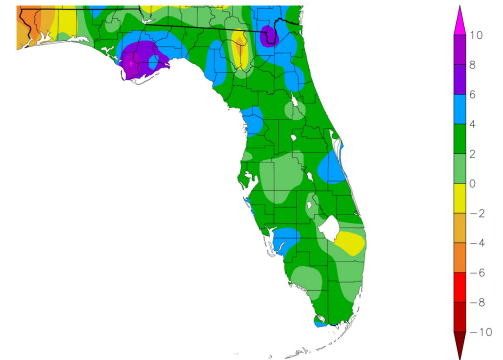
The ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation) switched from the La Niña of the last 3 winter to El Niño this winter, and potential could end up being one of the top five strongest since 1950. El Niño usually means that we'll see overall temperatures near to slightly below normal for the season while rainfall will be above normal. This overall pattern was accurate for most of West Central and Southwest Florida.

We saw some large swings in the temperatures during the winter with some rather chilly days where temperatures were 10 to 15 degrees below normal while others were 10 to 15 degrees above normal. This winter (Dec/Jan/Feb) was from about 1 degree below normal to about 1 degree above normal. Meanwhile, for the Winter 2023-2024 we saw near normal rainfall for interior locations to well above normal rainfall along the Nature Coast and in Southwest Florida. The Tampa Bay area ended up with 2-4 inches of above normal rainfall.

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
12/1/2023 – 2/29/2024



Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)
12/1/2023 – 2/29/2024



Sky cover, or the amount of clouds, varies from day to day, but there are some trends depending on the phase of ENSO. During El Niño conditions, like this past winter, we tend to have more cloudy days and less sunny days thanks to the jetstream being stronger and further south bringing storm systems across our area.

For Winter 23-24 (gray bar), the number of cloudy days (44) for Tampa was on par with what we would expect for a strong El Niño. The number of partly cloudy days (35) exceeded all averages.

Spring 2024 Seasonal Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

