

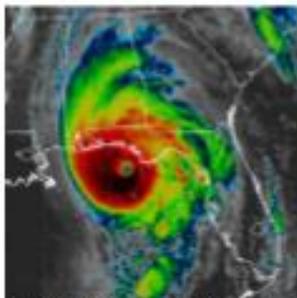
SUNCOAST OBSERVER

A quarterly newsletter brought to you by the National Weather Service Tampa Bay Area, FL

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Top stories in this newsletter



2018 Hurricane Season Recap



WX4TOR - NWS Amateur Radio Station



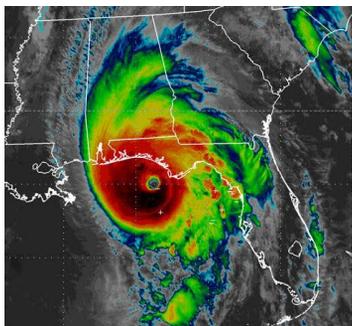
Hurricane Michael - A Worst Case Scenario for Port Tampa Bay



Florida Severe Weather Awareness Week

2018 Hurricane Season Recap

By: Dan Noah



The 2018 Atlantic Hurricane Season was above average with 15 named storms, 8 became hurricanes, and 2 became major hurricanes. The 1981-2010 normal is 12 named storms, 6 hurricanes, and 3 major hurricanes. Storms to impact our area included Subtropical Storm Alberto in late May, Tropical Storm Gordon in September, and Major Hurricane Michael in early October. Hurricane Michael impacts in west central and southwest Florida were limited to flooding of coastal roads, major beach erosion, and strong rip currents. Initial forecasts had the path of Michael much closer to our coast, with a storm surge forecast of 12 feet for Cedar Key and Crystal River. Actual values were 3 to 5 feet as the path traveled further to the west.

Hurricane Michael formed on October 7th, rapidly intensified from a CAT 1 to a CAT 3 on the 9th, and made landfall near Mexico Beach as a Major Hurricane CAT 4, with 155 mph winds. CAT 3 winds traveled all the way into southwest Georgia, with most every tree snapped in half over large areas of a forest. From the time the storm formed until landfall was only 3 days. Calhoun County had 23% of electricity customers still without power 21 days after landfall. The peak water level that includes the tide, surge, and waves was 20.6 feet, and hundreds of homes in Mexico Beach were completely washed off their foundations. Recovery efforts will take years.

Nine out of ten U.S. hurricane fatalities are due to water, half from storm surge and a quarter from flooding rain. A person will survive a hurricane if they avoid the water and hide from the debris in the wind.

WX4TOR – NWS Amateur Radio Station

By: Richard Rude



SKYWARN™ Recognition Day was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League. It celebrates the contributions that SKYWARN™ volunteers make to the NWS mission, the protection of life and property. Amateur radio operators comprise a large percentage of the SKYWARN™ volunteers across the country. The Amateur radio operators also provide vital communication between the NWS and emergency management if normal communications become inoperative.



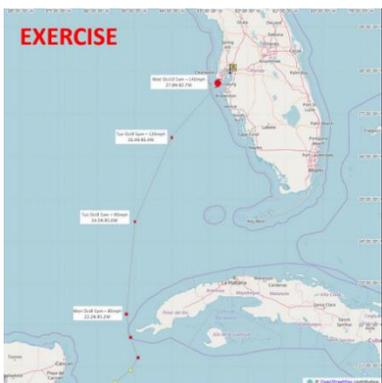
SKYWARN™ Recognition Day 2018 was conducted Dec 1 and 2 from our office. Nine HAMS attended and operated WX4TOR. A total of 104 contacts were made in 26 states and one Canadian province. The most distant contact was Los Angeles, CA followed by others in AZ, CO, MN, Ontario CN, and MA. Seven of these contacts were with other NWS offices.

Hurricane Michael - A Worst Case Scenario for Port Tampa Bay

By: Dustin Norman



In late November, several meteorologists from the National Weather Service office in Ruskin, FL joined the Port Tampa Bay's Port Heavy Weather Advisory Group (PHWAG) for their end of hurricane season wrap-up meeting. The PHWAG consists of key maritime stakeholders including the U.S. Coast Guard, who analyze risk factors, determine a course of action, and make recommendations regarding safe vessel movement throughout Tampa Bay. With over 60 million tons of cargo and one million cruise ship passengers annually, tropical systems pose a significant threat to life and property for Port Tampa Bay. The location of development (Western Caribbean) and rapid intensification of Hurricane Michael, which struck the Panhandle in October, is a worst case scenario for Tampa Bay if a storm of this magnitude had turned to the northeast. At November's meeting, an altered path of Michael was presented to the committee by the NWS in order to help our marine partners better prepare for this scary yet very real scenario. The National Weather Service in Ruskin continues to strive towards its goal of protecting life and property along with enhancing the U.S. economy by working closely with Port Tampa Bay on a regular basis.



Florida Severe Weather Awareness Week

By: Jennifer Hubbard



Severe Weather Awareness Week will be January 14th through 18th, 2019 for the state of Florida. This week is an in depth look at the typical weather hazards that impact Florida and focuses on safety actions to better protect residents from these hazards. Each day of the week focuses on a specific weather event. Monday is lightning. Tuesday is marine hazards and rip currents. Wednesday is thunderstorms and tornadoes. Thursday is hurricanes and flooding. And Friday is temperature extremes and wildfires. There is even a special statewide tornado drill scheduled for Wednesday, January 16th. Check the NWS Tampa Bay social media channels for special posts during this week!

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