
September is National Preparedness Month and a Lot More!

By: Douglas Hilderbrand, NWS Aware Editor

Every September, the National Weather Service partners with FEMA and other government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations to encourage everyone to become better prepared. This year's theme is "*prepare to Protect. Preparing for disasters is protecting everyone you love.*" You can find [resources](#) on National Preparedness Month available online.

In addition to National Preparedness Month, September 20-26 is also Deaf Awareness Week. NOAA and the National Weather Service are "*helping the deaf and hard of hearing become more Weather-Ready.*" Check out the [resources](#) available to help ensure the deaf and hard of hearing are #WeatherReady.

September is a special month for the National Weather Service, as it is a time when we recognize our Weather-Ready Nation Ambassadors of Excellence. During National Preparedness Month, this is a great time to say "thank you" to the over 11,700 organizations helping to build ready, responsive, and resilient communities. This two-week campaign, running from September 20 through October 1, recognizes innovative and impactful actions that can be emulated by everyone. Check out what organizations are recognized as WRN Ambassadors of Excellence at https://www.weather.gov/wrn/ambassador_recognition.

MARFC Marks 10th Anniversary of Irene and Lee Floods

By: NWS Insider Staff

In late August/early September of 2011, the Mid-Atlantic region was hit with back-to-back tropical cyclones (Irene and Lee), causing major to record flooding for several rivers in the area. This year, in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of these historic events, the Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center (MARFC) led an outreach project to tell the stories of how these flood events unfolded.

Two StoryMaps were published, one for each flood event, containing discussions of the weather setup, radar and satellite loops of the storms, and interactive maps of estimated rainfall and flood locations, as well as photos and videos of the flooding.

The StoryMaps also feature several video clips of NWS forecasters and core partners sharing their stories and experiences from working during these events. From the ominous feeling of seeing 12+ inches of rain in the forecast for Irene, to seeing flood walls overtopped and levees nearly failing during the floods of Lee, the stories shared by those involved help to bring the personal impact of these events to life.

Irene StoryMap: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fa28d98081594cf3b2dd9ce3a6d7018b>

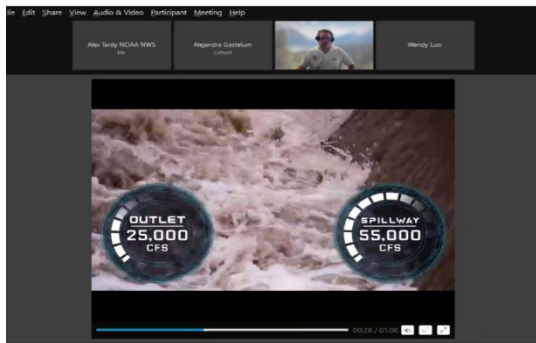
Lee Storymap: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/94bb7db898254b27a80cdb5617387d64>

Special thanks to the NWS employees who shared their stories, including Greg Heavener (WFO Pueblo), Jim Brewster (WFO Binghamton), Scott Kroczyński and Ted Rodgers (MARFC), and retired NWS employees Joe Miketta (WFO Mount Holly) and Pete Jung (WFO State College).

The StoryMaps were created by a team of MARFC employees including: **Rob Shedd, Bill Marosi, John Kirk, Brad Carlberg, Dave Ondrejik, and Ted Rogers.**

NWS San Diego Participates in Dam Exercise with USACE

By: NWS Insider Staff



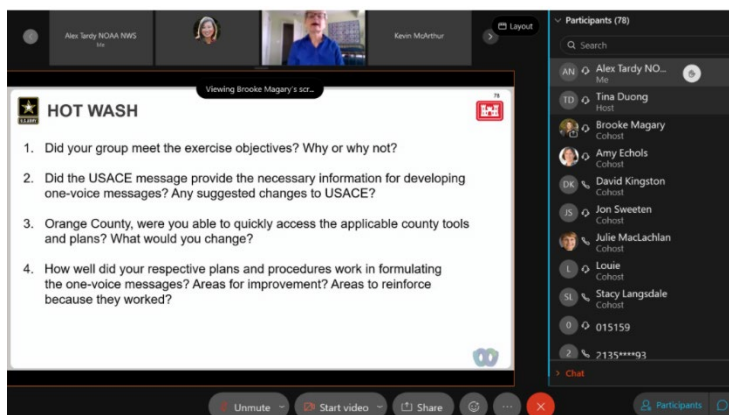
Exercise video for the Mojave Dam excessive flows leaving the dam following heavy rain

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)-owned Prado Dam and Mojave Dam held virtual exercises on July 21 and September 1, 2021, to demonstrate and practice response.

The Prado Dam scenario began when the USACE Regional Operation Center received the following information from the National Weather Service: "Atmospheric River conditions developing in the tropics are gaining speed and intensity, and moving toward the West Coast. An additional 3 to 5 days of intense rainfall is expected. Total rainfall amounts from this series of storms are anticipated to range between 20 and 30 inches total in the mountains (this occurred in a major AR of December 2010)." The USACE ROC notified the Chief of Emergency Management that uncontrolled spillway flow from Prado Dam was possible within 6 to 8 hours with continued intense rainfall and runoff into the reservoir.

This had the possibility to overwhelm the downstream levees and flood communities. The USACE Emergency Operations Center was activated and notifications to external agencies were sent out in accordance with the EAP.

The scenario simulated several storm systems that have impacted the Santa Ana River Basin over the last week. The ground was saturated and localized flooding in the street occurred, which hindered mobility in the region. Sporadic power outages were reported. Seven Oaks Dam, upstream of Prado Dam, was full and spilling. USACE Reservoir Operation Center coordinated flood control releases from Prado Dam that would discharge at the maximum of 10,000 CFS. For this amount of release, the channels downstream of Prado Dam were nearing maximum capacity. The reservoir pool at Prado Dam reached an elevation of 543 ft (NAVD 88), which is 2 feet below the spillway crest. The USACE Special Dam Inspection Team (SDIT) was on site monitoring the condition of the dam and reported no issues.



USACE Prado Dam exercise hot wash as viewed in the virtual WebEx setting

USACE recommended that local officials take necessary steps to notify the public of potential flooding and actions to be taken. A separate alert notification message was developed by the Orange and Riverside Counties and downstream cities in coordination with the USACE Public Affairs Office.

The critical inject during the exercise was for the Santa Ana River levees, downstream of Prado Dam, which began to overtop at several locations and began flooding communities adjacent to the levee including the cities of Santa Ana, Fountain Valley, and Huntington Beach. Orange County Storm Patrol was deployed and reported that flood water was eroding the top of the Santa Ana River 1 Levee at Station 606+40, just upstream of Garden Grove Freeway, and worsening the flooding. A levee breach at this location was imminent. NWS planned to issue a flash flood warning on WEA due to the levee breach and rapid flooding in downstream communities. Partners again went into virtual break-out sessions to discuss their alert level and actions to be taken.

Both exercises ended with a complete hot wash of challenges and actions taken by each agency. A strong partnership with dam operators and owners is a crucial piece of the NWS alert warning system.

Comment Period is Open for Impact-Based Warning Tags

By: Monica Parker, NWS Aware Editor

Your feedback is important to the development of NWS services. Don't forget to weigh in on the Impact-Based Warning (IBW) tags for the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) Snow Squall Warnings! The comment period for the proposed change is open until October 15, 2021.

Snow Squall Warnings use IBW format, which is a consistent, bulleted product format designed to provide easily readable information on the snow squall hazard, the source of the information (e.g., radar indicated or trained spotter observed), and a brief description of the impact of the hazard. The addition of IBW tags will append machine-readable tags that characterize the snow squall impact and source information, in turn allowing NWS to issue WEA only for warnings with "Significant" tags. Based on the feedback received, NWS may implement these changes in 2022.

If you would like to provide feedback on IBW tags, the survey link is available through the [Public Information Statement](#). This page also provides resources to learn more about IBW tags and Wireless Emergency Alerts, as well as contact information for any further questions.

To stay up to date on the development of IBW tags or future products, see the NWS [Notification](#) page.

Soliciting Comments until April 30, 2022 on the Experimental Winter Storm Severity Index (WSSI) Day 4 Extension

By: Monica Parker, NWS Aware Editor

The experimental Winter Storm Severity Index (WSSI) Day 4 Extension is accepting comments until April 30, 2022. The WSSI Day 4 Extension provides web-based information based on input from the National Digital Forecast Database, National Blend of Models, and Weather Prediction Center. It provides greater lead times than the current Days 1-3 Operational WSSI to help NWS operational forecasters maintain situational awareness of potential winter weather-related impacts. It also improves communication of the societal impacts of expected winter hazards, along with their affected times and regions, to external partners, media, and the general public. This Extension will have values produced for 116 NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) across the contiguous 48 states, making every additional feedback valuable.

To participate in the survey, as well as more detailed information on the Experimental WSSI Day 4 Extension and WSSI, read the full [Scenario Change Notice](#). If the experimental evaluation and feedback received during the comment window are positive, the product may transition to operational status on a nationwide scale. Future updates on this and other NWS products will be available on the [Notification](#) page.

Introducing the 2021 NOAA Education Photo Contest!

By: NWS Insider Staff

Do you have amazing photographs of your education and outreach program? The NOAA Office of Education is holding the fourth internal NOAA Education photo contest! Consider submitting photos, showcase our programs, and recognize outstanding photography! This year there are three new contest categories related to the pandemic: at home, but not hands-off; masks up; and snappy screenshots. Selected images will be featured in printed materials, in briefings, and online.

Submissions due on Friday October 22, 2021

NOAA Office of Education will award photographs in the following categories along with one grand prize winner:

Creative education in the time of COVID-19:

The pandemic continued to bring new challenges and opportunities to our NOAA interns, fellows, and educational communities. Show us how you or your programs adapted to another difficult year. Focus on the virtual projects you pioneered, the learners you inspired, and the educators who made it happen!

At home, but not hands-off: NOAA Education made impressive strides to provide opportunities for people to take a hands-on approach at home, but away from the screen. Did your program create physical activity boxes for students to explore at home or provide resources to keep students (and parents) occupied throughout the pandemic? Show us how your programs delivered at-home resources to parents and educators to keep students learning hands-on.

Masks up!: Masking up has become a norm throughout the country. If you have photos of your programs working while 'masking up,' send them our way!

Snappy screenshots: With most programs being held virtually in 2021, we know you've snapped screenshots of your successes! Whether it's a screenshot of a virtual celebration, a conference call with students, a presentation of an activity, or a capture of your cat skulking behind you while you're giving a presentation, we want to see your snappy screenshots. Just make sure you have [permission](#) to share the photo from any humans that appear in it.

Learning in action: We're looking for pictures that show people of all ages caught in the act of learning during NOAA education programs, whether they're asking questions, taking actions, or making connections. Pandemic safety should be taken into account when submitting these photos.

Faces of NOAA: We want to get to know the diverse staff and partners who bring your programs to life. Show us the amazing educators, mentors, and experts who work to share NOAA science with the public.

Best-placed NOAA logo: Nothing says "NOAA" like a photo with our iconic emblem in it. Whether it's emblazoned on a t-shirt or the bow of a ship, we want to see the NOAA logo physically featured in photos of education efforts.

Best alt text: Our pictures communicate a lot about our work, but we need to make sure that information is also available to people who are blind or low-vision. Alternative text, or "alt text" for short, provides a description of what's happening in the image. See [WebAIM](#) for guidance.



Two girls take a "hands-on" approach to learning about tornados at the San Diego High Tech Fair in Balboa Park, San Diego CA. The Tornado Chamber was a big hit with students and parents. The National Weather Service in San Diego was an exhibitor for the 2-day event.

Artistic: Calling all photographers! Does your photo have that extra flare to catch the eye? Whether you're capturing education with a creative camera angle or in a breathtaking landscape, submit your photo to this category for a chance to show it off!

**Note: Artistic photos should still be related to NOAA Education.*

Awards

- **Grand Prize:** The grand prize winner will be included on the cover of the 2021 NOAA Education Accomplishments Report. In addition, it will be featured prominently on the NOAA Education website and social media.
- **Category Winners:** The winning photo from each category will be highlighted in a “year in review” photo story on NOAA.gov/education. See [NOAA Education's best photos from 2020!](#)

For detailed instructions on how to participate in the photo contest, including contest eligibility and evaluation criteria, see the full story [here](#). We look forward to your submissions!



Aware

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