

NOUS41 KWBC 151325
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Public Information Statement 18-32
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
928 AM EDT Thu Nov 15 2018

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From: C. Bruce Entwistle
 Chief, Aviation and Space Weather Services Branch

Subject: Soliciting comments on experimental Graphical Forecasts
 For Aviation for the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea and
 western North Atlantic Ocean through December 31, 2018

Comments will be accepted through December 31, 2018, on the Experimental Expanded Graphical Forecasts for Aviation (Expanded GFA). The Expanded FA are designed to provide meteorological information equivalent to the textual Area Forecast (FA) for the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea in a graphical format. The Expanded GFA also expands this graphically depicted information into the western North Atlantic Ocean, and includes the domain of the operational Graphical Forecasts for Aviation over the conterminous United States.

This product includes observations and forecasts valid for the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the New York Oceanic Flight Information Region that provide data critical for aviation safety, overlaid on high-resolution base maps. FAs for Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea will not be affected at this time. The Expanded GFA is available at:

<https://testbed.aviationweather.gov/gfa>

Observational data in the Expanded GFA are time synchronized and are available by the hour for the current time and the previous 14 hours. Hourly model data are available up to 15 hours in the future. Wind, icing and turbulence forecasts are available in 3,000 ft. increments from the surface up to 30,000 ft. MSL (FL300) and in 6,000 ft. increments FL300 (30,000 ft. MSL) to FL480 (48,000 ft. MSL). Turbulence forecasts are also broken into LO (below 18,000 MSL) and HI (above 18,000 MSL) graphics. Maximum icing graphic and maximum wind velocity graphics (regardless of altitude) are also available.

This product include data such as Observations/Warnings, Thunderstorms, Clouds, Flight Category (Ceiling and Visibility), Precipitation, Icing, Turbulence, and Winds. These data are combined into categories the user can select using the top level

buttons above the display. Details of each category can be found in the Product Description Document (PDD):

https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/GFA_Expanded_PDD_Oct2018.pdf

The Expanded GFA was developed in anticipation of a formal request by the FAA to discontinue production of the textual Area Forecasts (FAs) for the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Requirements for the underlying meteorological information in the FA have not changed. The FAA, pursuant to Title 49 U.S. Code Section 44720, established requirements for this weather information and service, which is necessary for the safe and efficient conduct of operations in the National Airspace System (NAS).

Based on comments received on the Expanded GFA and in coordination with established FAA processes, NWS plans to discontinue production of FAs for the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea once the Expanded GFA product is approved as operational and when all concerns identified within submitted comments have been addressed. Formal public notification will be provided in advance of the action to discontinue the FAs.

Additional information on the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation can be found at:

<https://testbed.aviationweather.gov/gfa/help>

Comments will be accepted through December 31, 2018, on the proposed operational implementation of the expanded GFA as a replacement for existing text FAs over the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, via the following electronic survey:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=GRAFS>

If you have any questions regarding the expanded Graphical Forecasts for Aviation, contact:

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

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

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