



Prevailing Winds

November 2023

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Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach

by Bryce Williams

DAHH Skywarn Talk

On May 3, 2023, NWS-Boston/Norton, in partnership with the Learning Center for the Deaf in Framingham, MA, hosted a SKYWARN Weather Spotter training session specifically for the deaf and hard of hearing community. Forecaster and Skywarn Program Leader Bryce Williams and Warning Coordination Meteorologist Glenn Field gave this presentation. The session was fully accessible, with two skilled ASL interpreters from the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The presentation was modified to change slogans from things such as "when thunder roars, go indoors" to "if you see a flash, then dash inside." The length was shortened a little in order to give the interpreters adequate time between slides. We emphasized reporting avenues such as Twitter and the "Submit Storm Report" link on our website, as opposed to the phone number.



Bryce Williams holding a pillow shaker and strobe lights that are critical additions to NOAA Weather Radios

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach (Cont)

The deaf and hard of hearing communities in the United States are larger than one might think. According to the National Institutes of Health, as much as 13% of the U.S. suffers from some form of hearing loss. To put that into perspective, the population of southern New England is 11,730,744 (2020 census). If the national estimate is applied to this region, that would mean that more than 1.5 million citizens in southern New England would have some form of hearing loss!

This was our first attempt to provide severe weather training/education to this important, underserved community and although it was a small group, they were extremely attentive and excited for this opportunity.



WCM Glenn Field talking about lightning safety.

Hurricane Tabletop Exercise with Media Partners

By Frank Nocera

This June, NWS Boston/Norton participated in a media hurricane tabletop exercise led by Lead Meteorologist Frank Nocera. This exercise was the first of its kind, with all major media markets from Boston, Massachusetts; Hartford/New Haven, Connecticut; and Providence, Rhode Island, participating. It took place on June 14 with both virtual and in-person options, including two sessions offered to maximize attendance and accommodate three news shows (morning, noon, and evening broadcasts).

Thanks to our keynote speaker, Boston WCVB legendary TV meteorologist Harvey Leonard, participation was outstanding, with a total of 33 TV meteorologists from all three major TV markets! Harvey shared with us his recollections of Hurricanes Gloria (1985) and Bob (1991), the last landfalling hurricane in Southern New England. His news station had dedicated a remarkable 10 consecutive hours during Hurricane Bob to provide comprehensive storm updates. Such an undertaking is undoubtedly daunting and physically demanding.

This same exercise was conducted last spring with State and Federal partners, including State Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) from MA, CT & RI, FEMA Region I, the U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This year, we continued building a coalition by furthering our relationship with our media partners. The scenario was a Category 3 hurricane that made landfall along the CT/RI, similar to Hurricane Carol in 1954. The name was Hurricane Thompson, paying homage to NWS-Boston's retired MIC Bob Thompson. This was an effort to educate and increase our situational awareness of evacuation zones after the tragic loss of life associated with Hurricane Ian in southwest Florida September 2022, where findings indicated that residents did not know the difference between evacuation zones or if they lived in one.



BOX staff and partners



Virtual Tabletop Exercise

Rhode Island Preparedness Conference

By Frank Nocera

Following the success of the tabletop exercise, WFO Boston/Norton participated in the 2023 Rhode Island Annual Preparedness Conference in East Providence on June 23. Meteorologists Bryce Williams and Frank Nocera presented a slideshow on weather resources for the Emergency Management Community focusing on a demo of the new WFO Emergency Management (EM) self briefing page created by ITO James Notchey and WCM Glenn Field. Also shared with EMs was an IDSS page for EMs to request weather support. A demo was also provided for fire weather spot forecasts.

NWS Director Ken Graham was one of the keynote speakers at this conference. Marc Pappas, Director of Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and Clara Decerbo, Director of Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) informed Ken during and after his presentation of their high praise for IDSS from WFO Boston/Norton to both of their agencies, including knowing many forecasters by name. Ken and both agencies gave WFO Boston/Norton a standing ovation!



From left to right: Justin Pullin, Bryce Williams, Frank Nocera, NWS Director Ken Graham, and Emily Klaus.



Bryce Williams presents information about DSS for Emergency Managers

Warning Coordination Meteorologist Glenn Field Retires

By Andy Nash

Glenn Field, WCM at WFO Boston/Norton, will be retiring Friday, August 25th, with 39 years of federal service, including 30 years at this office. A little historical tidbit about Glenn is that he is the last of the "original" WCMs hired into Eastern Region WFOs during the start of the Modernization effort. Glenn, like many in the NWS, was interested in weather from a young age, partially through his father who had a meteorology degree and worked as a ship-based meteorologist in the US Navy for several years. Glenn ended up getting his BS and MS degrees from the University of Wisconsin - Madison.



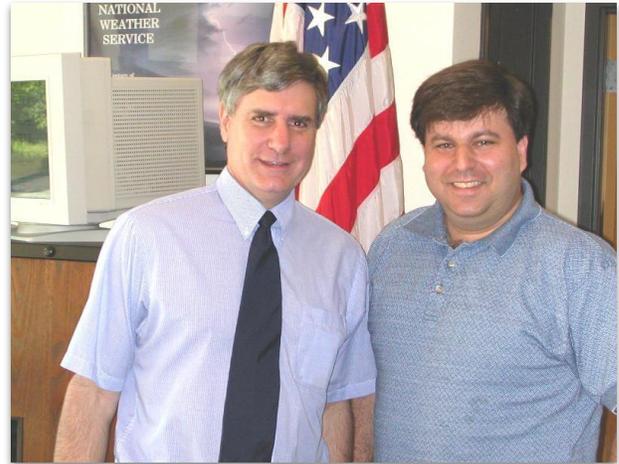
Glenn Field

He also earned a major in economics, and jokes that he has degrees in 2 sciences that you can't predict. From 1980 to 1983 he had summer internships with the NWS (in Jacksonville FL) and NESDIS (Redwood City CA and Camp Springs MD). In 1985 he started as a full time federal employee as a satellite meteorologist at the NESDIS Synoptic Analysis Branch in Camp Springs. In 1987 he moved over to the NWS, becoming a forecaster at the Milwaukee/Sullivan WI Forecast Office, as well as having the role of Warning Preparedness Meteorologist. In 1990, he was promoted to Lead Forecaster at the Raleigh NC Forecast Office. In 1993, he was promoted to the newly created position of Warning Coordination Meteorologist here in Boston.

In the 30 years since arriving at this office, Glenn has been involved in a tremendous amount of change and put considerable effort into service improvements that have benefitted the entire NWS.

Warning Coordination Meteorologist Glenn Field Retires (cont)

Within the office some of his most notable accomplishments have been: Leading the huge growth in the Skywarn Spotter program and bringing on nearly 8500 spotters during his tenure; Creating an active StormReady Program, including leading the effort in 2018 to have all towns and cities within Rhode Island designated as StormReady – making it the first state StormReady down to the community level; Leading major initiatives that created a robust DSS program beginning in the mid 1990s that resulted in the office having a long track record of providing on-site support for events such as Sail Boston, Boston Marathon and the Boston Pops 4th of July Celebration.



Glenn Field with former
MIC Bob Thompson

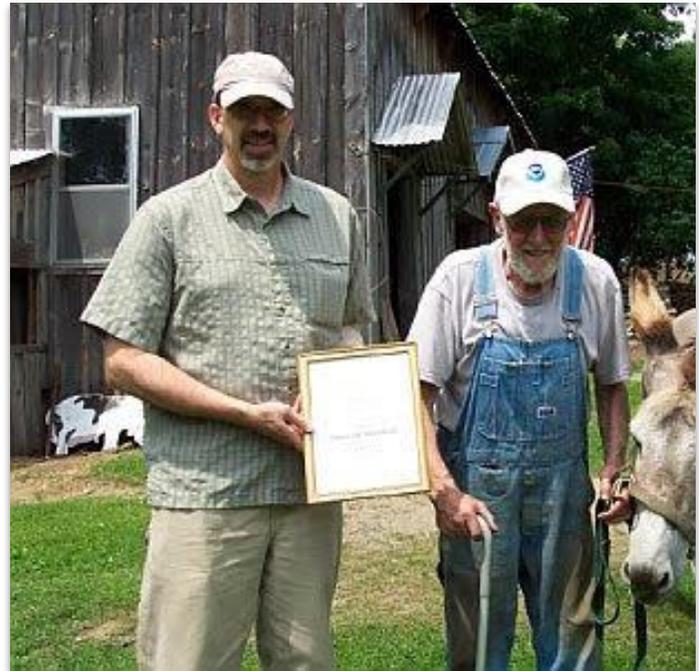
At the national level, Glenn has been instrumental in a number of national teams over the years, including the: Watch Decentralization team which developed the “Watch By County” concept, Severe Weather Algorithm Team which developed the SCAN software, Uniformity of Services Committee which reviewed NWS products across all regions and identified actions needed to make NWS products consistent nationwide, and the National Icon Team which reviewed public feedback on the national point and click forecast page to develop improved ways of displaying the forecast and watch/warning information in icon formats. Glenn was also heavily involved in organizing and moderating the annual Southern New England Weather Conference with the Blue Hill Observatory for 23 years.

As Glenn has looked back on his career, his hope is that his legacy will be that he worked well with people and helped them understand warnings and know what to do when severe weather strikes. As he put it, “If I was able to save a few lives, then my job was worthwhile!” We have already heard from a number of partners who have all expressed their deep gratitude for all the contributions Glenn has made to overall public safety and that they will miss their relationship with him. So I would say his legacy will not be soon forgotten.

Hydrometeorological Technician Bill Simpson Retires

By Andy Nash

Bill Simpson, HMT at WFO Boston/Norton, will be retiring on June 30th after 44 years of combined federal service to this country. Bill started his weather career with the Air Force from 1977 to 1986. During those 9 years, he was stationed in Arizona, Alaska, California and New Hampshire as a weather observer. His Alaska tour was way out on the tiny Aleutian Island of Shemya, nearly 1300 miles west of Anchorage where he did upper air balloon and rocket sonde launches. From 1981 to 1986, Bill was a forecaster assigned to both the George and Norton Air Force Bases, which are now closed.



Bill Simpson (left) presenting a CO-OP observer with a certificate.

In 1986 Bill left the Air Force and joined the National Weather Service at the now closed WSMO Chatham on Cape Cod, having the responsibilities as a WSR-74S radar operator and doing upper air balloon launches. Cape Cod is no stranger to big storms, but the one that Bill most fondly remembers was the February 1987 Nor'easter that had him work 30 hours straight because the office, located at the Monomoy Wildlife Refuge on Morris Island, was cut off from the mainland due to the road being impassable from coastal flooding and blowing and drifting snow.

The NWS modernization in the 1990s resulted in Bill transferring to the new WFO Taunton/Boston office as a member of the Hydrometeorological Technician staff. In the late 1990s, Bill became involved with the NWS Cooperative Observer program and took great pride in revitalizing and expanding the network in southern New England. That passion of Bill's is evident up to today and his departure will leave a big hole to the office Co-Op program, and I know all the volunteer observers will miss working with him.

Hydrometeorological Technician Bill Simpson Retires (cont)

Bill is also known as the office's "SWE Hunter", where he has worked closely with the NERFC and NOHRSC to measure and verify the late winter and springtime southern New England snowpack. Over the years, especially during those with a significant snowpack and potential for significant spring flooding, he typically spent extended hours doing solo snow surveys well into the evening and upon his return to the office would state: "I can't believe they pay me to do these surveys. I would do it for free!"

Bill will be retiring after 44 years of combined federal service to his home on Cape Cod. He is also considering doing the new "shuffleboard" retirement activity for active retirees and selling his home to travel in an RV so he can go mountain biking and skiing across the western US and up into Alaska --- as long as his knees play along.

Congratulations Bill on your retirement and thank you for your service to the country, the NWS, and WFO Boston for all those years!



Boston/Norton Office Gets a Facelift

By Frank Nocera

You may know that we moved into our brand new (at the time) building in Norton about five years ago, in May of 2018. Since then we've slowly but surely been making it our own. To that end it was decided that keeping our large, white walls blank just wouldn't do, and we began to brainstorm on how to decorate the hallways.

After consideration we decided on a mix of photos showcasing our beautiful County Warning Area (CWA) and recaps of historic southern New England storms. From the Great New England Hurricane of 1938 to Tropical Storm Irene and everything in between, a walk through our building will now take you on a journey into the past.



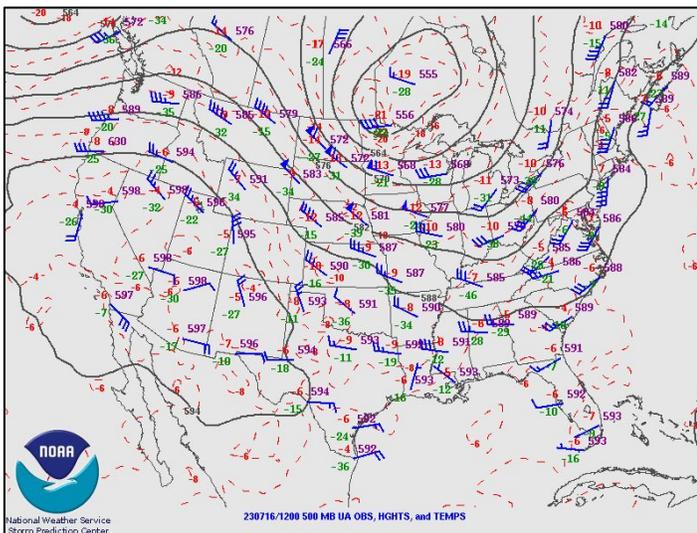
An Active Summer with Severe Storms and Flash Flooding

By Joe Dellicarpini

The summer got off to a quiet start in June but from the middle of July through August there were many instances of severe weather and flash floods in southern New England including more than a dozen tornadoes.

The jetstream pattern (below) featured a closed upper low over southern Canada which was a persistent feature in July and August. This “blocked” pattern maintained a flow of moist, tropical air from the south while also helping trigger showers and thunderstorms. Research done at our office over the past few years has shown this pattern to be especially favorable for flash floods and tornadoes.

In all, there were 13 confirmed tornadoes in the NWS Boston/Norton forecast area. The most notable was an EF-2 tornado that caused extensive damage in Scituate, RI on the morning of August 18. That tornado was part of an outbreak of five tornadoes that struck northeast Connecticut, Rhode Island and eastern Massachusetts. Another outbreak occurred in the same areas on September 13 when four tornadoes were confirmed.



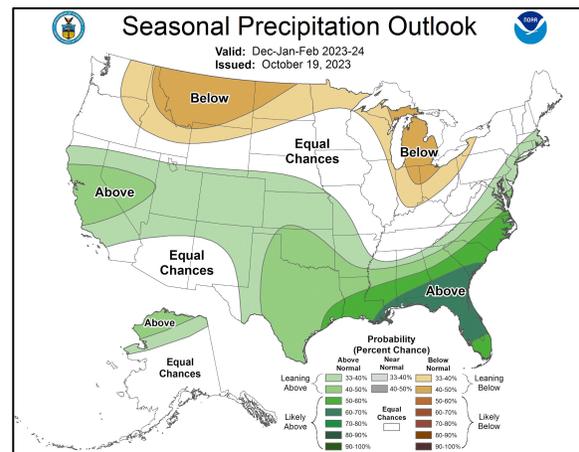
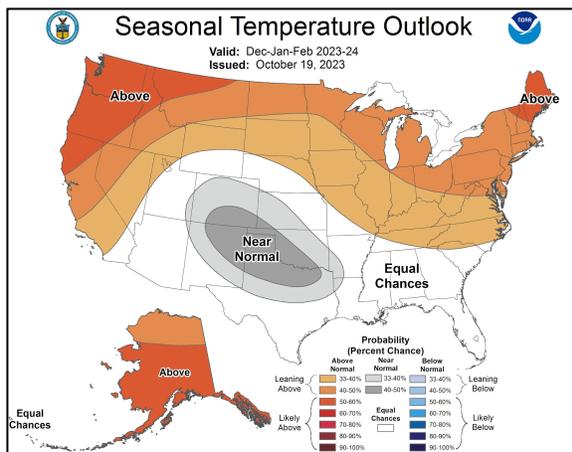
The dominant weather pattern was favorable for severe weather and flash floods

Winter Outlook

By Joe Dellicarpini

Will the upcoming winter be cold and snowy, mild and dry, or something in between? The main driver for this winter in the Northern Hemisphere is the return of El Nino, or warmer than normal ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. El Nino can influence weather patterns across the globe due to connections between the ocean and atmosphere.

In southern New England, there is no direct correlation between the presence of El Nino and its effects on winter, although they tend to be milder overall with near or below average snowfall and above average precipitation. Our winters are more driven by week to week changes in the position of the polar and subtropical jetstreams. However, during El Nino winters, the subtropical jet stream (often found near the Gulf Coast) tends to be more “energized” and can result in the formation of more coastal storms. Depending on how close the storms track to the East Coast, and how much cold air is available at the time, can result in significant snowstorms. Memorable snow storms such as the Presidents’ Day Storm in February, 1983 is one example.



NOAA’s Winter Outlook calls for odds favoring above average temperatures and a lesser chance of above normal precipitation

Winter Outlook

By Joe Dellicarpini

What about snowfall this winter? We can look at past historical data to get a sense of what we can expect for the upcoming winter in southern New England.

A strong El Nino is forecast to prevail through the winter months (December, January, and February) before weakening in the spring. How quickly this weakening occurs could have an effect on our seasonal snowfall as seen in the table below.

For strong El Nino winters, followed by slower weakening in the spring (to moderate El Nino), snowfall tends to be below average at all four climate sites but precipitation tends to be above average. This suggests more in the way of rain or ice as opposed to snow.

For strong El Nino winters followed by more rapid weakening in the spring (to weak El Nino), there is a signal that snowfall tends to still be below average, but closer to normal than with the slower weakening. In fact, seasonal totals across the interior end up fairly close to average. This tells us that the winter may persist a bit longer, with the potential for accumulating snow into March and April, especially inland.

	Boston, MA		Providence, RI		Hartford, CT		Worcester, MA	
	Snow(in.)	Precip (in.)	Snow(in.)	Precip (in.)	Snow(in.)	Precip (in.)	Snow(in.)	Precip (in.)
Strong-Moderate El Nino	32.8	36.20	25.3	41.71	40.1	38.03	57.1	39.15
Strong-Weak El Nino	40.2	34.21	30.8	36.38	47.5	33.38	69.4	35.29
Normal	49.2	33.20	36.6	37.23	51.7	34.49	72.9	35.97

Seasonal snowfall compared to average for Strong El Nino Winters



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The National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community.

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