

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE

June 2, 2015 – 5:00 pm – Council Chambers – Town Hall

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

AGENDA ADOPTION:

- 1. Bi-Monthly Emergency Management Report – Bryan Rush**
- 2. Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company Report**
- 3. Review Hurricane Season Forecast**
- 4. Committee Member Comments**

ADJOURN:

TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BI-MONTHLY REPORT

**Submitted by Bryan Rush
May 28, 2015**

PLANNING

CAMPGROUND SAFETY

The Eastern Shore Disaster Preparedness Coalition has developed a draft blanket campground safety plan that campgrounds can use for the patrons in the event of severe weather. This information will be shared with our local campgrounds.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

The emergency contacts list for the Town EOP has been reviewed and updated. The updated confidential list will be distributed to the committee.

LOCAL CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENT REPORT

The 2015 LCAR is approximately 50% completed and will be done ahead of the July 1 deadline. The report maps strengths and weaknesses to better capture an understanding of where training and grant money should be focused.

HAZZARD MITIGATION

The hazard mitigation planning group continues to meet. The group is working on an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan must be updated every 5 years. Currently, the group is reviewing and commenting on the erosion section. The group is also waiting on FEMA to finish the HAZUS model run for the Eastern Shore, at which time the risk analysis can begin.

FIREWORKS

The annual July 4th Fireworks celebration will occur July 4, 2015, at 10 PM. The rain date is July 6. A planning meeting will be held June 10, 2015. All departments and agencies involved will discuss the plan. After all objectives have been set, an IAP will be developed.

PONY PENNING RESPONSE

The planning process for emergency response to the annual pony penning activities has begun. After future planning meetings, an IAP will be developed.

LOGISTICS

NEW AMBULANCE IN SERVICE

The new Chincoteague Ambulance 3-1 went into service March 27, 2015. The unit has already logged nearly 6,000 miles since then.

TIDE GAUGE

The tide gauge is currently logging data and there is interest from NOAA to begin incorporating the data into their system sooner than anticipated. While no date has been given yet, discussions have been ongoing. In another related note, the gauge went off-line for a period of time on May 7 and May 8, 2015. A USGS representative made contact and was willing to send folks for an emergency site visit. After careful consideration and discussion it was determined that it could wait until the following Monday. The gauge began recording again late on May 8. The visit still occurred on Monday, May 11, to ensure all was working correctly.

TRAINING

SAND TUNNEL COLAPSE

There was a sand tunnel collapse training and exercise held between the US Park Service Lifeguards and the Town of Chincoteague Emergency Medical Services on May 29. The objectives of the exercise were to understand the various dangers of sand tunnels created by beach-goers and the steps to mitigate such an emergency. An Ocean City Beach Patrol member conducted the training as they had numerous tunnel collapses last year. Full scale exercises were conducted to re-inforce the lessons learned.

OPERATIONS

DAILY WEATHER MONITORING

Daily weather monitoring is on-going, with situational awareness emails sent to department heads as necessary. In the period February - May there has only been 2 weather conference calls and 4 briefings have been sent to department heads.

EBOLA

Continued Ebola monitoring is ongoing by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Health. No active cases within Virginia at this time. Plans are being continually updated and revised to facilitate an emergency response if needed.

COMMUNICATIONS TESTING

All forms of alternate communication from the EOC have been tested. The satellite phones are ready and operational. A new power supply is needed for the HAM radio and will be ordered.

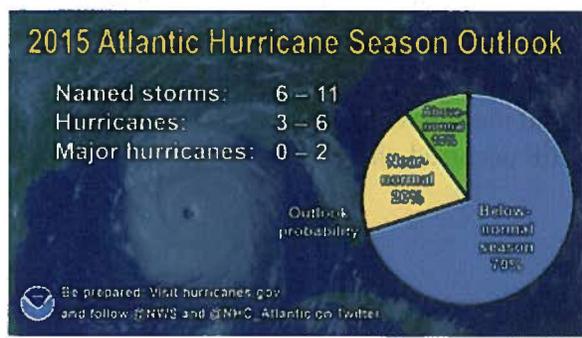
PUBLIC INFORMATION

PREPAREDNESS

Disaster preparedness information will continue on the Town's web page, information kiosk in the office, and on the quarterly newsletter. The hurricane "sales tax" holiday was advertised as well as the Hurricane Preparedness Week information.

NOAA: Below-normal Atlantic Hurricane Season is likely this year

Hurricane forecasting evolving with new storm surge products, upgraded modeling May 27, 2015



(Credit: NOAA)

[NOAA's Climate Prediction Center](#) says the 2015 Atlantic hurricane season will likely be below-normal, but that's no reason to believe coastal areas will have it easy.

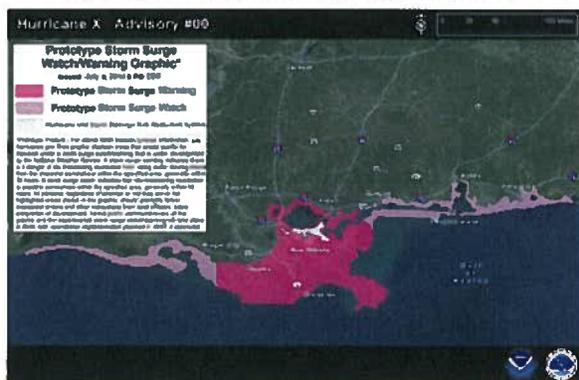
For the hurricane season, which officially runs from June 1 - November 30, NOAA is predicting a 70 percent likelihood of 6 to 11 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which 3 to 6 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including zero to 2 major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5; winds of 111 mph or higher). While a below-normal season is likely (70 percent), there is also a 20 percent chance of a near-normal season, and a 10 percent chance of an above-normal season.

"A below-normal season doesn't mean we're off the hook. As we've seen before, below-normal seasons can still produce catastrophic impacts to communities," said [NOAA Administrator Kathryn Sullivan, Ph.D.](#), referring to the 1992 season in which only seven named storms formed, yet the first was Andrew – a Category 5 Major Hurricane that devastated South Florida.

"The main factor expected to suppress the hurricane season this year is El Niño, which is already affecting wind and pressure patterns, and is forecast to last through the hurricane season," said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster with NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. "El Niño may also intensify as the season progresses, and is expected to have its greatest influence during the peak months of the season. We also expect sea surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic to be close to normal, whereas warmer waters would have supported storm development."

Included in today's outlook is Tropical Storm Ana, but its pre-season development is not an indicator of the overall season strength. Ana's development was typical of pre-season named storms, which often form along frontal boundaries in association with a trough in the jet stream. This method of formation

differs from the named storms during the peak of the season, which originate mainly from low-pressure systems moving westward from Africa, and are independent of frontal boundaries and the jet stream.



NOAA's National Hurricane Center will use a prototype storm surge graphic this season to highlight areas at risk for inundation from storm surge. (Credit: NOAA)

With the new hurricane season comes a new prototype storm surge watch/warning graphic from [NOAA's National Hurricane Center](#), intended to highlight areas along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the United States that have a significant risk of life-threatening inundation by storm surge from a tropical cyclone.

The new graphic will introduce the concept of a watch or warning specific to the storm surge hazard. Storm surge is often the greatest threat to life and property from a tropical cyclone, and it can occur at different times and at different locations from a storm's hazardous winds. In addition, while most coastal residents can remain in their homes and be safe from a tropical cyclone's winds, evacuations are often needed to keep people safe from storm surge. Having separate warnings for these two hazards should provide emergency managers, the media, and the general public better guidance on the hazards they face when tropical cyclones threaten.

Also new this season is a higher resolution version (2 km near the storm area) of NOAA's [Hurricane Weather Research and Forecasting](#) model (HWRF), thanks to the upgrades to operational computing. A new 40-member HWRF ensemble-based data assimilation system will also be implemented to make better use of aircraft reconnaissance-based Tail Doppler Radar data for improved intensity forecasts. Retrospective testing of 2015 HWRF upgrades demonstrated a five percent improvement in the intensity forecasts compared to last year.

This week, May 24-30, is [National Hurricane Preparedness Week](#). To help those living in hurricane-prone areas prepare, NOAA offers hurricane preparedness tips, along with video and audio public service announcements at www.hurricanes.gov/prepare.

"It only takes one hurricane or tropical storm making landfall in your community to significantly disrupt

your life," said FEMA Deputy Administrator Joseph Nimmich. "Everyone should take action now to prepare themselves and their families for hurricanes and powerful storms. Develop a family communications plan, build an emergency supply kit for your home, and take time to learn evacuation routes for your area. Knowing what to do ahead of time can literally save your life and help you bounce back stronger and faster should disaster strike in your area."

NOAA will issue an updated outlook for the Atlantic hurricane season in early August, just prior to the historical peak of the season.

NOAA also issued its outlook for the Eastern Pacific and Central Pacific basins. For the Eastern Pacific hurricane basin, NOAA's 2015 outlook is for a 70 percent chance of an above-normal hurricane season. That outlook calls for a 70 percent probability of 15-22 named storms, of which 7-12 are expected to become hurricanes, including 5-8 major hurricanes. For the Central Pacific hurricane basin, NOAA's outlook is for a 70 percent chance of an above-normal season with 5-8 tropical cyclones likely.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and our other [social media channels](#).