**July 9th, 2024 GP-CERT Meeting Minutes:**

**Holtby welcomed everyone and offered a special welcome to those members attending their first GP-CERT meeting. He advised that tonight’s meeting would be a little shorter than usual due to no communications update – there was no radio net check tonight due to Rich MacCready being out of town. Holtby requested that everyone sign in on one of the attendance sheets, and he mentioned that there were extra copies of tonight’s agenda, as well as copies of our new trifolds on the table.**

**Holtby acknowledged that he is starting to sound like a broken record – but the 2024 hurricane season continues to look ugly. When Hurricane Beryl peaked at Category 5 intensity last Tuesday, it became not only the earliest Category 5 in Atlantic history, but both the strongest June and strongest July hurricane on record. This is remarkable given that any kind of early-season tropical development is rare in the eastern Atlantic. Prior to Beryl’s Category 4 swath of destruction through the Windward Islands, only four hurricanes had ever struck the Lesser Antilles prior to August, none stronger than a Category 1. Holtby noted that the implications for the season ahead are sobering - significant June or July tropical activity is on average linked to elevated activity both for the season as a whole, and specifically for U.S. landfalls. In the last 150 years, there are ten seasons in which a hurricane formed in the Main Development Region before August: 2021, 2020, 2018, 2008, 2005, 1996, 1961, 1933, 1926, and 1887. All of those years were above-normal hurricane seasons, averaging almost double the long-term mean for Accumulated Cyclone Energy. Thirty-seven continental U.S. hurricane landfalls, fifteen of them major, lurk in those ten seasons, two to two-and-a-half times more than normal. Four of the ten recorded a major hurricane landfall in Florida, with two major hurricane landfalls in Florida in 1926 and 2005.**

**Having said that – Holtby noted that there is no relationship between how much total tropical activity occurs before August and how much happens later. Beryl doesn’t guarantee any particular outcome for the rest of 2024, but the number crunch on similar historical cases squares with everyone’s expectations for an extremely busy season ahead based on the totality of evidence. Holtby said that you don’t need to live with anxiety for the next four months, but what this means is that you should do the things you can do now to prepare before the inevitable “cone-panic” hits. Prepare, know where you would go if you need to evacuate, make sure your hurricane kits are in order, and as always, keep vigilant.**

**On the positive side – Holtby noted that there are no other U.S. tropical threats for the next 7-10 days.  Also, it’s Tuesday, July 9th… day 39 of the 2024 hurricane season, so only 144 days to go. By total storm energy, the season is 3.3%, 9.5%, and 8.3% complete for the Atlantic, continental U.S., and Florida, respectively.**

**Update Item 2: Holtby advised that GP-CERT had ordered and received new equipment and supplies, including 13 pairs of waders for flood waters, extra D batteries, and 6-1,000 ft rolls of hazard tape – one roll for each Zone Box. He requested that Zone Leaders provide Jean with feedback on what additional supplies might be required for your zone boxes. Holtby noted that the Triage team will be meeting to go over supplies needed as well. He also noted that all Zone Leads should be reaching out to all their Zone members to coordinate plans/meet up places for the 2024 season, if they have not done so already. Holtby mentioned that he would be filling in as the Zone 3 Lead for the next six weeks until Steve Phillips reassumes that role.**

**The third Update item was a discussion of “The GP Responder”.**

**Holtby noted that we published our sixteenth issue in June. He thanked all those volunteers who have submitted articles and passed on Carole Myles’ request that we start thinking about the September issue. We are looking for 100-150 words on anything with a safety or weather focus that would be of interest to the GP community. A tentative suggestion was advanced that we could also put together a list of “hurricane hacks” that may not be well known (such as freezing a glass of water and then putting a coin on top to see if freezer items need to be thrown out – if the coin drops down to the bottom). Holtby mentioned that we have been profiling members of the Command Team in each issue, with Brian Sheftel being featured in the June issue – and Kristi Loret was persuaded to be profiled for the September issue.**

**The fourth update item on the agenda was Training & Education.**

**Holtby mentioned that we had approximately 85 in person attendees and 100 on-line Zoom attendees for the June 20th presentation on hurricane preparedness. We had three presenters, Sandra Tapfumaneyi, Sarasota County’s Emergency Operations Chief, as well as Stacy Aloisio and Mike Nerarez from North Port’s Emergency Operations area. Those who attended felt the program was excellent, and that we should attempt to do something similar on an annual basis. He offered thanks to Sal Baglio for all his efforts in working with Tom Porada and coordinating this event, and Sal provided a little backdrop on some of the challenges faced (and overcome). Holtby also thanked all those CERT members who helped out that evening – and gave out a special thank you to the Heerens – who picked up the 14 pizzas from Costco. Holtby noted that the Zoom presentation was supposed to be put on the GP web-site for anyone who would like to view it, but it had not happened yet as of this morney, and he will follow up on that posting.**

**Kristi Loret then provided an update on the skills training that took place at IslandWalk on June 7/8, and Jan Lauglin provided her feedback from an attendee perspective that the program was well-put together. Kristi advised that the next skills training opportunity would be on August 24/25 at Grand Palm, and she encouraged anyone interested in taking the hybrid CERT basic training to let her know ASAP, as there will be a limited number of slots open to GP volunteers given Grand Palm CERT members will have first opportunity. Kristi also mentioned that she is planning to have a refresher course (likely one day) sometime late in the fall.**

**The fifth Update item was Recruitment – and Holtby was happy to announce that we have had nine new members join the team over the last four months – including two who joined during the June 20th presentation night. He mentioned that if anyone has any ideas on recruitment, they would be appreciated. Holtby updated the ‘Gran Paradiso At Wellen Park’ cap sales - we have sold 109 caps for approximately $2,000 – leaving 91 caps left to sell. The grey cap with blue lettering has been the top seller to date, followed by the grey cap with silver lettering. The white caps with red and silver/grey lettering are the slow sellers. Holtby also thanked Sal and Brian’s wives for selling caps at Sandra T.’s presentation in June.**

**Holtby reiterated that the BOD had agreed to have a GP-CERT trifold and a “one-pager” (which Holtby is putting together) included in all new resident packages, and he was hopeful that this will continue to raise our profile within the community.**

**Agenda Item 3 was Q&A and Open Discussion:**

**Holtby started the Open Discussion by mentioning that when he posted notice on Nextdoor about this meeting, one of our residents, Joe Tholl, posted the following:**

**“Gordon, I asked this question once before after Ian at the outside HOA meeting and nothing was ever done or talked about. Will CERT come up with a way to let people and emergency services know that a residence has people occupied in their homes when their home are boarded up and shutters are totally closed. One has no way of knowing if they sheltered in or went to a shelter. I think this is important especially for a resident that has health issues and could be traumatized. I suggested maybe a Blue Tape “ X “ on garage door signifying someone is in here. Your thoughts and maybe a committee suggestion before we get hit with the next hurricane.”**

**Holtby asked the group if anyone had any thoughts and a robust discussion ensued. The majority response was that GP-CERT needs to “stay in its own lanes” with a focus on post-event team activation and to be extremely careful about any potential liability exposure should we think about anything outside the training we have undertaken.**

**Holtby noted that the date for our next meeting is Tuesday, September 10th, 2024 at 6:30 pm in the craft room and he hoped that we would not have any hurricane activity in the interim.**

**Agenda Item 4:**

**We had a brief discussion on symptoms of both heat exhaustion and heat stroke, as earlier that day Holtby had witnessed an ambulance assisting a golfer at one of our local courses who apparently suffered heat stroke. Holtby agreed to attach a brief writeup to the email going out with these minutes.**

**Agenda Item 5: Meeting was adjourned**