



THE SOUTH TEXAS REGIONAL COCORAHS NEWSLETTER

NWS
Corpus
Christi



Spring 2011 Edition

Welcome to the spring edition of the CoCoRaHS newsletter!

by Christina Barron

"If you don't like the weather in Texas, wait a minute, it'll change" - seems so true over the past few months across South Texas, does it not?. From an expected typical La Niña dry winter to record rainfall in the month of January to hard freezes in early February, the weather sure did a lot of changing.

Even with all the changes, the one thing that doesn't change is the dedication of the CoCoRaHS observers. Your observations helped the National Weather

Service verify the intensity in amounts of rainfall that South Texas had during the month of January, as well as verify the amount of ice accumulation we had in early February. Here are a few of the observations that were recorded across South Texas:

Jan. 9th Rainfall Event		Feb. 3/4th Ice Event	
Location	Rainfall Amt	Location	Ice Accumulations (Thickness)
TX-WB-12	2.25"	TX-VC-15	1/4"
TX-CLH-3	2.22"	TX-NU-18	1/4"
TX-BEE-9	2.15"	TX-NU-45	1/10"
TX-DV-7	2.00"	TX-JW-5	1/16"

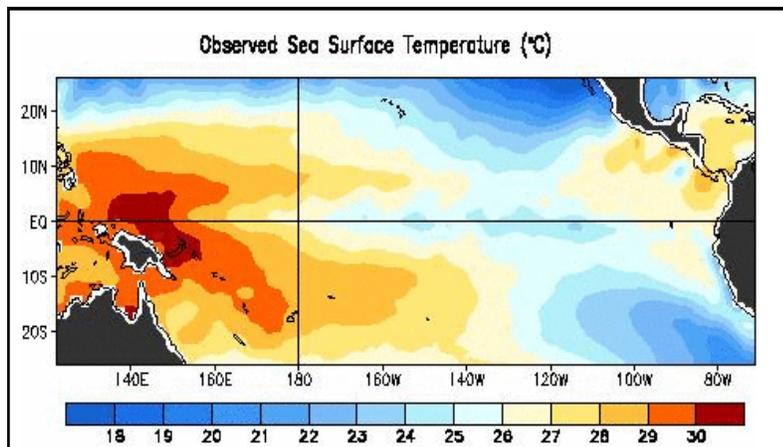
La Niña and Drought Season

by Christina Barron

Despite the abundant rainfall we received during the month of January, the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) reports the continuation of the La Niña season through Spring 2011. La Niña typically brings warmer and drier weather to South Texas during the winter and spring months, creating drought across the area.

La Niña features become evident in the equatorial Pacific waters, where

the eastern Pacific has cooler than normal waters and the western Pacific has warmer than normal waters. This change also changes the atmosphere over the northern Pacific, which in turns changes the weather



(continued on page 2)



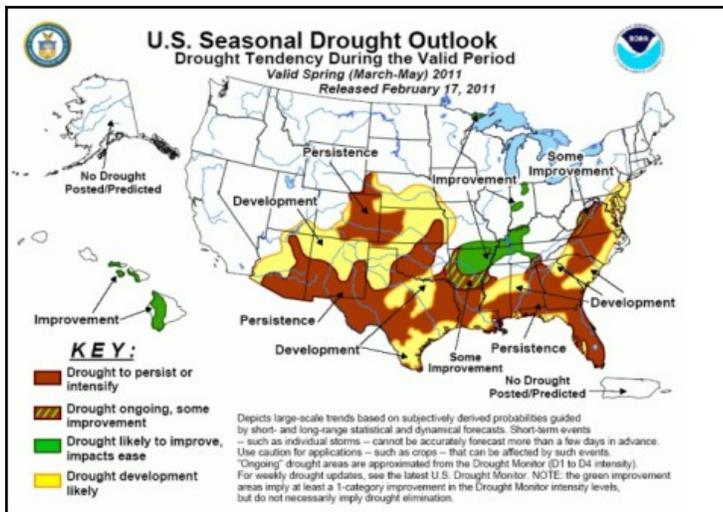
Inside this issue:

Welcome Message	1
La Nina and Drought Season	1
2010 Atlantic Hurricane Recap	2
SKYWARN Classes	3
Reporting Zero Rain	3
March Madness	3
CoCoRaHS on Facebook	4
Meet a Victoria County CoCoRaHS observer	4
National Weather Service Mission Statement and Brief History	5
Meet the South Texas Regional CoCoRaHS Coordinator observer	5



pattern over South Texas. These features have been prominent since late 2010. However, with the Arctic Oscillation (AO) not following the expected pattern, this allowed for a cooler and wetter January and February. With the AO now following its expected pattern, typical La Niña weather is in store for the rest of the winter and spring months. This will lead to increased drought conditions over South Texas. La Niña conditions are expected to end by the beginning of Summer 2011.

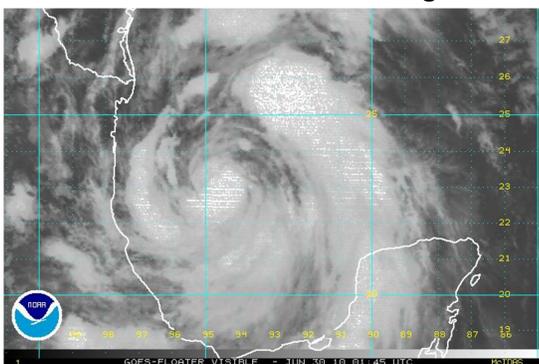
More information about the developing drought can be found at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/crp/?n=drought>.



2010 Atlantic Hurricane Recap

by Juan Alanis, Jr

Hurricane Alex 24 hrs before making landfall



the Rio Grande basin of northern Mexico, resulting in record flooding along the Rio Grande. At Laredo's International Bridge 1, the river crested at 42.45 feet on July 8th. Flood waters forced evacuations in low-lying areas of Laredo.

In September, Tropical Storm Hermine brought tropical force winds to areas west of U.S. Hwy 281, causing minor damage to signs, trees and metal structures. Rain totals ranged from 2 to 8 inches with the heaviest amounts in the northeast Coastal Bend areas. Hermine caused six deaths and an estimated \$240 million dollars in damage along its path through Texas and Oklahoma.

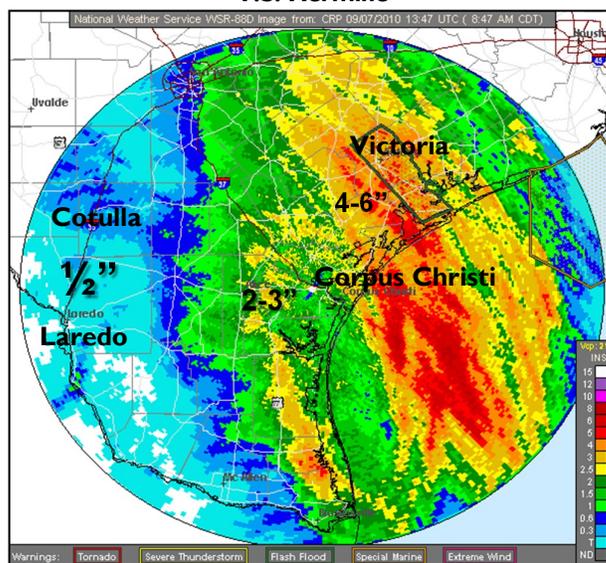
It was a very interesting 2010 hurricane season with 19 named storms developing, tying it with 1887 and 1995 for third highest on record. From these 19 storms, 12 became hurricanes and five reached "major" hurricane status.

The flurry of storms continues the trend of active seasons dating back to 1995. This year's activity was influenced by such factors as near record warm waters in the Atlantic, favorable winds coming off Africa, weak wind shear and La Nina.

Fortunately, no hurricanes made a direct landfall in the United States, thanks in part to warm and dry conditions in the eastern U.S. due to the positioning of the jet stream. This set up acted as a barrier and caused many storms to curve into the open Atlantic.

Here in South Texas, the highlights of the 2010 hurricane season included Hurricane Alex and Tropical Storm Hermine. Despite making landfall south of the border on June 30th, Alex brought tropical storm force winds from Cotulla to Port O' Connor as well as several tornadoes along the Coastal Bend. The storm also brought 10 to 20 inches of rainfall to

Storm Total Precipitation Radar Estimate from T.S. Hermine





SKYWARN Classes

by Christina Barron

What is SkyWarn? SkyWarn is a volunteer program comprised of nearly 290,000 trained severe weather spotters. SkyWarn spotters provide timely and accurate reports of severe weather to their local National Weather Service office. You'll learn what to look for when observing severe weather, as well as understand the development of severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and flash flooding.

How do I get involved?

Your local National Weather Service Office in Corpus Christi is extending an invitation for all of those interested in taking part in FREE SkyWarn training course. Courses are held during the late winter/early spring months before the peak of severe weather season. Training sessions will be held this spring at various locations across South Texas.

Please check out the following link for upcoming courses in your area: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/crp/?n=skywarn>

If there are currently no classes being offered in your area and you would like to see what SkyWarn is all about, please email Jason Runyen (Jason.Runyen@noaa.gov), Matt Grantham (Matthew.Grantham@noaa.gov) or John Metz (John.Metz@noaa.gov) and we can try to organize a course for your community.

Reporting Zero Rain

by Juan Alanis, Jr.

South Texas and the Coastal Bend region just went through a long dry period that began in late September. Dry weather obviously makes CoCoRaHS a bit boring with no rain to report. However, even in periods of drought, all observers are strongly encouraged to report "zero" rain. Your reports are very important. Unless you tell us that it did not rain at your location, we have no way to know for sure. These reports are used for drought monitoring purposes. Plus, stations that have more complete data are more likely be used for climate monitoring, analysis and research than stations with incomplete data.

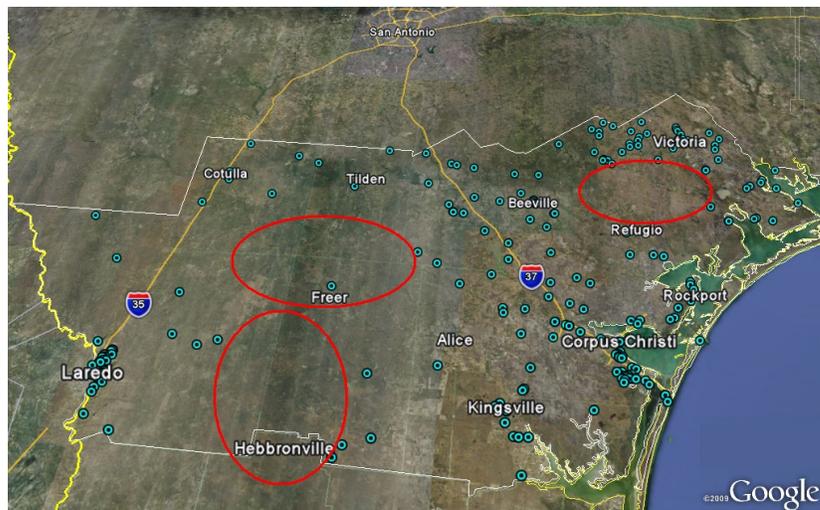
If you cannot submit your "zero" reports daily, than you can submit them weekly or monthly. Simply login and click on "Monthly Zero Report" and click on all the days that had no rain. It only takes a minute.

March Madness!

by Juan Alanis, Jr.

Yes, it is almost here....March Madness! Though, it's not the "madness" that is commonly known as the men's college basketball tournament — in this case, it is the annual CoCoRaHS recruitment drive!

Every March, CoCoRaHS encourages all observers to spread the word about the program, its importance and how easy it is, in order to recruit new observers. At the end of the month, CoCoRaHS will announce which state got the most new recruits. Obviously Texas is a large state, but it takes all of us to help spread the word and recruit. We need many more observers across our region, especially southeastern Webb, Duval, Jim Wells and McMullen Counties, as well as areas between the cities of Refugio and Victoria. CoCoRaHS' goal is to have 20,000 active observers nationwide by the end of 2012.





CoCoRaHS on Facebook

by Juan Alanis, Jr.

CoCoRaHS National Headquarters is now on Facebook. To join in, simply go to www.cocorahs.org and click on the Facebook logo on the top right hand side of the screen. The site allows observers to share the weather observations, stories and pictures with headquarters and all observers across the country. The page will also post any news and information that observers need to know and will have links to other informative and interesting weather sites.

Several states also have their own CoCoRaHS sites on Facebook, including Illinois and Oklahoma. A page for observers in the South Texas region is in the works.



Weather Q&A

Do you have any questions about the weather that you would like answered? Your questions could lead to articles in the next issuance of the CoCoRaHS newsletter! If you do, send an email to christina.barron@noaa.gov.

Meet a Victoria County CoCoRaHS observer

by Noel Villareal



Noel Villarreal has been a CoCoRaHS observer since November 2007. Not only is he an observer, but he is also the volunteer Victoria County CoCoRaHS Coordinator. Along with reporting for CoCoRaHS, he's trained as a SKYWARN spotter and relays important information to the National Weather Service Corpus Christi Office via Amateur Radio as well as by phone and internet.

Noel was born and raised in Port Lavaca, Texas and has al-

ways had an interest in weather and Emergency Communications since he was a small boy. While other kids were playing outside, watching cartoons and playing video games, Noel was tracking hurricanes, watching the weather, listening to shortwave radio and watching space launches.

After his graduation from Calhoun High School in 1978, Noel took a computer specialist course where he learned to build and repair computers. Noel moved to Victoria in 1997 and married soon after.

Due to Noel's interest in Emergency Communications, he decided to get his amateur radio license in 2001. He is now involved in many emergency communication organizations such as the United States Air Force Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS), the Texas Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) and SKYWARN. He has also recently applied for the Victo-

ria County CERT team and is awaiting training in the near future.

In his spare time Noel enjoys spending time with his family, going to the park, and watching football and movies. His main hobby, is of course, Amateur Radio, where he has communicated all over the world from his residence and has made many friends through the radio. His greatest contact was when he contacted the International Space Station (ISS) one night and received a QSL card from them. He also likes to communicate via satellites, all this of course, when there is no Emergency occurring.

Noel enjoys being a part of CoCoRaHS ever since he joined in 2007, and with inception as the Victoria County CoCoRaHS Coordinator, he is looking forward to working with the observers in Victoria county.

Noel is "[thankful] for the opportunity to contribute to this great organization".

Noel, thank you for joining! -CB



National Weather Service
300 Pinson Drive
Corpus Christi, TX 78406

Public Phone Line: (361) 289-0959 ext.1
Recorded Forecasts: (361) 289-1861
E-mail: christina.barron@noaa.gov

National Weather Service Mission Statement:

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.

Brief National Weather Service History:

The National Weather Service has its beginnings in the early history of the United States. Weather has always been important to the citizenry of this country, and this was especially true during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The beginning of the National Weather Service we know today started on February 9th, 1870, when President Ulysses S. Grant signed a joint resolution of Congress authorizing the Secretary of War to establish a national weather service.

ON THE WEB!

<http://www.weather.gov/corpuschristi>

Meet the South Texas Regional CoCoRaHS Coordinator

by Christina Barron



Christina Barron is the new South Texas Regional CoCoRaHS Coordinator, taking over the position after previous

coordinator, Tony Merriman, was promoted to Senior Forecaster in North Dakota.

Born and raised in East Texas, weather became a big interest for Christina as severe weather would always pop-up somewhere nearby. Her interest led her to Texas A&M University where she earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Meteorology in 2008.

During her undergraduate days, she was a student worker with the National Weather Service Austin/ San Antonio. Here, she was thrown into a non-stop rainfall scenario, where river flooding occurred nearly every day.

After graduation, she moved into the Meteorologist Intern position at NWS Corpus Christi, where she was greeted with the development of Hurricane Dolly, later followed by the 2008-2009 South Texas Drought. She enjoys living near the beach and is excited to be able to be a part of the Coastal Bend community.



If you would like to be featured in the Fall 2011 edition of the South Texas CoCoRaHS newsletter, please email Christina.Barron@noaa.gov. We would love to hear from observers in other parts of South Texas!