

NOUS41 KWBC 211400
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Service Change Notice 23-115
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
900 AM EST Thu Dec 21 2023

To: Subscribers:
 -NOAA Weather Wire Service
 -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
 -NOAAPort
 Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From: Stephen W. Bieda III, Ph.D., Chief
 Severe, Fire, Public and Winter Weather Services Branch

Subject: Changes to Public and Fire Forecast Zones for WFO Jacksonville,
FL: Effective March 5, 2024

Effective Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 4:00 PM Eastern Standard Time, 2100 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Jacksonville, FL (JAX) will change Public and Fire Weather Forecast Zones encompassing Columbia and Hamilton Counties in Northern Florida. After this change, all forecasts and related products will use the zone numbers and names shown in Table 2 below.

If March 5, 2024 is declared a Critical Weather Day, this implementation will be postponed to March 6, 2024 at 2100 UTC.

These changes will result in more geographically precise forecast, watch and warning products for the general public and will enhance web-based graphical product consistency and appearance.

Columbia County, FL which is currently two Zones will be split along Interstate 75 creating a third Zone and allowing for enhanced warnings due to Gulf of Mexico tropical cyclones.

Hamilton County, which is currently one Zone, will be subdivided into two Zones to support a more geographically precise forecast representative of meteorological conditions, especially during tropical events.

Three current zones will be converted into five separate zones. These new zones are being divided to optimize issuance of hazard products for conditions that vary significantly south and west of Interstate 75 due to its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. The new zones are listed in Table 2.

Table 1. Universal Geographic Code (UGC): Current Public/Fire Forecast Zone Name

FLZ020: Hamilton
FLZ122: Northern Columbia
FLZ222: Southern Columbia

Table 2. UGC: New Public/Fire Forecast Zone Name

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FLZ120: Eastern Hamilton
FLZ220: Western Hamilton
FLZ322: Northern Columbia
FLZ422: Southeastern Columbia
FLZ522: Southwestern Columbia
  
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Table 3. NWS Products Affected by the WFO Jacksonville, FL Change. The Public/Fire Weather forecast zone changes are listed below.

Product Name	WMO Heading	AWIPS ID
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Air Quality Alert	AEUS76 KJAX	AQAJAX
Air Quality Index Forecast	AEUS76 KJAX	AQIJAX
Area Forecast Matrices	FOUS52 KJAX	AFMJAX
Zone Forecast	FPUS52 KJAX	ZFPJAX
Point Forecast Matrices	FOUS52 KJAX	PFMJAX
Recreational Forecast	AEUS76 KJAX	RE CJAX
State Forecast Product	FPUS52 KJAX	SFPJAX
Tabular State Forecast	FPUS62 KJAX	SFTJAX
Area Forecast Discussion	FXUS62 KJAX	AFDJAX
Hazardous Weather Outlook	FLUS42 KJAX	HWOJAX
Short Term Forecast	FPUS72 KJAX	NOWJAX
Special Weather Statement	WWUS82 KJAX	SPSJAX
Public Information Statement	NOUS42 KJAX	PNSJAX
Non-Precipitation Watch/Warning/Advisory	WWUS72 KJAX	NPWJAX
Fire Weather Forecast	FNUS52 KJAX	FWFJAX
Fire Weather Message	WWUS82 KJAX	RFWJAX
Fire Danger Statement	FNUS62 KJAX	RFDJAX
Hurricane Local Statement	WTUS82 KJAX	HLSJAX
Tropical Cyclone Watch/Warning	WTNT81 KNHC	TCVAT1-5
WFO Tropical Cyclone Product	WTUS82 KJAX	TCVJAX
Winter Weather Message	WWUS42 KJAX	WSWJAX
Hydrologic Outlook	FGUS72 KJAX	ESFJAX
Flood Watch	WGUS62 KJAX	FFAJAX
Flood Warning	WGUS42 KJAX	FLWJAX
Flood Statement	WGUS82 KJAX	FLSJAX

NWS partners and users will need to make necessary changes to their communications systems to accommodate these weather forecast zone changes.

Preliminary shapefiles for public/fire weather forecast zones are available online at:

- <https://www.weather.gov/gis/PublicZones>
- <https://www.weather.gov/gis/FireZones>

Final versions of these shapefiles will be available on February 23, 2024.

A graphical depiction of the change is online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/jax/ZoneSplit2024>

For more information, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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