



FLORIDA COCORAHHS

MAY 2009

NEWSLETTER

Are You Prepared?

We are now **20 days** from the start of the 2009 Hurricane Season. Last year, Tropical Storm Fay dumped over two feet of rain over parts of the state and at one point, Hurricane Ike was forecasted to make landfall in Florida but devastated the Texas coast. While Florida escaped fairly unscathed last year, the threat is real every year between June and November, and **now** is the time to prepare. The Florida Division of Emergency Management has created a website that will create a checklist and provide information based on your needs:

Create a Hurricane Plan for:

Your Family: <http://www.floridadisaster.org/family/>
Your Business: <http://www.floridadisaster.org/business/>

You can find the contact information for your County Emergency Management Office here:
http://www.floridadisaster.org/County_EM/county_list.htm.

And you can also take part in Hurricane Preparedness Week, from May 24th - 30th, hosted by NOAA and the National Hurricane Center: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml>.

We've received a few questions about how the rain gauges hold up in hurricane conditions – and honestly, I don't have an answer. You are welcome to bring your rain gauge in, if you fear it could be lost or damaged. If a hurricane threatens your area, we are more concerned about your safety than a rainfall total.

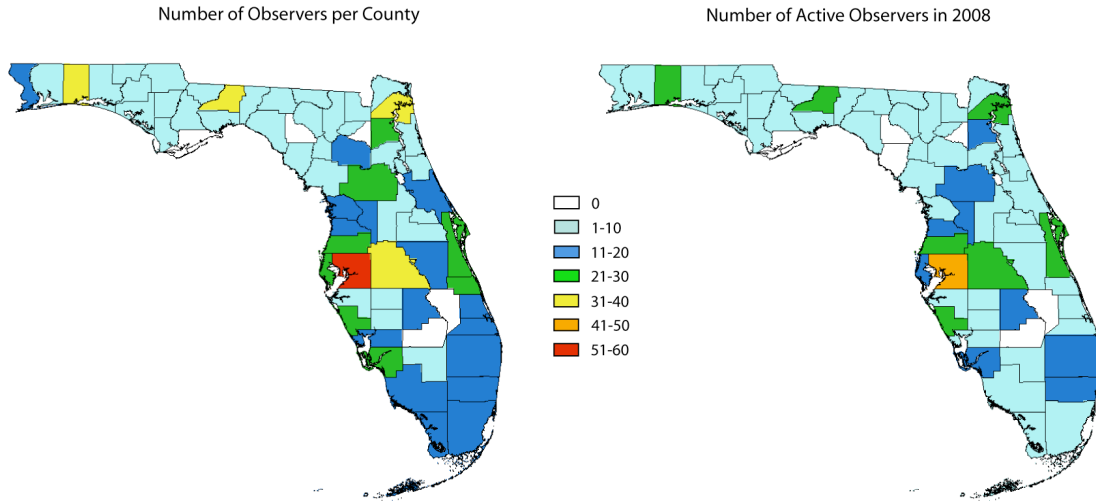
Hurricane Rainfall Facts:

- More than 10% of Florida's rainfall from June to November comes from tropical systems affecting the state.
- The record 24-hr rainfall total for the state of Florida is 38.70", and occurred on September 5, 1950 in Yankeetown from Hurricane Easy.

A Quick Status Update

On May 1st, West Virginia officially became the 43rd state to join CoCoRaHS. June 2009 will see Hawaii join the bandwagon, while Connecticut and New Hampshire start in July. We now have about 850 observers signed up for CoCoRaHS in Florida. The total number of daily observations has dropped off during the last few weeks, mainly due to the lack of rain. Please remember that 0.00" is a valid and important value.

Here's a little graphic that shows where all of our observers are, and how many have been active.



Current State Of The Drought

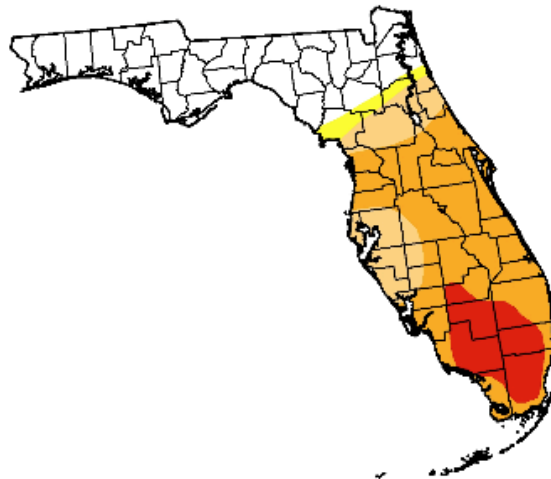
Since last month, portions of Alachua, Levy, Marion, Putnam, St. John's and Flagler counties have seen some recovery from drought conditions due to some rain in April. However, counties such as Collier, Monroe, Miami-Dade, Hendry, Broward and Palm Beach have slipped into D3 drought conditions.

U.S. Drought Monitor Florida

May 5, 2009
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	37.6	62.4	59.8	47.3	11.3	0.0
Last Week (04/28/2009 map)	37.6	62.4	59.8	47.3	8.9	0.0
3 Months Ago (02/10/2009 map)	16.0	84.0	24.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Start of Calendar Year (01/06/2009 map)	44.0	56.0	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Start of Water Year (10/07/2008 map)	75.8	24.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
One Year Ago (05/06/2008 map)	64.4	35.6	18.8	5.7	0.0	0.0



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



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Author: Laura Edwards, Western Regional Climate Center

The NOAA forecast does call for some improvement in the hardest hit areas over the next few months. You can take a look at the latest NOAA Seasonal Drought Outlook at this link: http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/seasonal_drought.html.

April Rainfall Review

The last week of March and first week of April brought a shift in the large-scale weather patterns across the Southeast U.S., characterized by an active pattern with frequent low pressure systems moving across the northern Gulf Coast. Several of these systems were slow-moving, allowing soaking rains and thunderstorms to dump heavy accumulations of rain over the two-week period across most of Georgia, Alabama, and North Florida. A large swath of the Florida Panhandle, South Alabama, and South Georgia received over 12 inches during the last week of March and the first week of April with most of the area seeing 6-8 inches. The widespread nature of the heavy rainfall resulted in flooding of low-lying or poorly-drained areas and record or near-record floods on some Georgia and North Florida Rivers.

The State was hit by one final rain system on April 13th-14th that dumped another 2-4 inches across the Panhandle, but amounted to generally one inch or less from Jacksonville down through the Tampa area.

Unfortunately, these torrential rains failed to progress down the peninsula where the driest areas of the state are located. South of a diagonal line from Gainesville to St. Augustine, the peninsula received only 1-2 inches during the month of April and continued the string of months with below-normal rainfall. The South Florida Water Management District reported the driest 6-month period on record (since 1932) for their management area from November through April.

Station	Total Rainfall	Departure from Normal
Pensacola *	1.73	-3.33
Tallahassee	10.18	6.59
Jacksonville	5.90	2.76
Orlando	1.06	-1.36
Tampa	1.22	-0.58
Miami	1.17	-2.19
Key West	0.70	-1.36

Table 2: April precipitation totals and departures from normal for selected cities (inches).

* Pensacola totals are low because the rain event on April 1st missed the near coastal area (where the rain gauge is located) while dumping 6-8 inches just a few miles inland.

Intense Precipitation Reports

Hopefully, as we move through May and into June, we'll see a return of the afternoon sea breeze thunderstorms and the possibility of rain from a tropical system. Most of us are aware that some of these storms can be intense and produce large amounts of rain in a short period of time.

If you experience heavy rain of at least 2.00" per hour, please submit an "Intense Precipitation Report" as soon as it is safe for you to go read your rain gauge. All intense rain reports are automatically transmitted to the National Weather Service Office for your area. The information you provide may be critical information that can be issued to help issue a severe thunderstorm or flash flood warning.

If you've never submitted an "Intense Precipitation Report," you can access it by going to the CoCoRaHS website, logging in, and clicking "My Data." A link for the form will appear in the

left hand toolbar. Please take a look at the form and familiarize yourself with the information it requests so that when the time comes, you'll be ready to use the form.

Remember that you'll still need to submit your regular "Daily Precipitation Report" so we can see your total rainfall. You can also submit more than one report if necessary.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the regional/local coordinators or myself.

Have Questions?

If at any time you have questions about CoCoRaHS, reading your rain gauge, or finding a location to set-up your rain gauge, please feel to contact a CoCoRaHS Coordinator. We are lucky enough to have regional support from the National Weather Service offices across the state, as well as a few members who have offered to help out at the county/local level. You can find all of the contact information for the CoCoRaHS Coordinators at:

http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=coord_FL

Take care,
Melissa

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"Because Every Drop Counts!"