

September 20, 2017 04:45 pm

A quick update with the reminder that it's still TOO SOON to know where Maria will be by the time she makes as far north as NC/VA. The key to where Maria goes will likely be how long Jose remains an active system to our north. The question will be: is Jose strong enough to provide enough atmospheric disturbance to prevent a high-pressure system from blocking Maria's ability to turn out to sea as she moves northward? The forecast still has Maria staying off shore, but the models are sensing weakness in Jose and have trended slightly westward the last few model runs. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) currently has most of extreme eastern NC/VA with a 10%-20% chance of seeing tropical force winds (39+mph) and Isle of Wight is right on the edge between 5%-10% and 10%-20% chance of seeing tropical force winds in the next 5 days.

As she moves north the forecast track is going to shift, so don't focus too closely on the future track at this point. For now, you should continue to make sure you are prepared for what Maria and the rest of this busy hurricane season could bring our way. As we've said before, hoping Maria (or the storms that may follow her) doesn't head our way is not a plan. If you are not already prepared for the possible impacts of a hurricane/tropical storm, we've still got more than a month of hurricane season to go and you should be making a plan and preparing NOW. Go to www.ready.gov for more information.

As of 2pm, Maria was located west of Arecibo, Puerto Rico and had sustained winds of 115mph. Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 60 miles from the center, and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 150 miles. Little change in strength is forecast during the next 48 hours, and Maria is expected to remain a dangerous major hurricane through at least Friday. Maria is moving toward the northwest near 12mph, and this general motion with a gradual decrease in forward speed is expected through early Friday. On the forecast track, the center of Maria will move away from the northwestern coast of Puerto Rico this afternoon. The center will then pass offshore of the northeastern coast of the Dominican Republic tonight and Thursday and then move near the Turks and Caicos Islands and southeastern Bahamas Thursday night and Friday.

We'll keep watching....Keep those eastward thoughts going!

