Hurricane Floyd Essay, Research Paper

A hurricane is easily the most powerful storm that mother-nature can throw at us. Every year people who live on the coasts fight hurricanes with no dismay. A hurricane is simply too strong. Their winds reach speeds of 75 mph. The winds around the eye wall can reach 130 to 150 mph. They are 200 to 300 miles in diameter. The number of casualties is endless, as well as the widespread destruction that takes millions of dollars to repair. Even if the hurricane doesn t cause a lot of damage, the storm surge will. Storm surge is the great tidal waves that crash into our coasts and make huge floods that are caused by hurricanes.

Hurricanes are extremely large area s of low pressure that are over the ocean in either the North Atlantic ocean, or the eastern North Pacific Ocean. If a hurricane is in the western Pacific Ocean than it is called a typhoon. One in the Indian Ocean is called a cyclone. The danger region of a hurricane is normally in the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean. The hurricane season is the six month time period from June-November. The peak month of hurricanes is September.

Hurricanes form over the ocean. Easterly waves, what hurricanes develop from, are long, narrow regions of low pressure which occur in ocean winds called trade winds. At first, these easterly waves can grow into something called, a tropical depression. A tropical depression occurs when winds are up to 31 mph. Then tropical depressions can be upgraded into a tropical storm if the winds reach speeds of 74 mph or less. Then finally a the storm can be bumped up into a hurricane if the winds reach 75 mph.

The National Weather Service is constantly trying to provide us with data and other information about when and where hurricanes are forming. It has been said that the only way

to reduce the number of fatalities in serious storms is to give people more warning time for them to go to a safer place. Many times in hurricanes people are told to evacuate there city or state. The more time that people have to do this the more that people will do this. Throughout the entire hurricane season meteorologists keep a close watch on the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. They examine pictures of the area taken by satellites, and also take information on air pressure, wind speed, and temperatures. One of there most important jobs is to gather information on where the storm will hit, and how powerful it will be. They track these monster storms with airplanes, satellites, and radar.

The warm ocean water fuels and powers the hurricane. Normally hurricanes move westward at first and gain strength. Then hurricanes turn east when they hit the equator. The hurricane dies when it ends up over cool oceans. Hurricane Floyd was a storm that did not go as planned. Myself, and many meteorologists hypothesized that Floyd would crash hard into the eastern coast and hit states like Florida and Georgia hard. Instead Floyd decided to abruptly turn northward and seemed to weaken. Floyd had the potential to be a killer storm, but fortunately for us, it wasn t.

Hurricane Floyd became a Tropical depression on September 7th. It was located in the Atlantic Ocean at 14.6 degrees North and 46.2 degrees West. It was first reported to have wind speeds of 25 mph. Later Floyd became a Tropical storm on September 8th with winds of 40 mph. This is when it moved West-North-West towards the Lesser Antilles. Floyd reached a category 1 hurricane on September 10th with winds of 80 mph. It gained strength and size and plowed into the Bahamas. It was a very strong category 4 hurricane with winds of 155 mph. It had a diameter of 600 miles!

Hurricane Floyd headed straight towards Florida. Warnings were in excess. Over one million people were forced to leave there homes and travel away from the path of this monster storm. However, Floyd turned North and spared Florida. These people didn t have to leave there homes, but if Floyd would of hit Florida as expected the evacuation of these people would have saved many lives. Floyd slowly started to weaken as it headed towards the Carolina coast. Floyd finally hit land when it hit North Carolina as a category 3. Floyd did flood the North Eastern United States with Tropical storm force winds and very heavy rain. Not as nearly as much as it could have. On September 17th advisories were no longer being issued as Floyd was becoming extra-tropical. Extra-tropical storms are when the hurricanes reach temperate latitudes.

Hurricane Floyd and Hurricane Andrew had similar characteristics at the beginning of there lives. They both started in relatively the same location and both followed the same path. The major difference is when Hurricane Andrew reached Florida it didn t weaken and turn north like Floyd. Andrew kept on charging right through Florida and into the Gulf of Mexico with wind speeds of 145 mph and gusts of up to 175 mph. Floyd in was similar in comparison with winds being clocked at 155 mph. Below are the paths of Floyd and Andrew. As you can see they started the same but Andrew made a path right through the United States.

A long time ago hurricanes were named after saints, wives, and girlfriends. Now though members of the World Meteorological Organization came up with a much better, and much more scientific way of naming these storms. These people came up with different lists for the 4 different basins of the world. The Atlantic Basin was assigned six lists, one for each year. The names are in alphabetical order with only one name beginning with each letter. There are only 21 names on each list though because letters Q, U, X, Y, Z are not used. Every sixth year the same list is used unless there was a named hurricane that was largely destructive or has had an impact on our economy. If a name is retired then it is replaced with another name of the same letter.

Ever since this naming system has been started no hurricane season has had more than 21 hurricanes. However, if a season did have 21 or more they would use the Greek alphabet, Alpha, Beta, etc. And also the gender of the names are used. If the 1996 list goes Boy-Girl-Boy-Girl than the 1997 list will do Girl-Boy-Girl-Boy. This list was simply complied from a 1,001 baby name book purchased by the forecaster Gil Clark.

Each different hurricane region has names that are the same flavor as the region that they are in. For example the United States region which includes Canada and Central America names like Mitch, Hermeine, and Ernesto are used. The Central Pacific region has names that are of a Polynesian flavor, such as Akoni, Ema, and Keli.

In the 19th century the hurricanes were named after Saints. They done this by naming them after the Saint s day that was closest to the date that the hurricane happened. During World War II they were typically named after wives and girlfriends of the meteorologists. They use people names rather than locations just as an easier way to keep track of storms. And also two hurricanes may start in the same general location and for book-keeping purposes you don t want two hurricanes to have the same name.

I thought this was particularly interesting because I really didn t know where the names for hurricanes came from.