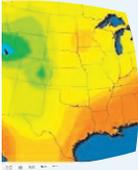




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○ ISSUE 14 | ○ Spring | ○ 2016



# Tallahassee *topics*

NEWS AND NOTES FROM YOUR LOCAL NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE.

*The National Weather Service (NWS) office in Tallahassee, FL provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for Southeast Alabama, Southwest & South Central Georgia, the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend, and the adjacent Gulf of Mexico coastal waters. Our primary mission is the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the local economy.*

## NWS Tallahassee's First Integrated Warning Team Workshop *By Jessica Fieux*

The National Weather Service in Tallahassee met with 60 partners at its first ever Integrated Warning Team (IWT) Workshop on Tuesday, February 23. This event brought together partners from across three different states and included state and local emergency management, broadcast meteorologists, the Florida Department of Transportation, communication experts, social scientists, and representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As it was the first workshop of its kind in the area, one of the main goals was to bring partners together to form new relationships and strengthen current ones. With the NWS office situated on the campus of Florida State University (FSU), there is a strong relationship between the National Weather Service and the meteorology program. However, this workshop fostered new relationships with faculty and students from the FSU Schools of Information and Communication.

In addition to the relationship aspect, a second goal of the workshop was to discuss and gain feedback regarding severe weather operations, warnings and advisories. The NWS shared what it is like to work a severe weather event and the challenges we face. Both the emergency management and broadcast meteorology communities had the opportunity to discuss the same topics during panel discussions.

The third goal of the workshop was to demonstrate the importance of including disciplines outside of traditional meteorology partners in the Integrated Warning Team. The group was fortunate to have Dr. Susan Jasko from the California University of Pennsylvania discuss applications of social science to meteorology, and Jana Telfer from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide a lesson in risk communication. Rob McDaniel, from the Center for Disaster Risk Policy at FSU also addressed risk communication with an emphasis on trust and message unity.



Within a day of the workshop, severe weather impacted the County Warning Area and while it kept all participants busy, it added to the success of the workshop. During one of the presentations, participants learned about the usefulness of NWSChat and this encouraged even more partners to sign up for the service ahead of the severe weather event. The office was also able to provide a briefing on the impending weather during the workshop and participants remained after ward to ask more technical questions than they typically ask on a webinar.

After receiving feedback from partners at the workshop such as “today was great,” NWS Tallahassee is looking forward to planning the next IWT workshop!



## Employee Spotlight: Kelly Godsey

*Service Hydrologist*

*By Katie Moore & Kelly Godsey*

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### What sparked your interest in meteorology?

When I was about 8 years old, I was incredibly frightened by thunderstorms and severe weather. To help eliminate this fear, I tried to learn everything I could about the weather and the types of conditions necessary for thunderstorms and tornadoes. Through learning, I realized that the weather, while sometimes unpredictable, wasn't all that scary. What started out as a fear, quickly developed into a hobby and eventually a career.

### How did you get your start in the weather service?

During my sophomore semester at Florida State University, I began investigating ideas for internships for the summer. I enjoyed helping organize and participate in the FSU Weather Show, so I naturally looked for summer internships in TV. My dad also suggested that I talk to our local National Weather Service office in East Tennessee about internship opportunities. After a couple of meetings at the NWS office in Morristown, I thought the job seemed especially fun. After an interview later that Spring, they offered me one of the old Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) positions in 2003. After graduating from Florida State in 2005, I accepted a full time position at the Tallahassee office, where I've been ever since.

### What is your favorite/most challenging part of your job?

In operational meteorology, shift work is required, and so adjusting to that can be a challenge. But I think the toughest part of the job is realizing you're never going to be right all the time. I think we all aspire to write the perfect forecast, but sometimes that just doesn't pan out. Being humble is an important trait to have in this job.

My favorite part is preparing for and working significant weather events. I greatly enjoy interacting with our emergency management partners and equipping them to make decisions which in turn help keep people safe.

### You've done a lot of work in the past 2 years revamping our hydrology program. What interests you the most about hydrology?

A running joke around the office is my fundamental theorem of hydrology: Water runs downhill, collects in low places, and payday is every two weeks. Obviously, hydrology is much more than that. What makes hydrology exciting to me is that in operations, it's an extension of meteorology. Predicting the meteorological side of an event is tough enough, but determining what happens after it's on the ground can be even tougher. Expanding on the outreach work I've done over the years in Tallahassee, it's exciting to work with our emergency managers and other partners to improve the program. Moreover, I've enjoyed integrating statistical models into our operations to improve forecasts.

### You also run our local student mentorship and volunteer program. Do you have any tips for students interested in volunteer opportunities with the weather service?

I'm very proud of the student mentorship and volunteer program in our office. Over the years, countless students have participated in the program and many now have jobs in operational meteorology. One of the goals of our program is to get students to begin thinking early in their collegiate careers about building a competitive resume and gain the necessary experience to compete in the job market. Meteorology is a very competitive field, so you have to set yourself apart from your peers not just by your performance in the classroom, but in the workplace as well.

You can never start early enough learning about your future job. Whether it's shadowing for a couple hours at a NWS office or visiting with your favorite TV meteorologist, this lays the groundwork for building a fun and exciting career!

### What do you like to do when you're off duty?

My wife Amy is the chief state meteorologist for the State of Florida, so you would think that we discuss the weather all the time at home, but our two year old son Thomas keeps us pretty busy.

When I do have free time, I enjoy reading about history, enjoying Star Trek episodes for the 20th time, and being one of the bigger Tennessee Football fans you've ever met.

## When It's Not Flooding: Make A Flood Plan

*By Katie Moore*

### Know Your Flood Risks

Flooding can come directly from heavy rainfall over low lying property or more indirectly as water rises along a river after heavy rainfall upstream. Along the coast, flooding can occur as wind driven surge pushes water from seas and bays inland towards properties. Determine your flood risk using the risk profile on the [National Flood Insurance Program site](#).

### Make A Plan

1. Have multiple ways to monitor the weather and receive emergency alerts and warnings.
2. Discuss your household or business plan for disasters and make sure everyone is on the same page.
3. Make sure you have contact information for everyone included in your plan and that there is a central point of contact to make sure everyone is okay.
4. Identify a safe meeting place that is accessible to everyone in your plan. If you have pets or service animals, think about animal-friendly locations. In the case of flooding, pick a location that has a higher elevation than your current location.

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# Impact-Based Warnings

By Katie Moore

Impact based warnings are an experimental product that started in 2012 in the NWS central region. These warnings were designed to improve communication of threats and highlight the most critical information in the warning by using specific statements, hazard and impact information, and summary tags. By the end of 2015, nearly 80 offices across the country had started issuing impact based warnings. Tallahassee began issuing them on October 1st 2015.

## Specific Statements

You'll only notice these specific statements pop up in tornado warnings for storms that are producing or expected to produce significant damage on the scale of an EF2+ tornado. The specific statements are *"This is a particularly dangerous situation."* and *"This is a tornado emergency for locations along the path of the tornado. Take cover now. This is a particularly dangerous situation."* The latter will only be used when there is a confirmed dangerous (EF4+) tornado on the ground that is approaching a populated area.

## Hazard and Impact Information

Each tornado and severe thunderstorm warning will now contain sections that briefly list the hazard expected, the source of the information, and the main impacts expected from the hazard. For example, when we issue a warning for a tornado detected on radar, the warning will have the following information in its segments:

Hazard...Tornado.

Source...Radar indicated rotation.

Impact...Flying debris will be dangerous to those caught without shelter. Mobile homes will be damaged or destroyed. Damage to roofs...windows and vehicles will occur. Tree damage is likely.

## Tags

Finally, at the very bottom of the new warnings will be summary tags indicating the main threats for the warned area. For our partners in our chatroom, these tags will appear automatically when a warning is issued. The "possible" tornado tag is used in severe thunderstorm warnings when radar data indicates that a storm is capable of producing a tornado. The "radar indicated" and "observed" tornado tags will let users know the source saying that there is a tornado. The "considerable" tornado tag is used for tornadoes capable of producing EF2+ damage. The "catastrophic" tornado tag is used for confirmed tornadoes capable of producing EF4+ damage.

Below is an example of an impact based warning if there was a confirmed tornado which the radar indicates could produce EF2+ damage:

Tornado...Observed  
Tornado Damage Threat...Considerable  
Hail...<.75 in

For more information, check out the impact based warning project's web page: <http://www.weather.gov/impacts/#.VkEtz7erRpg>

# El Niño Update

By Katie Moore and Mark Wool

The latest El Niño discussion shows that sea surface temperature anomalies in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific decreased during February and that the subsurface temperature anomalies have decreased substantially as well. All models indicate that El Niño will continue to weaken and that a transition to ENSO-neutral conditions during the late spring or early summer of 2016 is likely. Chances for La Niña conditions increase into the fall.

The three month precipitation outlook for March, April, and May indicates a 40% chance of above normal rainfall across our region during this period, which is fairly typical for the latter stages of an El Niño event. Excess rainfall this winter over the Chattahoochee, Choctawhatchee, Apalachicola, and Flint River basins has caused elevated river stages. With above average precipitation in the forecast, there is an above normal potential for flooding. Further east, in the Ochlocknee and Suwannee River basins, normal to below normal rainfall occurred this winter, leaving the rivers running at about their normal stages. Although there is a climatological signal for increased flood probability across the Suwannee River Basin with moderate to strong El Niño events, the lack of heavy rainfall in this area this winter will make significant flooding unlikely.

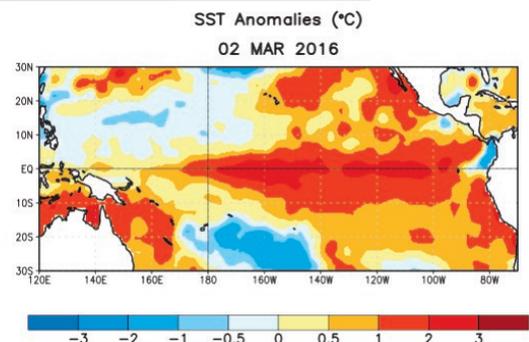


Figure 1. Average sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies (°C) for the week centered on 2 March 2016. Anomalies are computed with respect to the 1981-2010 base period weekly means.



### Management-Admin Team

Jane Hollingsworth, MIC  
 Mark Wool, WCM  
 Parks Camp, SOO  
 Doug Sherrick, ESA  
 Chris Duggan, ASA  
 Toan Tran, ITO  
 Kelly Godsey, Hydrologist

### Lead Forecasters

Jeff Fournier  
 Don Van Dyke  
 Donal Harrigan  
 Jessica Fieux  
 Vacant

### Journeyman Forecasters

Tim Barry  
 Alex Lamers  
 Vacant  
 Vacant  
 Vacant

### HMTs

OPL (Vacant)

### Interns

Katie Moore  
 Claudia (Jeanie) McDermott  
 Emma Weston

### Electronic Technicians

Ron Eimiller  
 Vacant

# Outreach Efforts

By Mark Wool

NWS Tallahassee continued to reach out to the community in many ways over the winter months. In December, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Mark Wool, attended a ceremony where Valdosta State University was recognized as StormReady. Meteorologist in Charge, Jane Hollingsworth, attended the GEMA Contemporary Issues Forum in Tifton, GA. In January, Jane also attended the GEMA Area 6 Emergency management quarterly meeting in Camilla, GA. Meteorologist Tim Barry talked weather and weather safety at Roberts Elementary School in Tallahassee, FL. Mark addressed the FSU Emeritus Alumni Society and introduced the group to the various NWS programs. In February, Mark joined WALB-TV's Yolanda Amadeo, Tift County Emergency Management, and representatives from Midland Radio Corp. for a NOAA Weather Radio programming event at a Walgreens in Tifton, GA. Mark also conducted spotter training at the Florida Dept. of Emergency Management. Mark travelled to Tyndall AFB to verify the base's continued status as a StormReady community. Mark and meteorologist Emma Weston joined Tim Osborn of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey at an annual NOAA Seminar hosted by Bob Fowler at the MarineMax Marina in Panama Beach, FL (pictured). Finally, the NWS Tallahassee team hosted its first ever Integrated Warning Team Workshop for partners, highlighted on page 1.



# Climate Recap for Winter

By Tim Barry

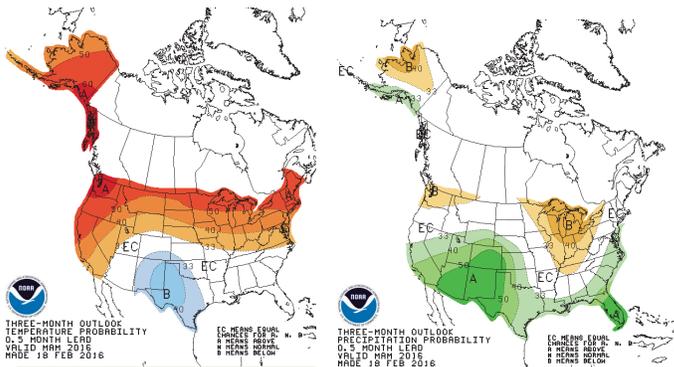
The climate for Tallahassee during the 3-month period of December 2015 through February 2016 saw temperatures that were warmer than normal. The average temperature for winter was 57.1°F, 4.1°F above normal. This past winter was highlighted by the warmest December on record for Tallahassee with an average temperature of 65.1°F, which was a whopping 11.9°F above normal! To put that into perspective, this past December was almost 5°F warmer than what we would normally see in November. There were several days in the month where record highs were either tied or broken including a new all-time record high on Christmas day with a temperature of 81°F. The all-time record high minimum temperature for December of 71°F was tied on the 17th, 24th, and 29th and then broken on the 30th when a minimum temperature of 72°F occurred. As a result of the unusually warm December, 2015 was Tallahassee's warmest year on record with an average temperature of 71.8°F. January and

February saw near average temperatures this past winter. The highest temperature recorded at the Tallahassee Regional Airport was 83°F on December 26th and the lowest temperature was 26°F on the 20th and 24th of January. The coldest maximum temperature was on January 23rd with a high of only 47°F. There were 14 days with minimum temperatures at or below freezing this past winter, 10 below normal, and there were no hard freezes for our area.

During winter we normally see 13.09" of rain and this year we received 13.47", a surplus of 0.38". December was the wettest month with 4.77" followed by February with 4.45", and then January with 4.25". The greatest amount in a 24-hour period was 2.76" from the 3rd – 4th of February. The daily record rainfall of 2.04" was tied on February 3rd. A peak wind gust of 53 mph was recorded at the Tallahassee Regional Airport from a strong thunderstorm on February 24th.

# Climate Outlook for Spring

By Tim Barry



The latest outlook for spring (March through May) from the Climate Prediction Center calls for an enhanced chance for experiencing above normal rainfall and equal chances of experiencing above, below or near normal temperatures. The average rainfall is 12.47 inches and the average temperature for Tallahassee during spring is 66.9°F. The current El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle across the eastern Pacific is in the El Niño phase. El Niño is currently weakening and will likely transition to ENSO-neutral during late spring or early summer. The ENSO cycle during the spring tends to be associated with wetter than normal conditions.