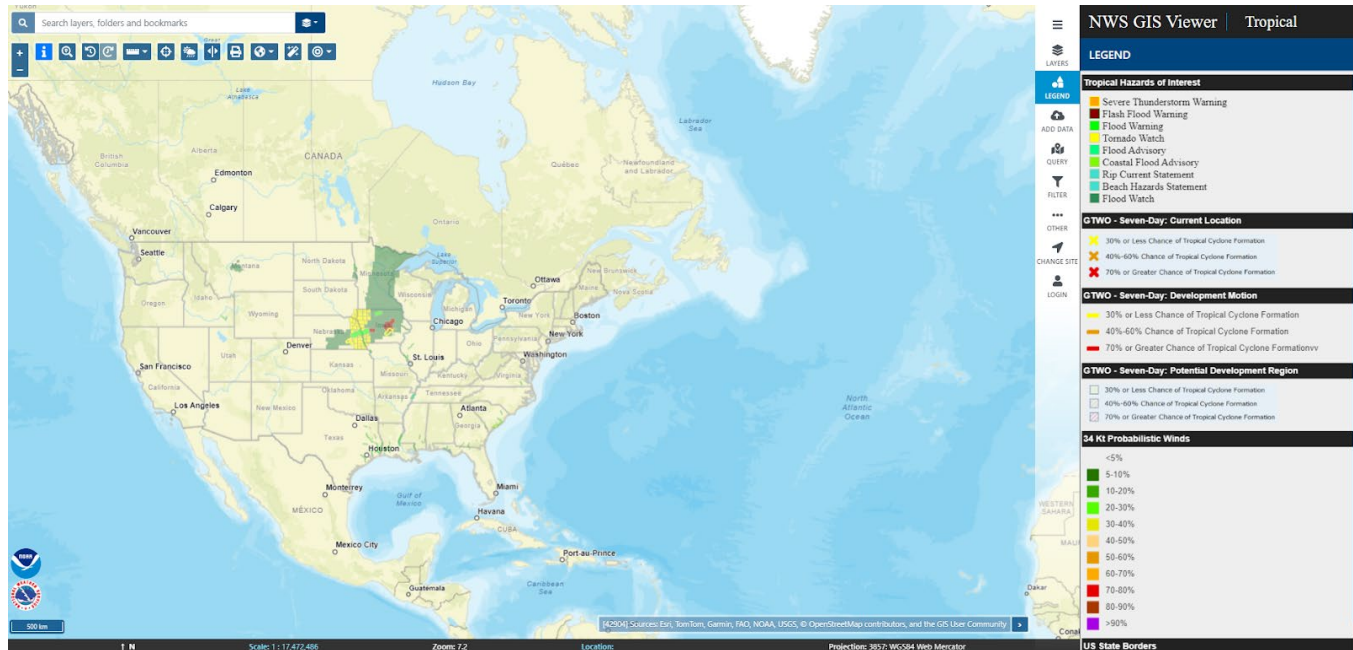


## Busy Week for the Viewer – Tropical Program Site is Now Operational

By: Paxton Ryan, GIS Meteorologist



The Viewer on May 21, 2024, with the default data layers for the Tropical program site

Forecasters and core partners across the nation will have access to a powerful updated tool just in time for the upcoming Hurricane Season. This means consistent, reliable access to a wide range of products for critical decision making, from Tropical Warnings to peak storm surge graphics, especially during dangerous tropical systems. The NWS Dissemination Team has been working hard the past three years to implement impressive updates to the NWS National GIS Map Viewer (the Viewer) and to transition the Tropical Site from experimental to operational status – to learn more, see the [Service Change Notice \(SCN\)](#).

The Viewer is a GIS application that hosts the majority of U.S. federally-produced weather data in a GIS format on the Amazon Web Services public cloud, making it available for easy visualization and interpretation through a small set of geoprocessing tools. Not only does the Viewer house a wide range of NWS data by theme, but it allows for the overlay of data to help decision makers understand context, which includes impacts from tropical systems.

The Tropical program site now makes **three** program sites operational on the Viewer, including the General, Water, and Tropical program sites. Experimental program sites also exist for Fire, Marine, Severe, Winter, Space, Climate, and Aviation service program areas. These experimental program sites will remain experimental until operational status is approved by the applicable Service Program Teams and subsequently announced as operational in a NWS SCN. This process was just completed for the Tropical Program Site. We anticipate, but have not confirmed, Fire and Marine will be the next operational sites.

Recent changes to the Viewer and Tropical Program Site include:

- Dynamic legend only displays the hazards in effect
- Plain language field names (attributes)
- [Peak Storm Surge Graphics](#) added as a new service
- Improvements to Point Weather Forecast button functionality

*Additional data and functionality will be added periodically in the future.*

Furthermore, on May 23, the NWS Dissemination (DIS) Team hosted a NWS Viewer training session with various demos and exercises for the NWS ROCs and the GIS group within the Response Directorate at FEMA. This 'prototype' of a training exceeded expectations and will be used as a template for future engagements and training sessions. Excitedly, the DIS Team is continuously making and adding new datasets as they become available or are requested from NWS field staff, and is continuing to engage with partners regarding the Viewer.

If you have suggestions on datasets or additional functionalities you would like to see in the Viewer, or if you have any questions, please reach out to the DIS Team at [nws.mapservices@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.mapservices@noaa.gov).

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## 7 Things EMs Need to Know About NWS's New Spot Forecast Request Tool

By Maureen O'Leary, Public Affairs, National Weather Service

Are you a public safety official looking for a non-routine, near-term weather forecast? You've come to the right place. For decades, the National Weather Service (NWS) has provided site-specific Spot Forecasts as a resource for emergency managers and wildland fire agencies to support safety and help with tactical decision-making. On June 25, the NWS will unveil the new Spot Forecast website. The new site is designed to better aid first responders and emergency management partners in protecting life and property during wildland fires, rehabilitation and restoration of natural resources, and special events.

Here are 7 things you need to know about NWS Spot Forecasts:

1. On June 25, there will be a [new URL](#) to request a Spot Forecast! While the new Spot request tool functions similarly to the old one, it has a different look and feel and lives on a more stable, secure, and reliable IT infrastructure.
2. Sixty percent of current Spot Forecast requests are for prescribed burns or fire support; however, Spot Forecasts also can be useful to public officials for hazardous materials incidents, marine incidents, search and rescue response and other threats to public safety.
3. For prescribed burns, weather observations from the site should be taken and sent to the Spot forecaster hours if not days before ignition. Observations allow meteorologists to understand the local terrain's weather in data sparse areas which will result in a more accurate forecast.
4. Spot Forecasts are usually issued with a turn-around time of 30 to 60 minutes unless the request is for a future date. Requestors can ask for an update to the forecast if forecast conditions are not representative of what is actually occurring.



5. Spot Forecasts have helped land managers make go or no-go decisions for prescribed fires due to forecast weather conditions. For example, winds may cause smoke to be transported into populated communities.
6. You must be a public safety official or land manager to request a Spot Forecast.
7. In 2023, partners requested more than 37,000 Spot Forecasts nationwide.

The NWS is a key partner of emergency managers and [Wildland Fire Agencies](#). Our role is to predict the weather that impacts incidents on the ground. Accurate and timely forecasts and products are crucial to the safety and success of incident missions and fuel treatment activities. If there is ever a question or concern regarding Spot forecasts, or other forecast services, please contact your local NWS weather forecast office for further assistance.

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## Corpus Christi and Brownsville Participate in Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference

By: NWS Staff



*WFO Corpus Christi and Brownsville meteorologists at the Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference*

As the 2024 Atlantic Tropical Season nears, WFOs Corpus Christi and Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley participated in the 13th annual Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference hosted by the Coastal Bend Emergency Management Association and Nueces County. With an audience of over 1,000 people, including community stakeholders, emergency managers, a range of local, state and federal government responders and policy makers, volunteer organizations, healthcare professionals and industry representatives, several members from both WFO Corpus Christi and WFO Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley presented important topics in front of the large crowd. The conference started

off with a keynote presentation from Warning Coordination Meteorologist **Cory Mottice**. Throughout the first day of talks, Meteorologists presented on a wide variety of topics, ranging from assessing your risk along the coast to an in-depth look into Storm Surge. Day two saw presentations on how we can better prepare ourselves and our properties for a storm, as well as how we can work with stakeholders to build windstorm resilience in our highly vulnerable communities.

In addition, both WFOs helped support the NWS booth, where hundreds of attendees stopped by to talk about the weather, pick up our latest hurricane guide, and learn about past weather events.

The two-day event concluded with a Regional Hurricane Exercise. Meteorologists from WFO Corpus Christi and Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley participated in the half day exercise by serving as deployed meteorologists embedded amongst emergency managers from various counties and agencies as they worked through the event and made important decisions. Not only did the meteorologist from both WFOs gain a better understanding of the EOC environment but our partners were able to explore the benefits of having a meteorologist on-site.

We are already looking forward to next year's conference!



*Various emergency management agencies set up for the hurricane tabletop exercise*

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## Southeast WFOs, SERFC, and NHC Participate in NOAA SECART All-Hazards Workshop

*By: NWS Staff*



*Federal, state, and local stakeholders listen to Heidi Funkhouser of the USCG share her response experiences of Hurricane Dorian and the Francis Scott Key Bridge*

From May 20-22, NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team (SECART) Resilience Working Group held an all-hazards workshop in Jacksonville, FL. Members of both WFO Columbia (Lead Meteorologist **Emily Carpenter** and MIC **Rich Okulski**) and WFO Jacksonville (Lead Meteorologist **Angela Enyedi** and WCM **Al Sandrik**) were involved in coordinating the event, which consisted of presentations by representatives from each NOAA Line Office, "Stories from the Field" by core partners who showcased how NOAA resources have been used in past disasters, and a tabletop exercise simulating a Category 4 Ian-like hurricane making landfall in the Jacksonville/St. Augustine area.

The purpose of this year's workshop was to help local partners become more familiar with the NOAA line office capabilities for assisting through a disaster's life cycle and to allow our partners who have real-world examples of working with NOAA to share their stories and offer suggestions for working with NOAA on future incidents. Exercise discussions revolved around preparedness, response, and recovery from devastating hurricane storm surge and heavy rainfall into the St. Johns River basin which resulted in an oil release from the Navy Fuel Depot. Participants noted one of the first recovery activities would be to survey and dredge the St. Johns River so that the channel could be safely re-opened as soon as possible. Additional concerns regarding environmental pollution, marine debris, and impacts to historic sites in St. Augustine were considered. Players had the opportunity to identify how each line office may be involved through each part of the disaster timeline using a "Behind the NOAA Door" Jeopardy-style game, and exercise injections were made using the NWS JAX exercise room in SLACK. The workshop concluded with participants visiting the US Coast Guard Station Mayport and Port of Jacksonville's Blount Island, both located on the St. Johns River.

The workshop was well attended by a variety of federal, state, and local agencies across the southeast region, both in person and virtually, along with additional participation from NWS Jacksonville, NWS Melbourne, and representatives from the NWS Line Office. In a notable example of cross-line office collaboration, workshop planning and execution was well supported by NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R) Disaster Preparedness Program (DPP). Additional contributions were made in cooperation with University of North Florida as a StormReady University for providing a beautiful venue, and NOAA's Homeland Security Program Office (HSPO) for providing exceptional exercise development and execution assistance.

Presentations have been made available for review with permission for a limited time at the [workshop website](#). Overall, attendee feedback was positive, and SECART is already looking ahead to the 2025 workshop.



## Aware

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