



President's Report – July 2015

The Atlantic hurricane season began June 1st and ends November 30th. As we approach the middle of this period, I thought it fitting to spend time on this topic. Tropical cyclones with maximum sustained winds below 40 mph are labeled as tropical depressions by the National Hurricane Center. Should a tropical depression reach 40 mph, it will receive a name and be classified as a tropical storm. If the tropical storm continues to intensify and reaches maximum sustained winds of 74 mph then the tropical storm will be designated as a hurricane.

North Carolina is ranked fourth (after Florida, Texas, and Louisiana) in the number of cyclones that produce hurricane force winds. The busiest month for hurricanes is September followed by August – together they have produced 80% of our major hurricanes.

“Major hurricane” is a term used by the National Hurricane Center to describe storms that reach maximum sustained winds greater than 110 mph. This is the equivalent of a Category 3 storm or greater. Those of us who have lived or who have own property on the Outer Banks for any length of time know that damage can occur at much lower wind speeds. Even a Category 1 hurricane has winds of 74-95 mph which can be dangerous and produce damage.

Over the past 30 years there has been an annual average of twelve named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes. Hurricane forecasters are predicting the 2015 season to have fewer named storms than average. (These forecasts do not attempt to predict the number of storms that will make landfall in the U.S.) Yet this still leaves us with a forecast of 6-11 named storms, 3-6 hurricanes and 0-2 major storms. So far this year we have had three named storms. One, “ANA” occurred in May prior to the official start of the hurricane season.

When a hurricane watch is issued, you should begin preparations for possible evacuation. Monitor the storm via internet, TV or radio. When the probability of a hit to the Outer Banks becomes likely, Dare County will issue a MANDATORY EVACUATION. ***Never ignore an order to evacuate.*** Even sturdy, well-built houses may not hold up against a hurricane. Staying home to protect your property is not worth risking your health and safety. Many who have stayed put during a hurricane regret it. The fear and anxiety about the potential effects of the storm, and sleep loss caused by the sound of wind driven rain, tree branches and pine cones pelting your home combine to make a situation you don't want to experience. Flying debris is the most common cause of injury during a hurricane.

Plan your evacuation route once a hurricane watch is issued. Keep in mind that the first to evacuate will get the closest hotel/motel rooms and avoid traffic congestion. The longer you wait, the further you'll have to travel to find accommodations, if you aren't staying with a friend or relative. When evacuating, do not forget to take your cell phone and charger, medicines/medical supplies, identification (like a passport or license) and cash. Also, bottled water, a battery-operated radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit and flashlight. Make sure you also have a car emergency kit. If you have time, turn off your home's gas, electricity, and water, and unplug your appliances. Follow the roads that emergency workers recommend even if there's traffic. Other routes might be blocked.

Let's hope the forecasters are right but let's be prepared so we can best deal with any eventuality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg", is located in the bottom right corner of the page.