Radford High Water Mark Sign Unveiling & Dedication

10:00-10:30 AM

October 18th, 2011

Bisset Park, Radford, VA

(near the entrance and/or first shelter)

Guest speakers will include:

- **Richard Harshberger**, *Vice Mayor, City of Radford*
- **Mark Slauter**, *IFLOWS Chief, Virginia Dept. Emergency Management*
- **Frank Simms**, *Manager of Hydro Operations, American Electric Power*
- **Anthony Phillips**, *Hydrometeorologist, Ball State University, IN*
- **Peter Corrigan**, *Service Hydrologist, National Weather Service, Blacksburg*

The High Water Mark Sign Project is sponsored by the National Weather Service and the United States Geological Survey. The project helps raise awareness of flood risk by installing High Water Mark signs in prominent locations within communities that have experienced severe flooding.

The sign at Radford, Virginia was donated by Anthony Phillips. Anthony is a hydrometeorologist at Ball State University in Indiana and a graduate of Virginia Tech.

Special thanks go to Ken Goodyear, Peter Corrigan, Shaun Wicklein, Marsha DuBose, Kevin Myatt, and the Department of Geography at BSU for their help and support.

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For more information about the High Water Mark Sign Project:
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/water/high_water/

For more information about Virginia's water resources:
http://va.water.usgs.gov/

National Weather Service
Weather Forecast Office Blacksburg
1750 Forecast Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060
http://weather.gov/rnk

National Weather Service
High Water Mark Sign Project

Radford, Virginia

Flood of 1940 & Sign Unveiling Ceremony

In cooperation with:

Photo: The Radford-Fairlawn Bridge and the New River, 2007.

The Georgia-South Carolina Hurricane of 1940

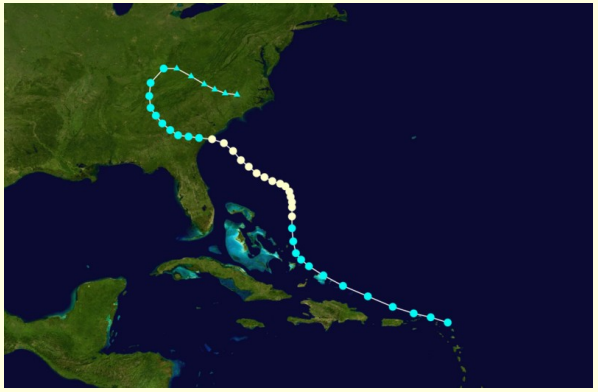

Figure 1. Storm track of the 1940 hurricane

The 1940 hurricane season produced eight storms, four of which were hurricanes. Around August 5th of that year, a tropical storm was detected along the northern Leeward Islands in the West Indies (Fig. 1). The storm brought wind gusts of 44 mph to San Juan, Puerto Rico as it moved northwestward. By August 6th it began a turn to the north while producing rough seas in the southeastern Bahamas. Four days later on August 10th the S.S. Maine off the southeast coast measured hurricane-force winds and the storm began movement again toward the northwest.

The storm made landfall as a category 1 hurricane on August 11th at approximately 4 PM near Beaufort, South Carolina (along the SC/GA border). Winds reached 73 mph in nearby Savannah, Georgia.

Impacts from the Hurricane on Southwest Virginia

As the Georgia-South Carolina hurricane moved inland, record rainfall amounts were recorded from South Carolina north through the Smoky Mountains and into southwest and central Virginia. The storm meandered along the Cumberland Plateau region as rain began falling in Virginia on August 13th. The mountainous terrain coupled with extremely slow movement from the now tropical depression produced tremendous amounts of rain. Copper Hill in Floyd County, Virginia received the highest rainfall in the state: 17.03". Figure 2 below shows the track of the storm along with storm total rainfall amounts.

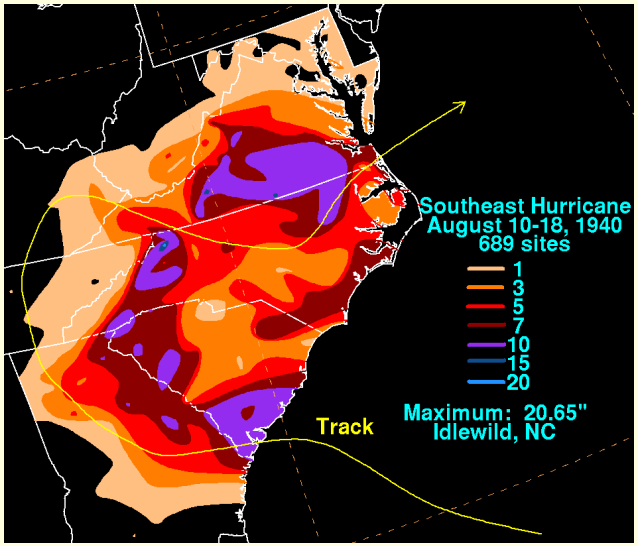

Figure 2. Storm track and total rainfall

Record Flooding along the New River and Its Tributaries

Figure 3. Flooding along the New River near the intersection of Little River Dam Road and West Main Street

The USGS stream gauge across the New River from Bisset Park measured an all-time record height of 35.96 feet (1748.92 MSL) which is nearly 22 feet above what is considered flood stage! Residents in low-lying areas were forced to evacuate their homes and both the former Burlington Mills and the Lynchburg Foundry manufacturing plants were shut down because of high water. The road leading from Radford into Pulaski County towards Claytor Lake Dam (Fig. 3) was inundated and impassable. Thankfully, no deaths were reported across southwest Virginia, but several million dollars worth of damage occurred (1940 USD).

Photo: The New River, 2007.