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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 19-57 Updated  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
825 AM EDT Tue Sep 10 2019

To:           Subscribers:  
              -NOAA Weather Wire Service  
              -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network  
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              Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From:       Michelle Hawkins, Chief  
              Severe, Fire, Public, and Winter Weather Services  
              Branch

Subject: Updated: Changes to Public Forecast Zones for WFO Albuquerque,  
          NM, effective October 10, 2019

Updated to change effective date to on or about October 10, 2019, and to  
change Critical Weather Day to October 15, 2019

On Thursday, October 10, 2019, at 1200 PM Mountain Daylight  
Time (MDT), 1800 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the NWS  
Weather Forecast Office in Albuquerque, NM, (ABQ) will realign  
public zones within the ABQ area of responsibility.

If Thursday, October 10, 2019, is declared as a Critical Weather Day,  
this implementation will be postponed to Tuesday, October 15, 2019.

These changes are intended to provide increased flexibility and  
improved accuracy of forecast, watch, warning and advisory  
products in the public programs.

Twenty-four (24) current zones will be adjusted and one (1) new  
zone will be created. To streamline these changes, all forecast  
zones will be renumbered to begin with 201 and continue through  
241. The changes are designed to optimize the issuance of hazard  
products for conditions that vary significantly across northern  
and central New Mexico. The specific details are below:

NMZ501 (Northwest Plateau) - Locations along and west of U.S.  
Highway 550 will be relocated from NMZ503 to NMZ201. The U.S.  
Highway 550 and State Route 170 corridors are more  
representative of the climate regime found in NMZ201 compared to  
eastern NMZ503, and this will improve communication of hazardous  
weather events that impact commerce, particularly during the  
winter season.

NMZ502 (Chuska Mountains) - The southern extent of this zone  
will be shifted north of State Route 264. This will place the  
highway in NMZ205, which is a better representation of the  
climate regime and will help in communication of hazardous

weather impacts, especially during the winter season and high wind events.

NMZ503 (Far Northwest Highlands) - This zone will expand east-southeast to include a larger portion of the northwest highlands. This shift removes the highlands from the higher terrain (NMZ510) and will improve communication of hazardous weather impacts, especially during the winter season and high wind events. The communities of Monero, Brazos, Tierra Amarilla, El Vado, Lindrith, and Heron Lake State Park will be located in NMZ203. A greater portion of U.S. Highways 64/84 and State Routes 112, 537 and 595 will move into this zone.

NMZ504 (Northwest Highlands) - The northeast quadrant of this zone will be relocated to NMZ203 as described above.

NMZ505 (West Central Plateau) - The northwest part of this zone will be shifted north as described in the NMZ502 section.

NMZ506 (West Central Mountains) - A small portion of this zone will expand south to accommodate significant changes to NMZ508 as described below. This adjustment does not impact any communities or travel corridors.

NMZ508 (Southwest Mountains) - The Plains of San Agustin and the adjacent lowlands will be separated into a new zone (NMZ241) due to the significant differences in weather climatology with the nearby mountains. NMZ208 will generally follow the 7,000 or 7,500 feet terrain contour.

NMZ509 (San Francisco River Valley) - This zone will expand northeast within the San Francisco River Valley to capture elevations below 7,000 feet. This change will improve communication of winter, hydrologic and freeze events. The communities of Aragon and Apache Creek will be located in NMZ209, as well as a greater portion of State Routes 12 and 32. This adjustment ensures U.S. Highway 180 remains within NMZ209 before exiting the San Francisco River Valley, improving communication of travel impacts. The far southeast border of this zone will be adjusted to better align with NMZ401-402 found within the County Warning Area (CWA) of WFO El Paso.

NMZ510 (Tusas Mountains including Chama) - The western part of this zone will be relocated to NMZ203 as described above. The eastern boundary previously straddled U.S. Highway 285 and will be moved eastward to improve communication of hazardous weather, especially during the winter season. This adjustment ensures San Antonio Mountain will remain in the higher elevation zone (NMZ210). In addition, the name of this zone will change from the San Juan Mountains to Tusas Mountains including Chama to be consistent with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Geographic Names Information System (GNIS).

NMZ511 (Jemez Mountains) - Two small sections will be removed

from NMZ511. The first section includes the area north of Regina and west of Gallina, and will improve communication of hazardous weather impacts along State Routes 96 and 595. U.S. Highway 550 in the southwest corner of this zone will be relocated to NMZ219.

Note: Current zones encompassing the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of northern New Mexico (NMZ512 through NMZ515) will change significantly to improve communication of hazardous weather conditions throughout the year and will better reflect the climatology across this region.

NMZ512 (Glorieta Mesa including Glorieta Pass) - The western slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains will be redistributed to neighboring zones (including NMZ213, NMZ214, NMZ216, NMZ217 and NMZ218). The southern part of NMZ512 will expand south to include additional terrain between 7,000 to 7,500 feet, particularly near the Interstate 25 corridor. This will allow a greater portion of State Route 34 to be located within southern NMZ212. In addition, the name of this zone will change from the West Slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to Glorieta Mesa including Glorieta Pass.

NMZ513 (Northern Sangre de Cristo Mountains) - The elevation of NMZ513 was lowered to account for the adjustment of NMZ512 described above and will expand south to include the northern portions of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico. This will relocate the communities of Amalia, Lama and Shady Brook as well as U.S. Highway 64 into this zone. The name of this zone was adjusted to remove the elevation reference.

NMZ514 (Southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains) - The elevation of NMZ514 was lowered to account for the adjustment of NMZ512 described above and will expand north to include the southern portions of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico. This change will relocate the communities of Llano, Llano Largo, Truchas, Cowles, and Tres Ritos as well as a good part of State Route 518 within NMZ214. The name of this zone was adjusted to remove the elevation reference.

NMZ515 (East Slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains) - The west central and southwest portion of this zone will be relocated to NMZ214 as a result of the changes described in the NMZ513 and NMZ514 sections.

NMZ516 (Upper Rio Grande Valley) - The western portion of this zone will be relocated to NMZ210 as described above. The eastern zone border will align with the NMZ213 and NMZ214 borders as described in those sections. The communities of Costilla, Cerro, Questa, San Cristobal, Valdez and Arroyo Seco will be relocated to NMZ216, which is a better representation the climatology and hazardous weather in this region. State Route 522 will be located entirely within this zone.

NMZ517 (Española Valley) - The eastern border of this zone will

align with the NMZ214 border as described above. Picuris Pueblo, Rio Lucio, Vadito, Chamisal, Penasco, and Rodarte will be relocated to this zone. In addition, parts of State Routes 73, 75 and 76 will be found in NMZ217. The name of this zone will change from Lower Chama River Valley to Espanola Valley to be consistent with the USGS GNIS.

NMZ518 (Santa Fe Metro Area) - The northeast border of this zone will align with the NMZ212 and NMZ214 border as described above. A larger portion of State Route 475 will be relocated to this zone.

NMZ519 (Albuquerque Metro Area) - U.S. Highway 550 was relocated from NMZ511 to NMZ219, specifically the area west of San Ysidro. This will help in communication of hazardous weather impacts, especially during the winter season and high wind events.

NMZ521 (Sandia/Manzano Mountains including Edgewood) - A section of the eastern border will expand east to include the growing community of Edgewood. A larger portion of Interstate 40 and Historic Route 66 will be located in this zone. The name of this zone will be adjusted to include Edgewood.

NMZ522 (Estancia Valley) - The northwest border of this zone will be relocated to NMZ221 as described above.

NMZ523 (Central Highlands) - The northern border of this zone will be relocated to NMZ212 as described within that section. This adjustment does not impact any communities or major travel corridors.

NMZ525 (Upper Tularosa Valley) - The far southeast border of this zone will better align with NMZ414 found within the CWA of WFO El Paso. This adjustment does not impact any communities or major travel corridors.

NMZ526 (South Central Mountains) - The far southwest border of this zone will be relocated to NMZ225 as described above.

NMZ527 (Johnson and Bartlett Mesas including Raton Pass) - The name of this zone will change from Raton Ridge/Johnson Mesa to Johnson and Bartlett Mesas including Raton Pass given Raton Ridge is not considered a geographical description within the USGS GNIS database.

NMZ241 (San Agustin Plains and Adjacent Lowlands) - This new zone, previously encompassing NMZ508, will include the San Agustin Plains and adjacent lowlands. This adjustment will better reflect the climatology in this region and allow for improved communication of hazardous weather. The community of Datil, the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, and parts of U.S. Highway 60 as well as State Routes 12, 52, 107, 166, and 169 will be relocated to this zone.

Table 1: Current public zones and corresponding Universal Geographic Codes (UGC) for WFO Albuquerque, NM.

UGC: Current Public Zone Name

NMZ501: Northwest Plateau  
NMZ502: Chuska Mountains  
NMZ503: Far Northwest Highlands  
NMZ504: Northwest Highlands  
NMZ505: West Central Plateau  
NMZ506: West Central Mountains  
NMZ507: West Central Highlands  
NMZ508: Southwest Mountains  
NMZ509: San Francisco River Valley  
NMZ510: San Juan Mountains  
NMZ511: Jemez Mountains  
NMZ512: West Slopes Sangre De Cristo Mountains  
NMZ513: Northern Sangres Above 9500'/Red River  
NMZ514: Southern Sangres Above 9500'  
NMZ515: East Slopes Sangre De Cristo Mountains  
NMZ516: Upper Rio Grande Valley  
NMZ517: Lower Chama River Valley  
NMZ518: Santa Fe Metro Area  
NMZ519: Albuquerque Metro Area  
NMZ520: Lower Rio Grande Valley  
NMZ521: Sandia/Manzano Mountains  
NMZ522: Estancia Valley  
NMZ523: Central Highlands  
NMZ524: South Central Highlands  
NMZ525: Upper Tularosa Valley  
NMZ526: South Central Mountains  
NMZ527: Raton Ridge/Johnson Mesa  
NMZ528: Far Northeast Highlands  
NMZ529: Northeast Highlands  
NMZ530: Union County  
NMZ531: Harding County  
NMZ532: Eastern San Miguel County  
NMZ533: Guadalupe County  
NMZ534: Quay County  
NMZ535: Curry County  
NMZ536: Roosevelt County  
NMZ537: De Baca County  
NMZ538: Chaves County Plains  
NMZ539: Eastern Lincoln County  
NMZ540: Southwest Chaves County

Table 2: Public zones and corresponding UGC for which WFO Albuquerque, NM, will issue forecasts and warnings effective September 10, 2019

UGC: New Public Zone Name

NMZ201: Northwest Plateau  
NMZ202: Chuska Mountains

NMZ203: Far Northwest Highlands  
 NMZ204: Northwest Highlands  
 NMZ205: West Central Plateau  
 NMZ206: West Central Mountains  
 NMZ207: West Central Highlands  
 NMZ208: Southwest Mountains  
 NMZ209: San Francisco River Valley  
 NMZ210: Tusas Mountains including Chama  
 NMZ211: Jemez Mountains  
 NMZ212: Glorieta Mesa including Glorieta Pass  
 NMZ213: Northern Sangre de Cristo Mountains  
 NMZ214: Southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains  
 NMZ215: East Slopes Sangre de Cristo Mountains  
 NMZ216: Upper Rio Grande Valley  
 NMZ217: Espanola Valley  
 NMZ218: Santa Fe Metro Area  
 NMZ219: Middle Rio Grande Valley/Albuquerque Metro Area  
 NMZ220: Lower Rio Grande Valley  
 NMZ221: Sandia/Manzano Mountains including Edgewood  
 NMZ222: Estancia Valley  
 NMZ223: Central Highlands  
 NMZ224: South Central Highlands  
 NMZ225: Upper Tularosa Valley  
 NMZ226: South Central Mountains  
 NMZ227: Johnson and Bartlett Mesas including Raton Pass  
 NMZ228: Far Northeast Highlands  
 NMZ229: Northeast Highlands  
 NMZ230: Union County  
 NMZ231: Harding County  
 NMZ232: Eastern San Miguel County  
 NMZ233: Guadalupe County  
 NMZ234: Quay County  
 NMZ235: Curry County  
 NMZ236: Roosevelt County  
 NMZ237: De Baca County  
 NMZ238: Chaves County Plains  
 NMZ239: Eastern Lincoln County  
 NMZ240: Southwest Chaves County  
 NMZ241: San Agustin Plains and Adjacent Lowlands

Table 3: Primary cities included in the new public zones effective September 10, 2019

UGC: Primary cities within New Zones

NMZ241: Datil

Table 4: NWS products affected by the WFO Albuquerque, NM, public zone changes effective September 10, 2019

AWIPS ID: WMO HEADING PRODUCT NAME:

AQAABQ: AEUS75 KABQ: Air Quality Aler  
 ESFABQ: FGUS75 KABQ: Hydrologic Outlook:

FFAABQ: WGUS65 KABQ: Flood Watch:  
HWOABQ: FLUS45 KABQ: Hazardous Weather Outlook:  
NPWABQ: WWUS75 KABQ: Non Precipitation Weather Message:  
PFMABQ: FOUS55 KABQ: Point Forecast Matrices:  
PNSABQ: NOUS45 KABQ: Public Information Statement:  
RWRNM: ASUS45 KABQ: New Mexico Regional Weather Roundup:  
SPSABQ: WWUS85 KABQ: Special Weather Statement:  
WSWABQ: WWUS45 KABQ: Winter Weather Message:

Users of WFO Albuquerque products must take the appropriate action to ensure systems recognize the new UGC (Z) and new zone alignments and names.

Updated public zone shapefiles are online at: (delete the ones you do not need. Links below must have a date showing they were updated as of the date this notices take effect.)  
<https://www.weather.gov/gis/PublicZones>

A graphical depiction of these changes are online at:  
<https://bit.ly/2KrB0Bj>

For more information, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:  
<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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