



SUNCOAST OBSERVER

A quarterly newsletter brought to you by the NWS Tampa Bay Area, FL

Fall 2024

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NWS Tampa Bay Summer 2024 Student Volunteer Program Was a Success!

By: Austen Flannery

Did you know that the NWS works with hundreds of student volunteers each summer who are passionate about a career in Meteorology or a related field? In Summer 2024, NWS Tampa Bay worked with four students from three universities to provide real-world job shadowing opportunities. Collectively, these students volunteered over 500 hours of their time to help launch nearly 4 dozen weather balloons, complete and quality control important, time-sensitive products like the daily climate summaries, assist with preventative maintenance inspections for weather equipment, and even attended regional meetings with partners. Additionally, each student selected and completed a local research project on a topic area of their choice. This included a case study for a local tornado outbreak, flooding and heavy rainfall impacts, and excessive heat forecasts. Two of our students were even able to participate in a NOAA regional panel to highlight their experiences and work this summer.

Providing these opportunities for our students is one of many ways we try to give back to our communities. While these students may be attending universities in far-away corners of the state - or even the country - all of these students have grown up in the area and may one day come back to serve with us too. In fact, this was how many of your current meteorologists were first exposed to the NWS. If someone had not invested time into our professional development, we would not be here today. It is paramount that we continue to provide these opportunities for those who will follow us, ensuring we continue to meet our mission of protecting life and property and building a Weather-Ready Nation.

Are you a student interested in learning more about student opportunities with the NWS?
Learn more at: <https://www.noaa.gov/national-weather-service/student-opportunities>

Brian LaMarre Forecasts NWS Future

Administrative Team

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Keily DeLorme
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Austen Flannery
Christianne Pearce
Ali Davis

Electronics Technician Team

Bobby Gianino
Josh Campbell

After serving the past 17 years as the Meteorologist In Charge of the Tampa Bay Area NWS office, Brian LaMarre has accepted a new position to help lead the National Weather Service in designing and implementing a new way of operating across the agency - called the "NWS Operating Model". In this new position as the NWS Operating Model Implementation Program Manager, Brian will deliver an overview of what the new Ops Model will look like and will eventually coordinate the implementation of this plan. Though this is a national level position, Brian will remain right here in Tampa. He looks forward to helping the next leader appreciate the amazing team here at NWS TBW!



Brian's interest in weather started at a young age - during the historic Blizzard of 1978 that devastated Connecticut and much of New England. Brian earned a bachelor's degree in meteorology in 1994 from Western Connecticut State University and a master's degree in management specializing in leadership and organizational change from Walden University in 2014. Brian started his NWS career in 1992 as a student volunteer with the NWS office in Hartford. Brian landed a permanent meteorologist position in 1994 with the NWS office in Corpus Christi. He then served as the national marine and coastal weather services program manager at NWS Headquarters and as the WCM at NWS Lubbock, Texas before moving to Tampa where he has been the MIC since 2007.

Staff Spotlight: Jen Hubbard, New WCM

Jennifer is a Florida native, born and raised in Bradenton just to the south of the NWS Ruskin office. In high school she determined that she wanted to be a meteorologist and attended Florida State University. Upon graduating, she accepted a full-time position at the NWS office in Jackson, Mississippi. Fourteen months there exposed her to just about every type of weather and was a wonderful experience, but she was anxious to get back home to Florida. She was promoted to General Forecaster here in Ruskin in 2003, and has remained ever since – becoming a Senior Forecaster, and now the Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM). She has also developed our local social media program and has grown our local tropical program to include state-wide trainings for core partners, and national NWS operational training.

What are you most looking forward to as the new WCM?

"I'm very excited to develop deeper relationships with our partners in emergency management and the media and work to improve messaging and public safety in natural disasters. This is my dream job and one that I've been working in more of a lesser supportive role for many years."



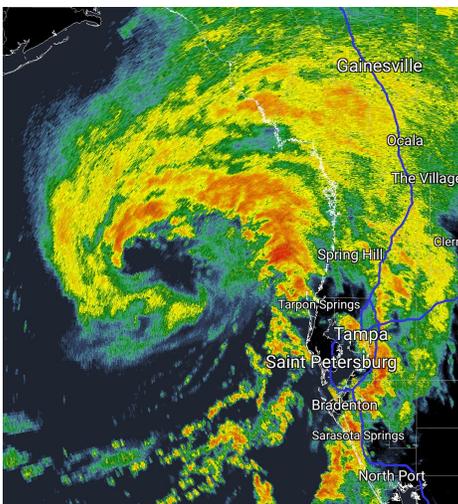
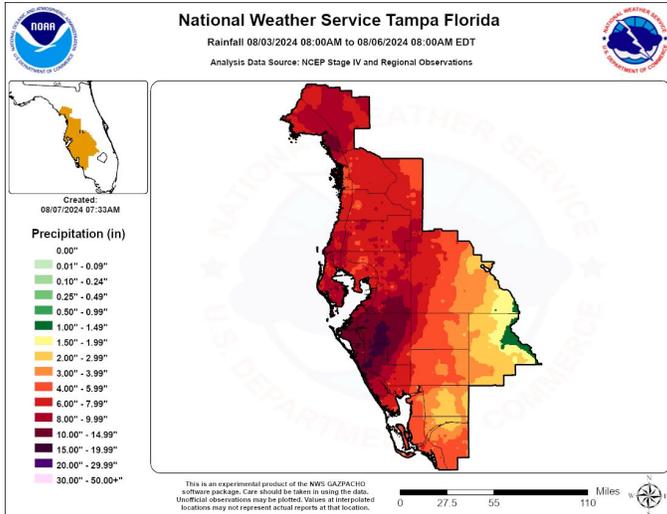
Hurricane Debby Scrapes West-Central Florida Coast

Hurricane Debby developed from Tropical Depression Four that formed along the southern coast of Cuba on August 2. The depression moved into the southeast Gulf of Mexico and strengthened into Tropical Storm Debby at 5 PM EDT on August 3. Debby continued organizing while turning north on August 4, strengthening to a hurricane at 11 PM EDT while centered about 100 miles west-northwest of Tampa. The hurricane gradually turned north-northeast while continuing to strengthen and made landfall near Steinhatchee, Florida, around 7 AM EDT August 5.



Impacts:

Debby produced storm surge and wind damage across west central and southwest Florida as it passed by the area to the west. However its most significant impact was river and flash flooding caused by torrential rainfall, which in parts of Manatee and Sarasota counties totaled between 15 to 20 inches, prompting the closure of numerous roads and requiring water rescues from stranded vehicles as well as homes and apartments in several area neighborhoods.



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The image to the left shows the rainfall analysis for West Central and Southwest Florida for the 72-hour period of 8 AM EDT August 3, 2024, to 8 AM EDT August 6, 2024 which covers the entire event. This heavy rainfall caused significant flooding in portions of Manatee and Sarasota Counties and sent rivers in and around this area into Major and Record Flooding.

There were also some strong wind gusts associated with Debby. Observed peak winds across West Central and Southwest Florida reached Tropical Storm Force in many locations. Portions of Levy County in the Florida Big Bend reported strong tropical-storm force winds, with isolated gusts to hurricane-force.

A detailed listing of rainfall amounts and wind gusts for sites across the region can be found within our Post Tropical Cyclone Reports page at:

<https://www.weather.gov/tbw/TropicalEventSummary>

The Upper Air Building Gets A Facelift!

By: Stephen Shively



Fun Fact: The oldest building on our property is actually the upper air structure which was built in 1975. Last month it got a well-deserved refurbishment! During the process, the building was resealed to prevent any leaking inside of it. Also, the wooden fence that surrounds the hydrogen tanks was replaced with a new one along with a new roof that had been damaged during Hurricane Ian. The inside and outside of the structure was also completely repainted. This refurbishment ensures this building will continue to serve its important mission to assist us in releasing our twice daily weather balloons that collect data for the Tampa Bay Area.

The next project for the upper air building will be to remove the dome that sits atop the structure. This dome once housed the antenna and communication equipment that was used to communicate with the previous generation of radiosondes. Since the NWS upgraded radiosondes nearly 3 years ago, the equipment inside the dome has been decommissioned and removed. The removal of the empty dome will be the final step in the renovation process.

NHC Debuts Experimental Forecast Cone

The time has come for the National Hurricane Center to produce their experimental version of the cone of uncertainty that depicts coastal and inland tropical storm and hurricane watches and warnings for the continental United States. A couple of important notes to keep in mind: the experimental cone may, at times, be a little rough around the edges, may not be available on a consistent basis, and probably should not be used yet for critical support decisions. Also, the current operational version of the cone will still be available and will not change during the experimental period.

What will be different about the experimental cone?

1. The experimental cone will add tropical storm and hurricane watches and warnings for inland areas.
2. Watches and warnings in effect will take visual precedence over the cone in the experimental version.
3. The new experimental cone will use white transparent shading for the entire forecast cone.

