

Monday, September 10, 2018 – 8:30 am

As of the 5am National Hurricane Center (NHC) update, Florence is a CAT2 hurricane (115mph winds) and is located off shore about 1,200 southeast of Norfolk and is moving west-northwest at about 9mph. Still too early for specific impacts for Isle of Wight. However, the local forecast is starting to take shape. Nothing very significant has changed since last night's update. However, as of this morning, the likelihood of us seeing at least tropical storm force winds have increased and the current National Weather Service (NWS) forecast is showing a range of 5-7" of rain with higher pockets possible. Actual impacts in the county will be highly dependent on the track Florence takes and it is likely that the forecast impacts will change over the next few days. Also note, that Florence is still forecast to slow down significantly or stall near the time of landfall, depending on when, where and how long the stall lasts we could see a significant increase in impacts, especially rain fall totals, coastal flooding and downed trees.

Forecast winds: A west-northwestward motion with an increase in forward speed is expected during the next couple of days. A turn toward the northwest is forecast to occur Wednesday night or Thursday. Florence is forecast to make landfall along the southeastern coast of the US Thursday (remember impacts will likely be felt long before actual landfall). Rapid strengthening is forecast, and Florence is forecast to become a major hurricane (CAT3 125+mph) by this afternoon, and is expected to be a CAT4 storm (140+mph) tomorrow. Florence will likely remain an extremely dangerous major hurricane until landfall which is currently forecast to occur Thursday. Hurricane-force winds currently extend outward up to 25 miles (35 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 125 miles (205 km). Model guidance increases the size of Florence's wind field during the next few days.

Forecast Confidence: There continues to be a significant difference in the 2 primary models regarding Florence's ultimate track. One brings it onshore and then moves it west towards central NC and north into western VA. The other brings it more up the NC coast with it stalling around the Pamlico Sound before moving more off to sea. The NHC forecast is favoring the more inland solution as the most likely scenario.

As noted before, don't focus too much on the center line of the forecast track – Florence landfall impacts have a likely chance of occurring anywhere inside the error cone. The current error cone for landfall includes points from near the VA/NC border to the GA/SC border. Also remember Florence impacts will not be contained to just inside the forecast cone – impacts from Florence will be felt well away from the storm's center and potentially outside the forecast error cone. The official NHC forecast is still favoring landfall in the greater Wilmington NC area to the very southern outer banks. Hampton Roads currently has a:

- 58% chance of seeing tropical force winds (39+mph);
- 20% chance of strong tropical force winds (58+mph); and,
- 10% chance of hurricane force winds (74+mph) 4-5 days.

We will likely see the % chances adjust as the storm forecast continues to become better defined. Richmond and Charlottesville continue to have chances for tropical storm force winds similar to Hampton Roads. Danville continues to have the highest wind chances in the state. If the forecast track shifts northward or the storm tracks more up the outer banks versus the NHC's current assumption of a more inland track our wind impacts will increase.

Now is the time to be preparing for potential impacts by late Weds (current forecast timing of likely very earliest we'd see tropical storm type conditions here). Wind arrival timing for us is more likely sometime Thursday morning. It's important to note that these timings refer to when we might see tropical storm winds begin - not when the system may have actually made landfall. The current forecast has actual landfall late Thursday/early Friday. Also important to note, timing of winds will likely continue to fluctuate as the forecast is refined.

Concerns: Beyond the obvious concerns about having a CAT4 hurricane making landfall anywhere on the east coast,

- **Rain/winds:** the current forecast shows a strong possibility that Florence may slow down significantly or stall in day 4-5 of the current forecast. If this happens, impacts from prolonged winds and heavy rains will be magnified. Of particular concern is if Florence does track more northward up the coast before stalling (some models show the stall lasting several days)– this would significantly increase impacts for our area – especially rain fall totals and wind impacts. Some models have a possibility of 20" or more in our area (not the most likely scenario, but within the realm of possibility).
- **Down trees/power outages:** We've already seen substantial rainfall in the county in September. We've gotten 3"-7+" across the county since Sept 7th. A large portion of this rain occurred over Saturday night into Sunday. Rain is forecast for everyday this week, regardless of Florence's impacts. Florence is currently forecast to dump at least an additional 5-7" of rain on the area. Depending on the timing/location of her forecast stall/slow down we could see more than double the current Florence forecast rain. With saturated soils and fully leafed out trees, there is a concern for a number of downed trees – which would likely impact power outages in the county. Again, impacts from a stall could increase these impacts.

- **Coastal flooding:** If Florence takes the track that brings her further up the coast, we'll likely see significant increase to the coastal flooding impacts.
- **Blackwater River:** River forecast have not yet started to factor in possible Florence impacts. Expectation is that we'll see some flooding along the Blackwater. The extent will be directly related to the actual storm track and final rain total numbers.
- **Tornados:** If the storm takes the more inland track near or south of Wilmington, we'll be on the "bad" side of the storm (we'd be in the north east quadrant of the storm) as it moves westward, this could increase our chances to see tornados develop.

