



Tropical Update



11:30 AM EDT

Tuesday, July 21, 2026

Tropical Storm Bertha Slowly Strengthening Over the Northeastern Gulf; Tropical Storm Warnings Now in Effect Along the Panhandle

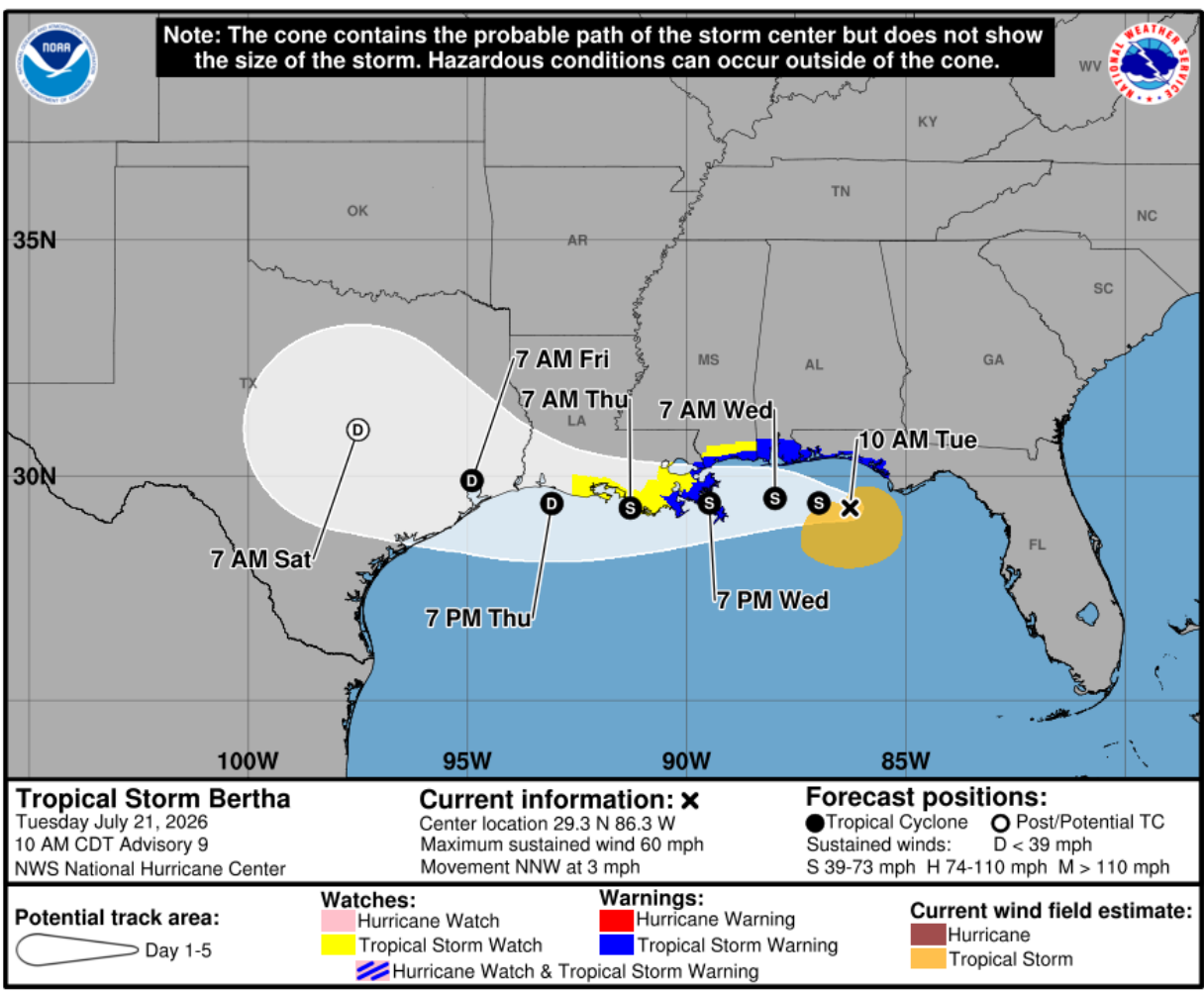
Periods of Heavy Rain, Gusty Winds, and Dangerous Beach Conditions Continue Along the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

This update is intended for government and emergency response officials, and is provided for informational and situational awareness purposes only. Forecast conditions are subject to change based on a variety of environmental factors. For additional information, or for any life safety concerns with an active weather event please contact your County Emergency Management or Public Safety Office, local National Weather Service forecast office, or visit the National Hurricane Center website at www.hurricanes.gov.



Tropical Storm Bertha

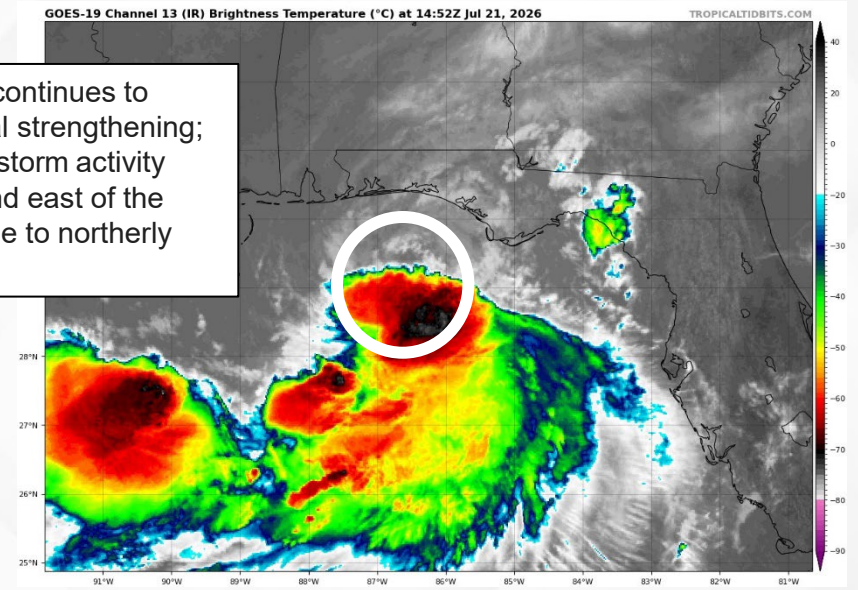
From the National Hurricane Center (NHC)



- **Location:** 70 miles SSW of Panama City, Florida
- **Maximum Sustained Winds:** 60 mph
- **Current Movement:** NNW at 3 mph
- **FL Watches/Warnings:** **Tropical Storm Warnings** from the Bay/Gulf County line to the FL/AL border.

A turn towards the west-northwest and west is expected later today. Then, a continued westward motion is forecast through the middle of the week. On the forecast track, Bertha will move near or along the northern Gulf coast during the next several days. Data from the Air Force Hurricane Hunters indicate maximum sustained winds have increased to near 60 mph with higher gusts. Little change in strength is expected today, followed by gradual weakening through the middle of the week. ***Bertha will continue to bring periods of heavy rainfall, gusty winds, dangerous surf, and life-threatening rip currents to the Florida Gulf Coast as it moves off to the northwest early this week.***

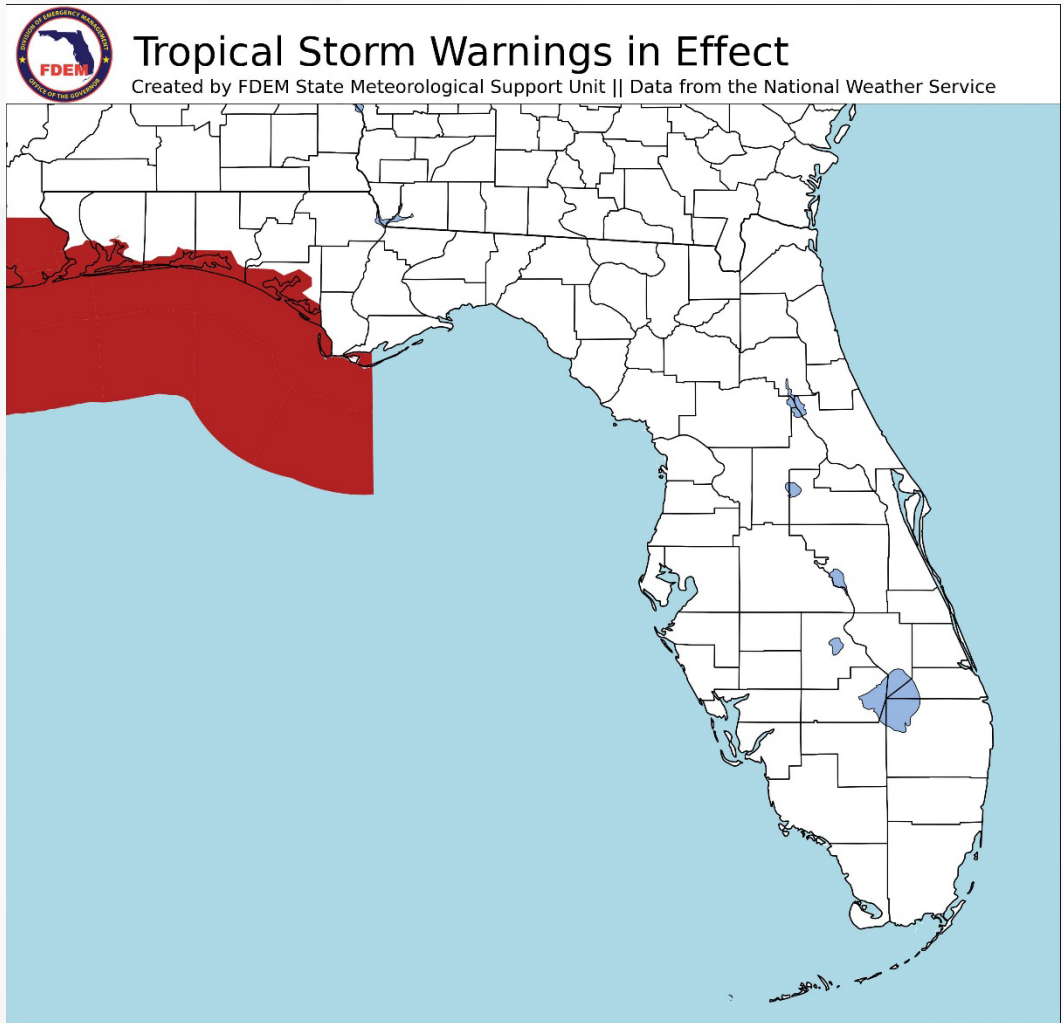
Tropical Storm Bertha continues to show signs of additional strengthening; however, most thunderstorm activity remains to the south and east of the center of the system due to northerly wind shear.





Tropical Storm Warnings in Effect

From the National Hurricane Center (NHC)



The Tropical Storm Watches have been upgraded to **Tropical Storm Warnings** from the Bay/Gulf County line to the FL/AL border along the Panhandle coastline.

Escambia	Santa Rosa
Walton	Okaloosa
Bay	



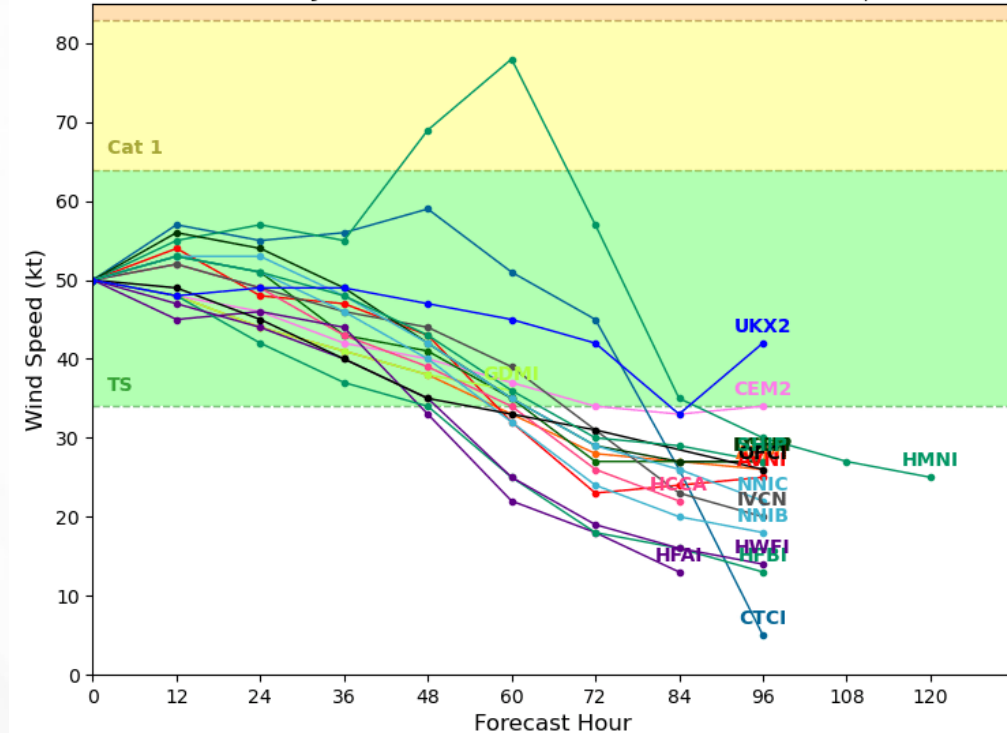
Initialized at 12z Jul 21 2026

Levi Cowan - tropicaltidbits.com



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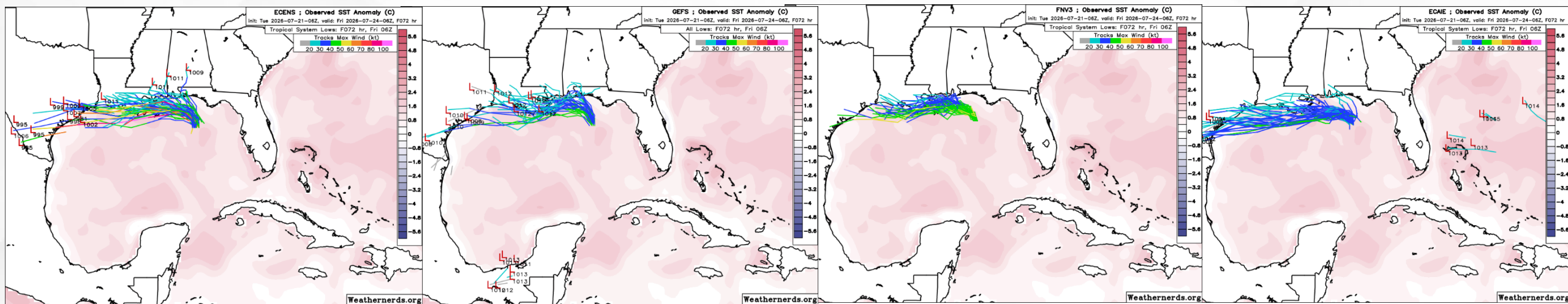


- A short-term northwesterly storm motion will be followed by a sharp turn to the west. A Florida landfall is not expected.
- Some additional strengthening is possible in the short term before Bertha turns to the west tomorrow. Steady weakening of Bertha is expected as it tracks along the northern Gulf Coast through this week. Bertha is expected to become a remnant low pressure system by Friday as it enters Texas.



Computer Models (Ensemble)

Next 3-Days



ECENS

GEFS

GDM

ECAI

Computer ensemble guidance remains in agreement that Bertha will remain a modest tropical storm as it treks across the northern Gulf Coast this week, eventually making landfall in Southeast Louisiana. Should Bertha remain further south and stay offshore Louisiana, there is a chance it could experience additional strengthening as it travels westward towards Texas. However, wind shear and dry air will continue to plague Bertha likely keeping it from rapid strengthening. This morning's satellite imagery confirms TS Bertha's continued struggle with dry air and northerly wind shear.

A **direct Florida landfall** is not anticipated; however, periods of heavy rainfall, gusty winds, and dangerous surf are still expected along all Gulf facing locations of Florida regardless of exact track.



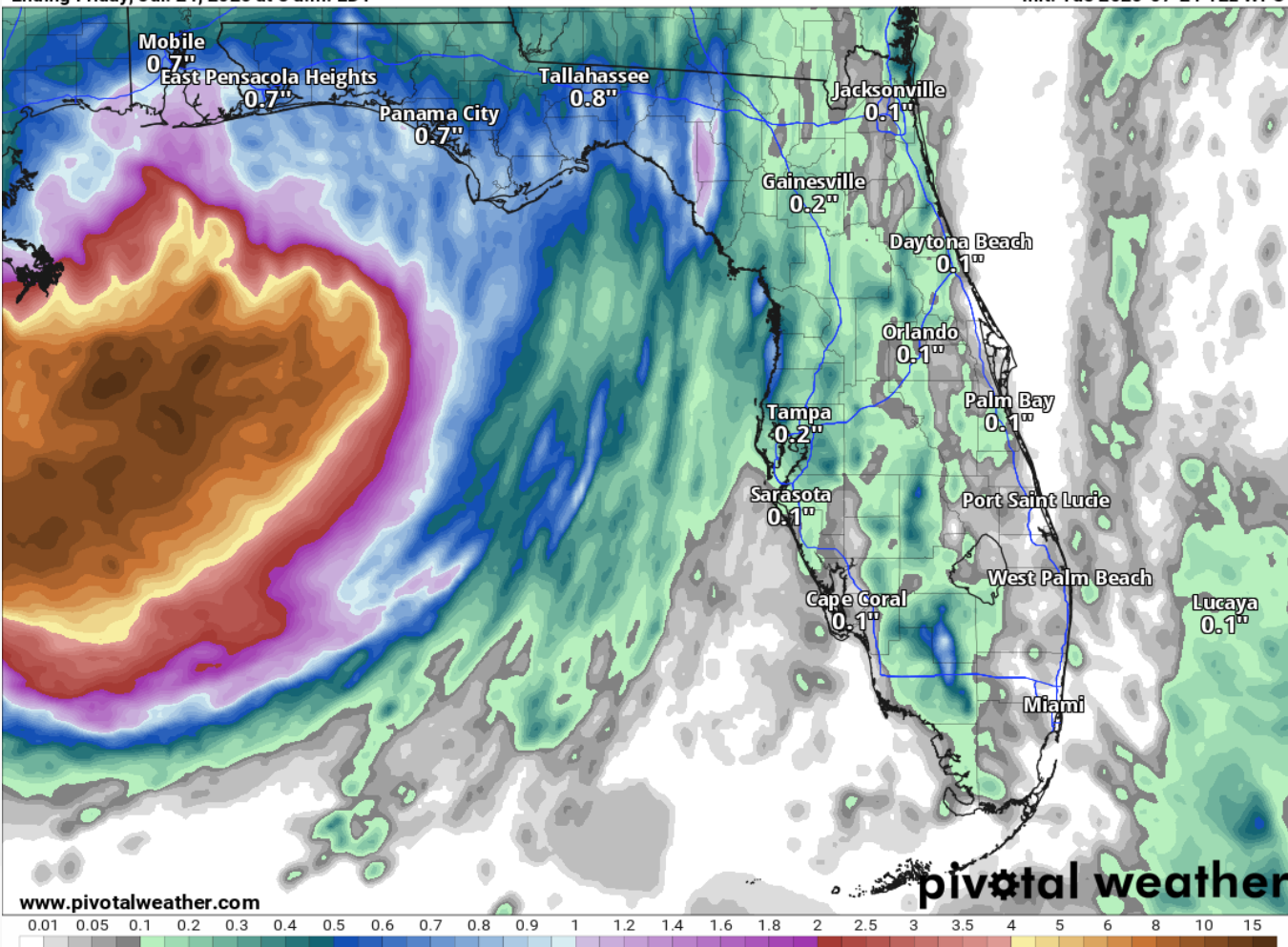
Forecast Rainfall Totals – Next 3 Days

From the Weather Prediction Center (WPC)

72-Hour Precipitation (in)

Ending Friday, Jul. 24, 2026 at 8 a.m. EDT

Init: Tue 2026-07-21 12z WPC



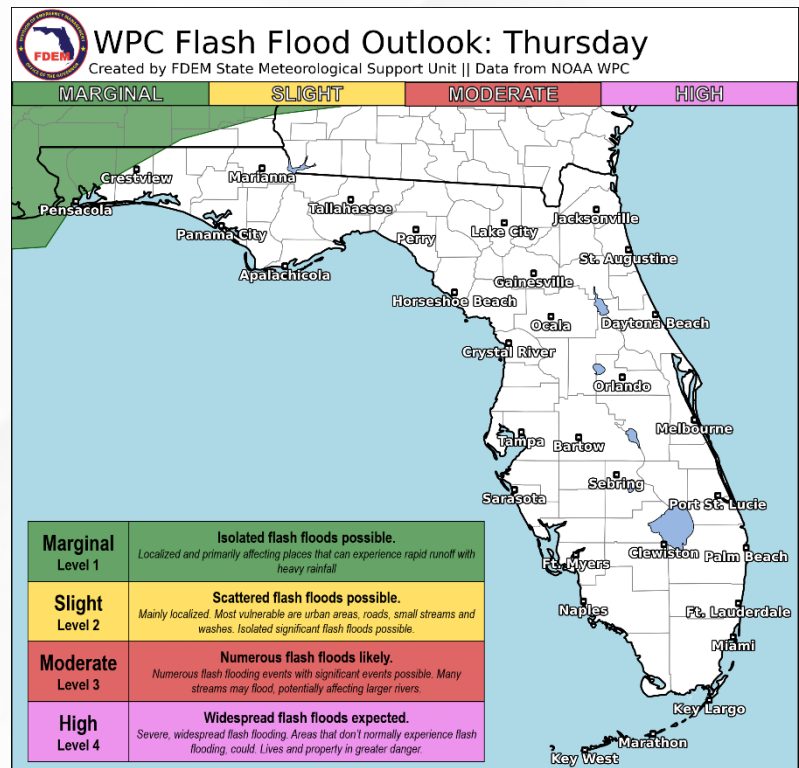
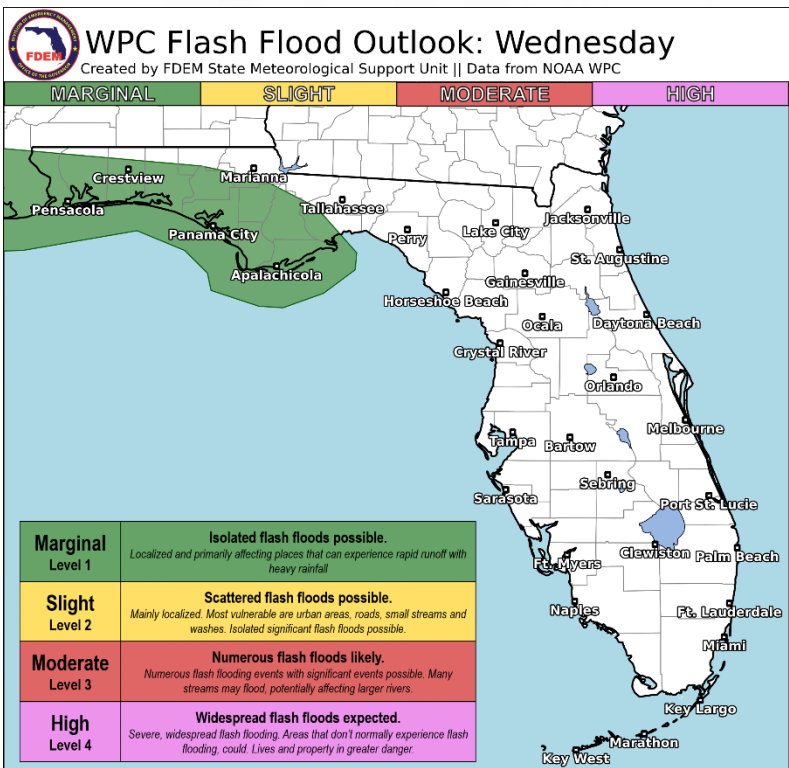
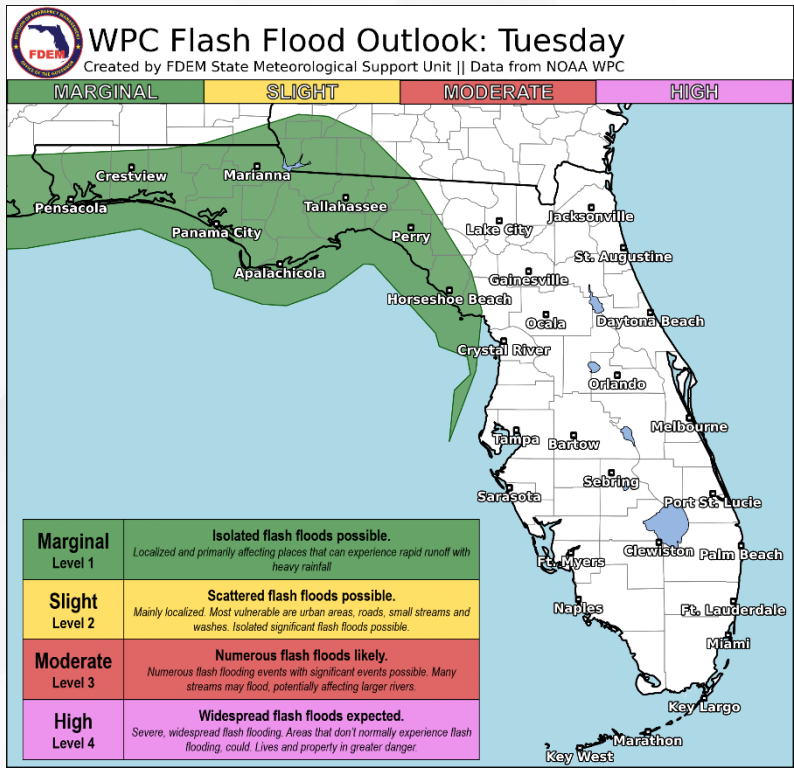
The heaviest rains yesterday fell across the Big Bend with a general 1-2" observed. Locally higher totals were found across Franklin and Wakulla counties with some totals measuring up to 3-4". Additional heavy bands of showers and thunderstorms rotating around Tropical Storm Bertha will continue today and tomorrow across the Panhandle and Big Bend as the system drifts to the northwest over the northern Gulf. An additional **1-2" of rain** is expected across the Panhandle and Big Bend associated with this system, mainly south of the I-10 corridor. Additional totals **upwards 2-4"** cannot be ruled out for coastal locations that receive multiple rounds of heavy downpours. *A track closer to the coastline will expand higher rainfall totals farther inland towards the I-10 corridor.* Lesser amounts are expected throughout the Peninsula where some isolated to widely scattered showers and storms may lead to a quick 1" in localized spots.

Marginal Risks (level 1 of 4) for Flash Flooding remain outlooked across portions of the Panhandle and Big Bend through the remainder of the week.



Flash Flood Outlook – Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday

From the Weather Prediction Center (WPC)



The Weather Prediction Center (WPC) has maintained a **Marginal Risk (Level 1 of 4) for Flash Flooding** across portions of the Panhandle and Big Bend today and Wednesday in anticipation of **multiple rounds of heavy rainfall** associated with Tropical Storm Bertha. Another **Marginal Risk** is outlooked for the far western Panhandle on Thursday as remnant moisture from Bertha interacts with a cold front dipping into the Deep South, promoting additional shower and thunderstorm development. As is often the case with multi-day flash flooding events, further revisions to these outlooks may be needed as forecasts become more clear and previous days' rainfall totals influence future day's flash flooding risk.



Excessive Rainfall Outlook

From the Weather Prediction Center (WPC)

Understanding WPC Excessive Rainfall Risk Categories				
No Area/Label	MARGINAL (MRGL)	SLIGHT (SLGT)	MODERATE (MDT)	HIGH (HIGH)
Flash floods are generally not expected.	Isolated flash floods possible	Scattered flash floods possible	Numerous flash floods likely	Widespread flash floods expected
www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov @NWSWPC	Localized and primarily affecting places that can experience rapid runoff with heavy rainfall.	Mainly localized. Most vulnerable are urban areas, roads, small streams and washes. Isolated significant flash floods possible.	Numerous flash flooding events with significant events possible. Many streams may flood, potentially affecting larger rivers.	Severe, widespread flash flooding. Areas that don't normally experience flash flooding, could. Lives and property in greater danger.
Flash flooding near me?	Flash Flooding	Flash Flooding	Flash Flooding	Flash Flooding
NO Flash Flooding	NO Flash Flooding	NO Flash Flooding	NO Flash Flooding	NO Flash Flooding
 WEATHER PREDICTION CENTER				



Flash Flood Safety

From the National Weather Service (NWS)

3 SIMPLE STEPS FOR FLASH FLOOD SAFETY

During a flood, water levels and the rate at which the water is flowing can quickly change. Remain aware and monitor local radio and television.



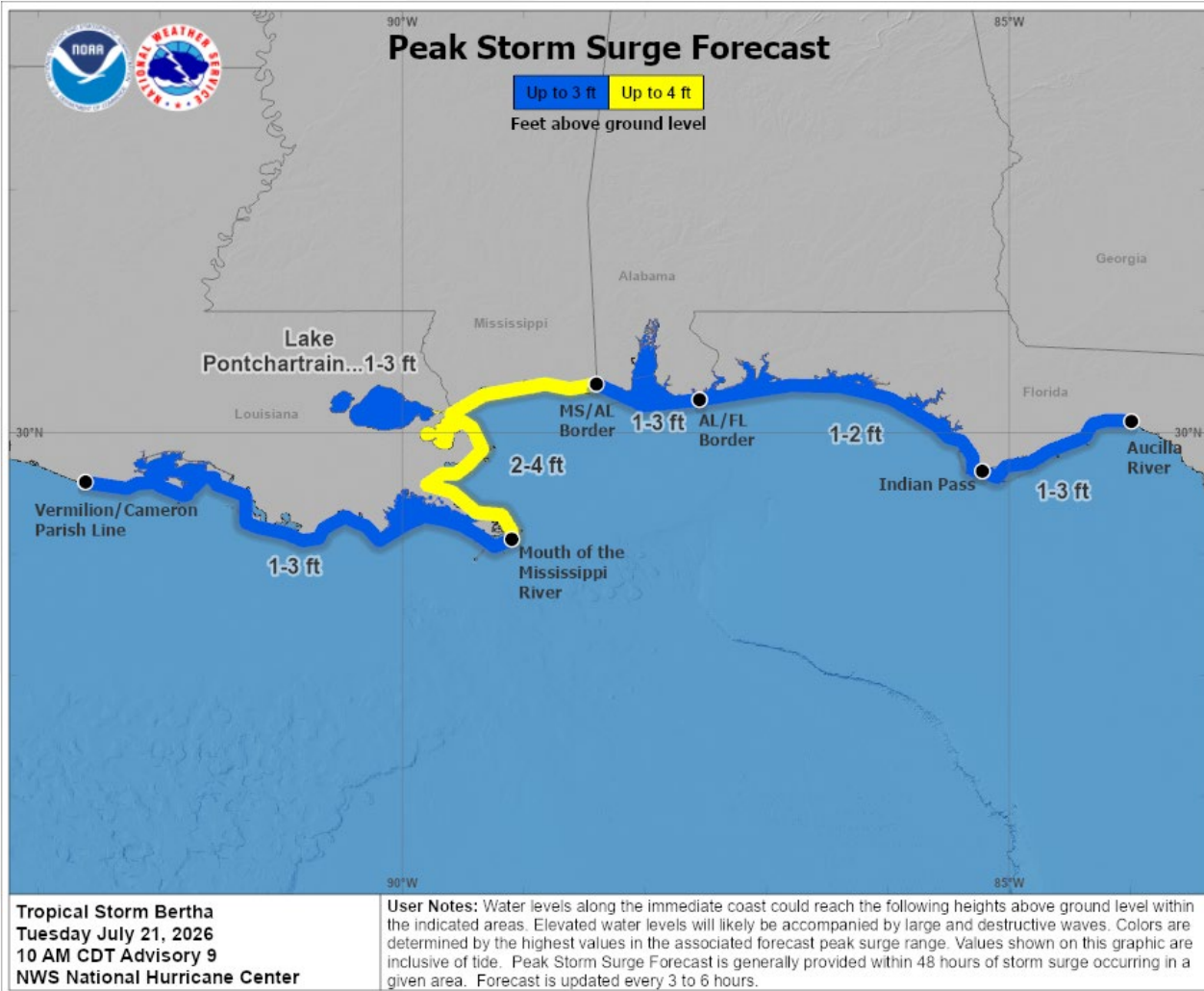
weather.gov/flood

- 1 GET TO HIGHER GROUND**
Get out of the areas subject to Flooding
- 2 DO NOT DRIVE INTO WATER**
Do NOT drive or walk into flooded areas. It only takes 6" of water to knock you off your feet.
- 3 STAY INFORMED**
Monitor local radar, television, weather radio, internet or social media for updates.



Storm Surge & Coastal Flooding

From the National Hurricane Center (NHC)



Coastal Flood Advisory

Visit weather.gov/tallahassee
for more information

Minor Coastal Flooding



When:

FL Big Bend: Until Noon ET Today
FL Panhandle: Until 1 PM CT Wednesday



Where:

The Florida Big Bend and Panhandle



Potential Impacts:

Water around the time of high tide will flood low-lying parks and roads along the immediate coast.



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Tallahassee Florida
weather.gov/tallahassee
@NWSTallahassee

Updated: 5:00 AM ET July 21, 2026

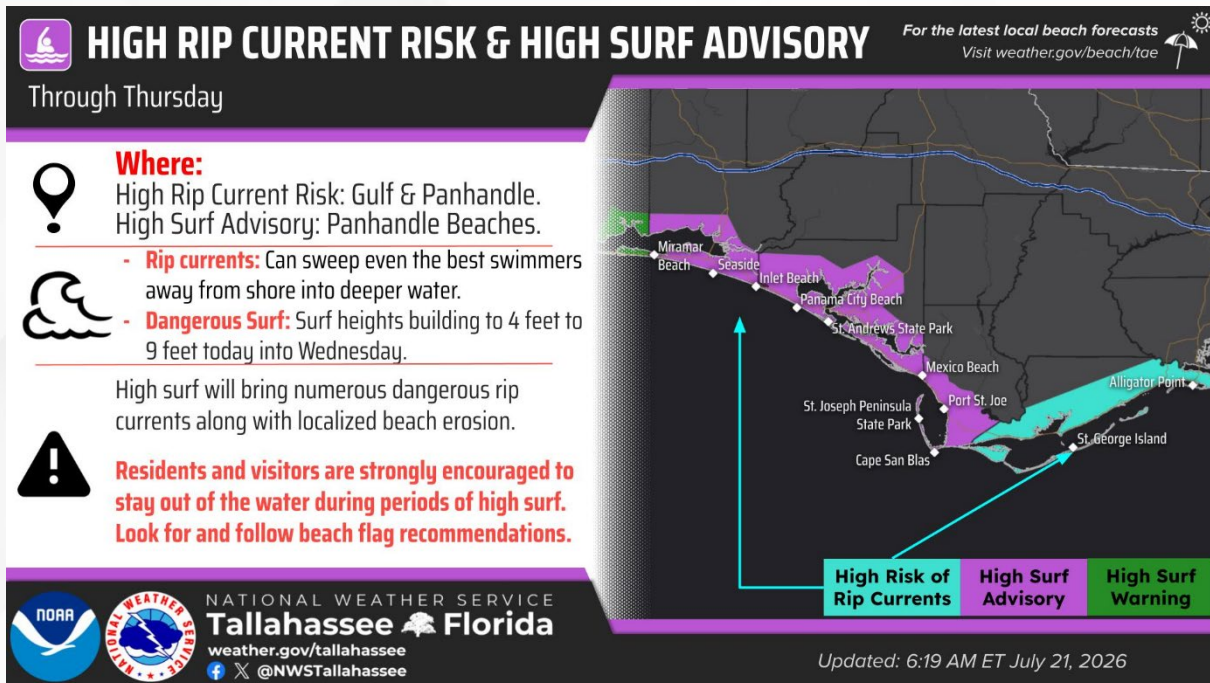
Storm surge is forecast to peak at **1-3'** across portions of the Big Bend coastline this week and **1-2'** for all Panhandle shorelines. This may lead to areas of nuisance to **minor coastal flooding** near and during times of high tide. A **Coastal Flood Advisory** is in effect for much of the Panhandle and Big Bend coast.

No storm surge watches or warnings are in effect at this point.

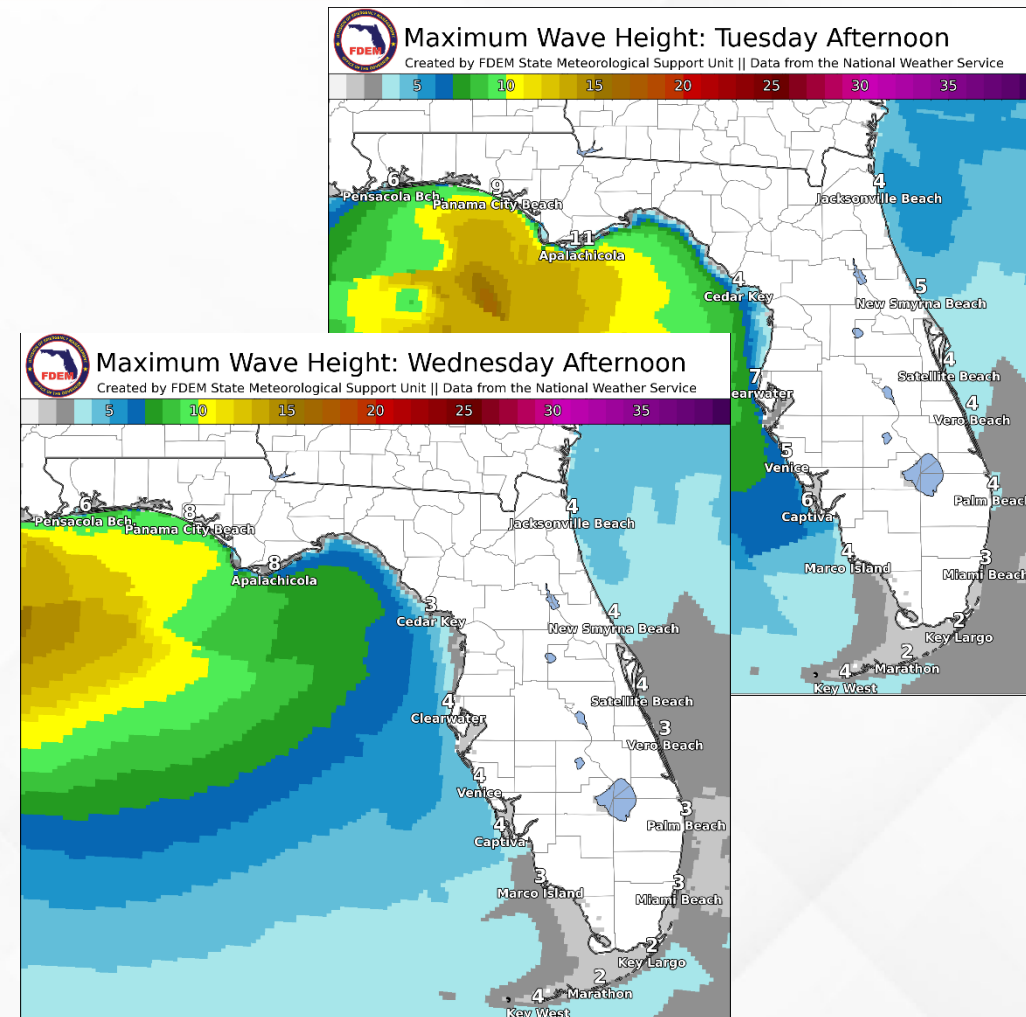


Dangerous Beach Conditions Expected

From the National Weather Service (NWS)



- **High Surf Warnings** are in effect for coastal Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa counties with a **High Surf Advisory** in effect for coastal Walton, Bay, and Gulf counties.
- Instances of **minor beach erosion** are possible for susceptible Panhandle beaches through the week as Tropical Storm Bertha brings surf near **6-10'** for all beaches. Locally higher surf **upwards of 12'** cannot be ruled out in the surf zone.
- **5-8'** waves are expected for Big Bend and West Coast beaches today, only slowly diminishing through the week as Bertha slides to the northwest across the Gulf.
- A **high risk for rip currents** will persist for all Panhandle beaches through the week, with West Coast beaches diminishing to a **moderate risk** by Thursday.





Rip Current Safety

From the National Weather Service (NWS)

Caught in a Rip Current? Here's How to Survive



Relax, stay calm and float to conserve energy



Do not swim against the current



Swim out of the current by following the shoreline or breaking waves, then at an angle toward the beach



If you can't reach shore, call or wave for help



weather.gov/beach



Summary

FOUO – For Government Official Use Only

Tropical Storm Bertha:

- As of the 11:00 AM EDT advisory, Tropical Storm Bertha is located 70 miles south-southwest of Panama City, Florida and is moving north-northwestward at 3 mph.
- A slow northwestward to west-northwestward motion is expected through today, followed by a turn toward the west by the middle part of this week.
- On the forecast track, Bertha will move near or along the northern Gulf coast during the next several days.
- Maximum sustained winds are now near 60 mph with higher gusts.
- Little change in strength is expected today, followed by gradual weakening through the middle of the week.
- ***Bertha will continue to bring periods of heavy rainfall, gusty winds, dangerous surf, and life-threatening rip currents to the Florida Gulf Coast as it moves off to the northwest early this week.***

Florida Outlook:

- **Tropical Storm Warnings** are now in effect for much of the Panhandle coastline from the Bay/Gulf County line to the FL/AL border.
- Breezy to gusty winds are expected along much of the Panhandle and Big Bend coast with sustained winds of **20-30 mph** and wind gusts **upwards of 35-45 mph**. A **Wind Advisory** covers coastal Wakulla, Franklin and Gulf counties while the **Tropical Storm Warning** covers the remainder of the coastal Panhandle for these gusty winds.
- Stronger wind gusts **upwards of 45-60 mph** may accompany the strongest embedded thunderstorm activity within the outer rain bands of Bertha. Additionally, a brief waterspout or tornado cannot be ruled out across the Big Bend and Panhandle as these bands rotate onshore.
- A **Marginal Risk (level 1 of 4) for Flash Flooding** remains outlooked across the Panhandle and Big Bend today and tomorrow in anticipation of multiple rounds of **heavy rainfall** associated with the outer rain bands of Bertha.
 - A general **1-2 inches of rain** is expected still to come, focused along the Panhandle and Big Bend coast nearer to the center of Bertha. Locally higher totals **upwards of 2-4"** cannot be ruled out, especially where multiple rounds of heavy rainfall occur within bands of showers and thunderstorms rotating around Bertha.
- Storm surge is forecast to peak at **1-3'** across portions of the Big Bend this week and **1-2'** for all Panhandle shorelines. This may lead to areas of nuisance to **minor coastal flooding** near and during times of high tide and a **Coastal Flood Advisory** is in effect for much of the Panhandle and Big Bend coast.
- **High Surf Warnings** are in effect for Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa counties for dangerous high surf near **8-11'** beginning this afternoon. A **High Surf Advisory** remains in effect for Walton, Bay, and Gulf counties where waves will reach **6-10'** today and tomorrow, with a few waves **upwards of 12'** possible within the surf zone. Instances of **minor beach erosion** are possible for susceptible Panhandle beaches.
- A **high risk for rip currents** is expected for all Panhandle and Big Bend beaches through the week. A **high risk** across the West Coast will diminish to a **moderate risk** by Thursday and Friday.
- The next name on the list is **Cristobal** (*krees-TOH-bahl*).



Severe Weather Update



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Florida Division of Emergency Management

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