

An Update on the (Gridded) Graphical Hurricane Local Statement

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Abstract

Since 1999, the Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Melbourne, FL has been developing a graphical version of the Hurricane Local Statement (gHLS). It is designed to complement the text HLS by providing a graphical depiction of threat levels for the following tropical cyclone hazards: wind, surge, flash flood, tornado, and marine (seas). Each hazard graphic is specific to the WFO's county warning area and marine area of responsibility, and depicts the geographical distribution and level of threat of each hazard. In addition, a combined hazard table contains bar charts of the five threats to compare threat levels relative to one another. The hazard graphics are designed primarily as a planning tool for decision makers potentially impacted by tropical cyclones. The graphics enable forecasters to convey pertinent severe weather information in an easy to interpret, consistent, and highly accessible format. The target audience for the suite of graphics includes state/local emergency managers, government agencies, media, as well as business managers and the general public; that is, anyone requiring location-specific hazardous weather threat information during tropical cyclone situations will have decision-making information available to them.

During 2002, developers migrated the preparation platform to the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) Graphical Forecast Editor (GFE) for creation of the five plan view maps (one for each hazard) and the combined hazard table. This upgrade has facilitated product-preparation consistency for the forecaster, while also accommodating the provision of threat information in gridded form. In operation, the *.png graphics are uploaded to the World Wide Web and ingested into the highly navigable and interactive web page. To accompany each graphic, descriptive detail is automatically extracted from the textual HLS and simultaneously displayed via a series of customized scripts; this is another new feature. This latest version of the gHLS was successfully implemented at WFO Miami and was operationally used during the 2002 hurricane season. This limited, yet notable, success of Melbourne's gHLS has warranted serious consideration for potential national implementation with formal activities now well-underway. This presentation will express the current status of the gHLS, identify recent upgrades, address national implementation issues, and outline the direction for continued future development.