

SWFL – More heavy rainfall on tap for SW Florida (H. Michael Mogil, CCM, CBM, NWA- DS*)

H. Michael Mogil

**A contribution to H. Michael Mogil's Learning Blog
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Yesterday morning's news included significant reference to Tropical Storm Cristobal located just to the southwest of the Yucatan Peninsula. Forecasts called for Cristobal to remain nearly stationary for about 36 to 48 hours and then start a northward movement toward the end of the week.

This means that Cristobal was NOT a direct factor in the forecasts for southwest Florida yesterday, and is not expected to play a role for the remainder of this week.

Rather, a moisture-rich atmosphere, considerable instability (the vertical temperature profile that allows for up and down atmospheric motions), and a very strong upper level diffluent wind pattern were all in synch for another day of heavy to excessive rainfall. Rainfall was expected to top two inches in a very short period of time in some places, leading to roadway ponding and storm drain (not sewer) backup.

On Tuesday, Naples Airport reported over two inches of rain (with 1.33 inches falling in just 21 minutes). That translated into a rainfall rate of just under four inches per hour! Yesterday, parts of Lee County reported excessive rainfall.

At my home in North Naples (near I75 and Vanderbilt Road), rain was falling so fast on Tuesday afternoon (video) that gutters could not handle roof runoff. As a result, we had a river running down our courtyard walkway. The grassy area between the building next door

and my condo became a lake. The rain was falling so hard and accumulating so fast that I called the National Weather Service (NWS) to report the conditions. A short while later, they issued a flood advisory for areas just to the west of I75 (where over three inches of rain fell). My rainfall total was 2.64 inches.

Today (Thursday), we are faced with a similar, albeit not exact weather pattern. And yesterday, the NWS issued a flood watch for all of south Florida through 8am EDT on Friday morning. Saturated ground, swales that already contain significant water accumulations, community lakes that are full, and the growing impervious surface cover in our area will all lead to accumulating water on roadways, parking lots and other areas.

The overall forecast calls for showers and thunderstorms each day and night through Saturday (and beyond). The storms are likely to develop earlier in the day and continue later into the evening. Already early this Thursday morning, showers and thunderstorms cover much of the Gulf of Mexico to our south and west (image) and they are advancing toward us.

While slight changes in atmospheric conditions may lessen or increase rainfall potential on any given day, wet weather will be the rule for the foreseeable future. And, while rain may be widespread, some folks may miss the heavier showers and receive only light rain, while others may miss the rain altogether.

The bottom line is that an umbrella should be part of your outdoor wardrobe; while driving, consider roadway ponding as a driving hazard (so, it is best to slow down and don't let the water on the roadways cause you to lose tire traction with the road).

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* The National Weather Association Digital Seal (NWA-DS) is awarded to individuals who pass stringent meteorological testing and evaluation of written weather content. H. Michael Mogil was awarded the second such seal and is a strong advocate for its use by weather bloggers.