

February Flash Flood Drenches Tampa Bay



Figure 1. Precipitation Accumulation Estimate, Florida Peninsula, 7 AM EST February 3rd to 7 AM EST February 4th, 2006. (click to enlarge)

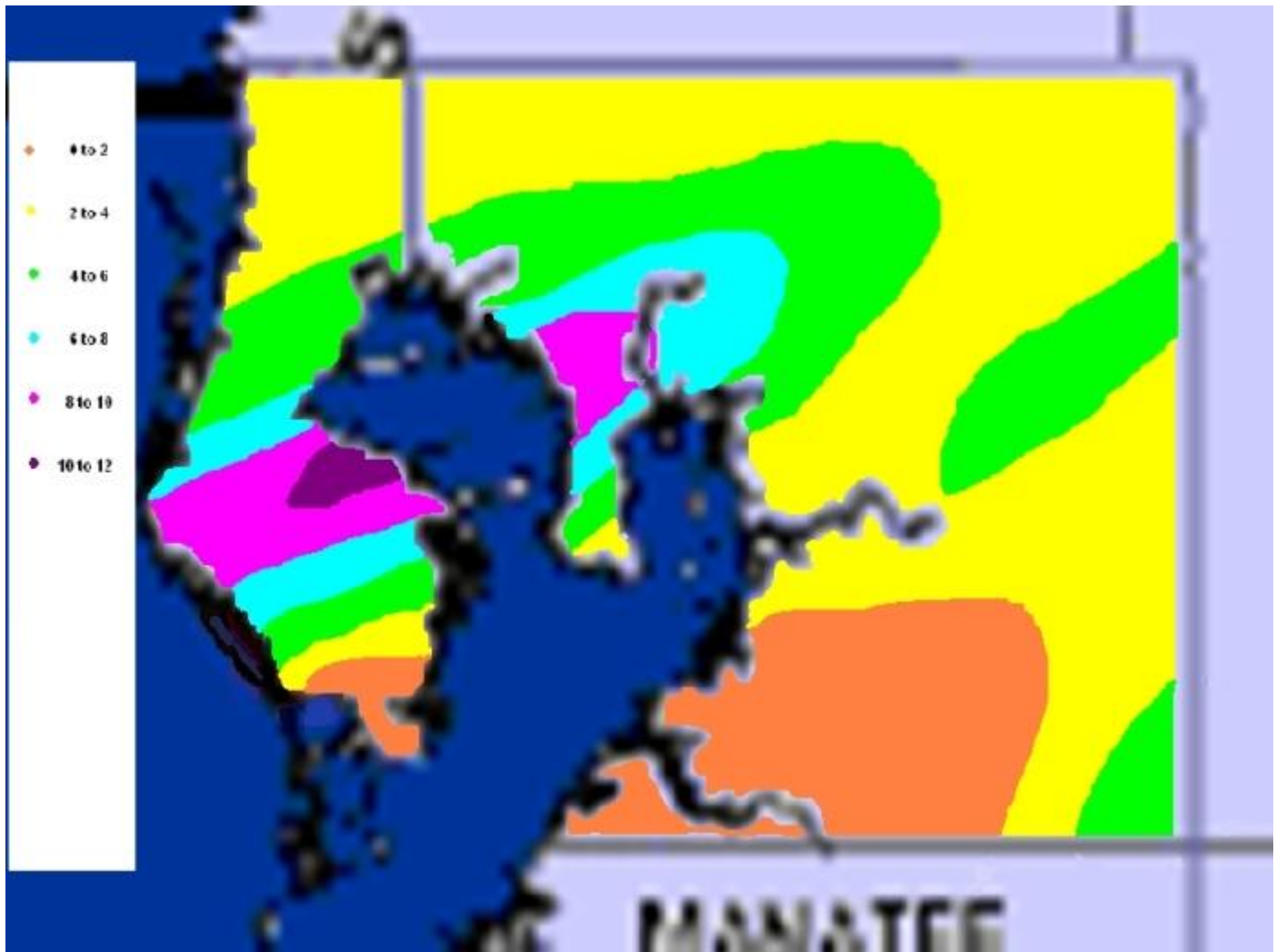


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Water Rescues, Property Damage in Pinellas After nearly a foot of rain falls

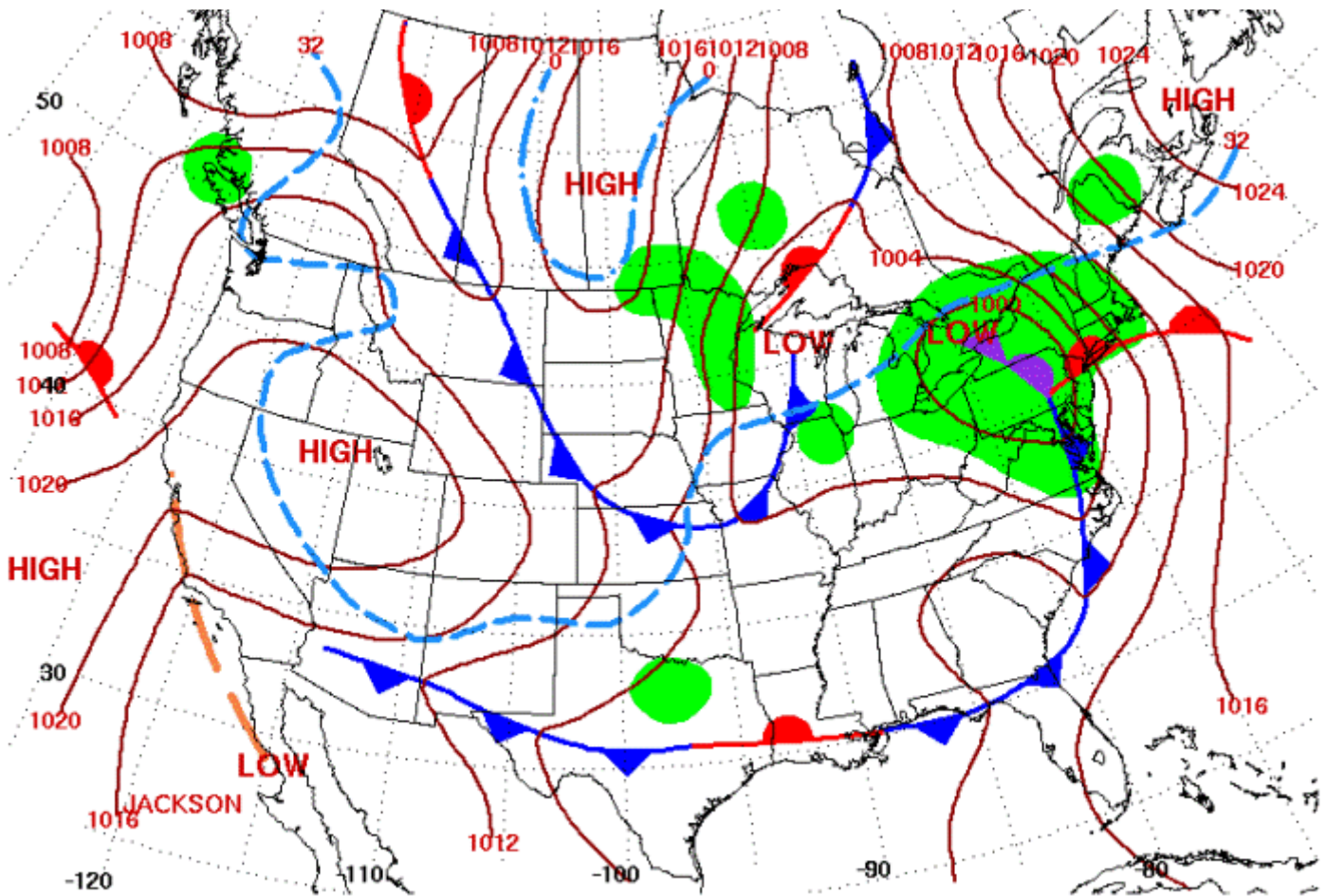
The combination of tropical moisture flowing into a line of thunderstorms with an approaching upper level disturbance, along with smaller scale features to be investigated, allowed a train of intense thunderstorms to repeatedly hammer portions of the Tampa Bay area on February 3rd. When all was said and done, between 8 and more than 11 inches of rain fell in roughly a five hour period in a stripe extending from Pinellas Park northeast through Lealman and Feather Sound, then across Old Tampa Bay to west Tampa, including Tampa International Airport. The area of heaviest rain was so concentrated that downtown St. Petersburg, less than 10 miles away, recorded less than an inch of rain during the same period! The daily record was shattered at Tampa; in fact, the total of 8.29 inches ranked unofficially as the 4th wettest calendar day since 1890. A preliminary

A little after midnight, a few strong storms began moving toward the Big Bend region of Florida. As those moved inland and weakened, others began to form in a line, or "train", farther southwest in the still unstable air mass. Outflow boundaries from the developing line soon formed a cluster of storms well ahead of it, moving onshore in Citrus County. Soon, the entire system formed a line of storms which extended from Marion County through Citrus County and into the Gulf. This line would remain nearly stationary through the pre-dawn hours of the 3rd, dumping a radar estimated 3 to 4 inches of rain in Citrus County. An event that initially had the earmarks of a severe weather

rainfall summary for the heart of the event (February 3) can be found at the bottom of the page. The torrential rains caused flash flooding in the areas where more than 8 inches fell. The flash flooding prompted the mayor of St. Petersburg to term the event a "hundred year flood". In Lealman, an entire mobile home community was evacuated, and at least 60 of the homes were flooded. Several roof collapses were reported, including a box store in north St. Petersburg and another at a community center in Treasure Island. Hundreds of vehicles were stranded by the flood waters; total damage to property will likely be in the millions.

The system began quietly enough; 12 hours prior to the event, convection was just beginning to organize well south of Panama City. The event was indirectly associated with an approaching cold front depicted below.

episode was transitioning into a heavy rainfall situation as well. By daybreak, new cells were forming in the Gulf west and northwest of the Tampa Bay metropolitan area, likely fed by strong southerly inflow of warm humid air. Sarasota/Bradenton airport reported temperatures of 76 or higher through the early morning, with dewpoints near 70 and sustained south winds in excess of 20 mph. Shortly after sunrise, thunderstorms began impacting the immediate Tampa Bay metropolitan area, and by mid morning the strongest cells were developing over central Pinellas County. Unlike overnight, when the "train" of thunderstorms propagated south, the line stalled, and additional cells containing torrential rains and frequent cloud to ground lightning continued to affect the area from central Pinellas County northeast through west Tampa toward Busch Gardens. So, why did the line stall? There may be many reasons, from the affects of inflow up Tampa Bay to the approach of an upper level disturbance which "lifted" the line back north. Check back soon for a full report!



Surface Weather Map at 7:00 A.M. E.S.T.

Public Information Statement
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 PNSTBW

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE TAMPA BAY AREA - RUSKIN FL
 1000 PM EST FRI FEB 3 2006

...FEAST OR FAMINE...

IT IS CURRENTLY THE DRY SEASON ACROSS WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AND FOR THE LAST TWO MONTHS RAINFALL AMOUNTS HAVE BEEN RUNNING WELL BELOW NORMAL. HOWEVER...TODAY THE REMNANTS OF A COLD FRONT COMBINED WITH UPPER LEVEL DISTURBANCES MOVING ACROSS THE AREA LED TO HEAVY RAINFALL...ESPECIALLY ACROSS PARTS OF THE TAMPA BAY REGION.

MANY LOCATIONS IN WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA HAVE RECEIVED OVER THREE

INCHES OF RAIN TODAY...WITH PARTS OF CENTRAL PINELLAS RECEIVING OVER TEN INCHES. UNFORTUNATELY...A STRONG UPPER LEVEL TROUGH IS MOVING EASTWARD ACROSS THE EASTERN U.S. AND GULF OF MEXICO AND THIS IS TAPPING TROPICAL MOISTURE AND SPREADING IT NORTH ACROSS THE FLORIDA PENINSULA. THIS COMBINED WITH ADDITIONAL ATMOSPHERIC DISTURBANCES MOVING THROUGH THE FLOW WILL LEAD TO MORE LOCALLY HEAVY RAINFALL TONIGHT INTO SATURDAY MORNING.

BY SATURDAY AFTERNOON...HIGH PRESSURE WILL BEGIN TO BUILD INTO THE REGION BRINGING COOLER AND MUCH DRIER WEATHER FOR THE REST OF THE WEEKEND.

FOLLOWING ARE PRELIMINARY AND UNOFFICIAL RAINFALL TOTALS FROM MIDNIGHT TO 9 PM TODAY AT SOME SELECTED LOCATIONS ACROSS WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA:

OBSERVING SITE	COUNTY	RAIN TODAY (INCHES)
...AIRPORTS...		
TAMPA INTL	HILLSBOROUGH	8.24
ST PETE/CLEARWATER INTL	PINELLAS	8.20
LAKELAND LINDER	POLK	3.69
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE	HILLSBOROUGH	3.63
BROOKSVILLE/HERNANDO CO	HERNANDO	2.41
WINTER HAVEN/GILBERT FIELD	POLK	1.67
ST PETE/ALBERT WHITTED	PINELLAS	0.96
FORT MYERS/PAGE FIELD	LEE	0.53
PUNTA GORDA/CHARLOTTE CO	CHARLOTTE	0.31
SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTL	MANATEE	0.21
...OTHERS...		
PINELLAS PARK (UPR HIGHLANDS CANAL)	PINELLAS	11.17
PINELLAS PARK (PINEBROOK CANAL)	PINELLAS	7.90
SAWGRASS LAKE	PINELLAS	7.50
SEMINOLE	PINELLAS	7.01
CITRUS PARK	HILLSBOROUGH	6.90
LARGO	PINELLAS	6.44
TAMPA (NEAR BUSCH GARDENS)	HILLSBOROUGH	5.68
CLEARWATER	PINELLAS	5.81
THONOTOSASSA	HILLSBOROUGH	4.35
THONOTOSASSA	HILLSBOROUGH	4.24
PLANT CITY	HILLSBOROUGH	3.60
LAND O LAKES	PASCO	3.40
VALRICO	HILLSBOROUGH	3.30
BLOOMINGDALE	HILLSBOROUGH	3.04
DUNEDIN	PINELLAS	2.87
ST LEO	PASCO	2.75
HOLIDAY 5 E	PASCO	2.43
RERDELL	HERNANDO	1.96
HOLDER (WITHLACOOCHEE RVR)	CITRUS	1.71
TRILBY (WITHLACOOCHEE RVR)	HERNANDO	1.56

LAKE PANASOFFKEE	SUMTER	1.54
BARTOW	POLK	1.39
DUETTE	MANATEE	1.32
FORT MEADE	POLK	0.85
COLEMAN 2 W	SUMTER	0.58
RUSKIN/NWS	HILLSBOROUGH	0.46
WIMAUMA	HILLSBOROUGH	0.24

FOR MORE CLIMATE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT THE FOLLOWING
LINK: [HTTP://WWW.SRH.NOAA.GOV/TBW/](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tbw/) AND THEN CLICK ON THE LOCAL
LINK IN THE CLIMATE SECTION ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE PAGE.