

StormTracker 46 Weather Blog



Tuesday, April 22, 2008

➔ Happy Earth Day!



I would be remiss on this Earth Day if I did not congratulate the kids at LaBelle Elementary School in Marietta for winning the first annual waterSmart rain barrel of fun contest.

The 2nd grade students of teachers Cory Babcock and Altonese Wisdom beat 4 other schools in the contest. The kids were given 2 weeks to design and paint their rain barrels. The goal... to learn about the importance a little change can make in the effort to conserve water.

Contributors

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The rain barrels were judged on the categories of creativity, artistic ability and team work, with extra bonus points awarded for display of water conservation knowledge.

Just because the contest is over does not mean the conservation is... all the rain barrels will stay on the campus of the respective schools to help provide a conservation friendly alternative to supplemental watering for landscaping.

Not that the kids needed any motivation... the winning students from LaBelle Elementary School will receive an ice cream party from waterSmart.

You can learn more about waterSmart, all they do for our community, and what you can do to help conserve by [clicking here](#).


Happy Earth Day!

--Chris

Posted by Chris at 7:16 [0 comments](#)

Smith [PM](#)

Sunday, April 20, 2008

 **times are a changing...**

Our weather producer, Jason Disharoon, sent me this article this

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afternoon that I thought some of you fellow weather geeks who read this blog might enjoy.

Jetstream Moving

The gist of the story is that researchers believe global warming is pushing the jet stream further north. How does that impact us? Well, the jet stream is the river of fast moving air that steers weather systems around the world. If the jet stream moves further north then rain producing weather systems would stay further north. That means less rain in the south. That being said, we would also see more tropical activity because if the jet stream was not further south then tropical systems would be more likely to form.

As you read below the other week, I was at a weather conference in the Bahamas. There were several interesting presentations with respect to the cause of global warming. You can watch several of the presentations as well as a heated exchange between Dr. William Gray of Colorado State and Dr. Tom Knutson here at the [Bahamas Weather Conference webpage](#).

Have a great week. It looks pretty nice.

--Chris

Posted by Chris at 9:14 [0 comments](#)

Smith [PM](#)

Sunday, April 06, 2008

weather conference...



Although I am 'off' this week I can assure you that I will be working hard!

I am headed to the [Bahamas Weather Conference](#) on Tuesday. (yes, I drew the short straw :-)) The conference is being held on Grand Bahamas Island at the [Westin Our Lucaya Resort](#).

There are a wide range of topics that will be discussed this year. From hurricanes, to insurance, to how to build a safer homes that can withstand tornadoes and hurricanes, and global warming.

One of the highlights of the conference will be on Wednesday when [Dr. William Gray](#) releases his updated forecast for the 2008 hurricane season.

You can follow along (sin the sun and the sand) at the conference website. You will probably see me from time to time in some of the meeting video and you can see many of the interviews and sessions that I am sitting in on.

I will make sure to post pictures and have a complete update when I get back!

I promise to work hard... :-)

--Chris

Posted by Chris at [11:49](#) [0 comments](#)

Smith [PM](#)

➔ the wedge...



The 'wedge' has been a popular topic as of late and anytime we talk about it we get lots of questions here in the weather department.

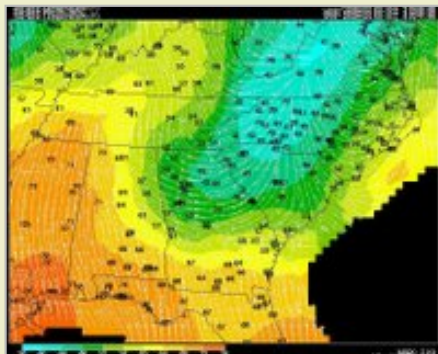
The wedge typically occurs during the winter and spring months here in Georgia... although it can actually happen any time of year. It takes a combination of our unique geography and a specific weather pattern to get the 'wedge.'

It happens when High Pressure settles over the NE United States. Because the flow around high pressure is clockwise it brings cool, maritime air into

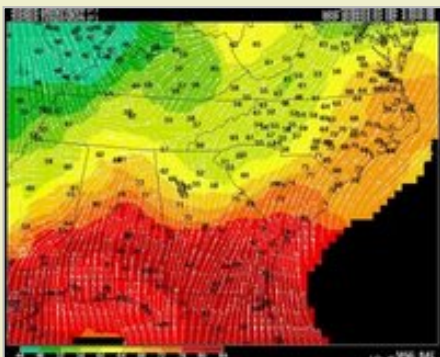
the southeastern U.S. (think about New England along the coast with sea fog and fog horns, etc). Because cool air is dense... when it gets pushed up against the Appalachian Mountains it can not go over the mountains so it gets pushed down the spine mountains into Georgia. You can see this in the graphic below.



Here is a weather chart from this past Friday morning when we were socked in with drizzle, fog, & cool temperatures. The arrows on the chart indicate the direction the wind is blowing from. Again, notice how the winds are blowing down the Appalachian Mountains. The other thing to note is the wide range in temperatures across Georgia. You go from 70s (in the morning!!) in south Georgia to 40s in NE Georgia. Needless to say, the wedge is one of the most difficult things to forecast.



In this picture from later Friday afternoon notice how the winds are shifting to out of the South instead of the East to NE. That is when the 'wedge' is retreating. This happens as the high pressure over the NE U.S. begins to move out into the Atlantic turning our winds to more of SE or South (think warm and tropical). Remember when temperatures soared to near 70 that afternoon? Those warmer temperatures helped allow for the development of the severe storms Friday afternoon/evening.



Well, guess what? It looks like the dreaded wedge weather pattern is again setting up for the early part of the week. I think the placement of the high over the NE U.S. is not ideal, but it is close enough to get some cooling, clouds, and drizzle over northern, and especially NE Georgia on Monday & Tuesday.

Have a great week... I promise the sun is up there somewhere!

--Chris

Smith

PM

Wednesday, April 02, 2008

lights out...



This past Saturday was [Earth Hour](#) and Atlanta was one of hundreds of cities participating around the world.

Below are two pictures showing Atlanta before the 'hour' and during the 'hour'.





The event was started to bring attention to global warming and the role that humans play in it. While global warming is occurring, the impact that humans play is very much up to debate. While most news stories claim that human induced global warming is fact, the reality is that some scientists disagree.

John Coleman, the founder of The Weather Channel, is one of the more outspoken critics of human induced global warming. [You can see hit argument here](#). There is also an anti-global warming website called [Icecap US](#).

I am going to a weather conference next week. Last year there was a big discussion about global warming and our role in it. The funny thing was that 75% of the meteorologists questioned the impact we as humans have in it. I would venture to say the general public would think it would be 75-90% in the other direction. It will be interesting to see if opinions and information has shifted in humans and their role in global warming.

Regardless of what you think I think it is important for humans to leave as few 'footprints' as possible and to always look for ways to lessen our

impact on the planet on which we live.

Have a good week!

--Chris

Posted by Chris at [12:19](#) [0 comments](#)

Smith [PM](#)

Friday, March 28, 2008

[➔ cool tornado pictures...](#)

Surfing around the internet I found some kinda cool webcams that show what went on right before and after the tornado earlier this month. While you do not see the tornado itself you can see some pretty cool things.

There are two in particular that you should check out. I will post the pictures I am talking about, but the actual program enables you to zoom in etc so you might want to go to this [website...](#)

-Click on the one for The Atlantic (a new condo tower in Atlantic Station)

-Adjust the date back to Friday, March 14th

-Click on the 9:39 and 9:55 images and notice how the crane (red) completely spins around as the storm passes!!!



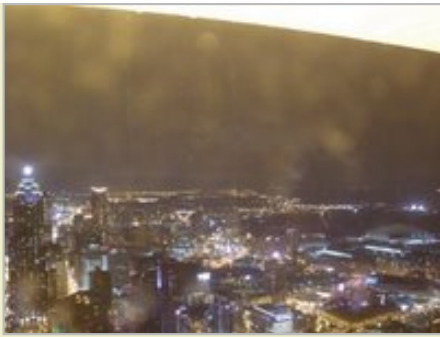
Next...

-Click on the one for Allen Plaza

-Adjust the date back to Friday, March 14th

-Click on the 9:33 and 9:57 images and notice how the lights go out and you can see where the hole is in the dome!





I hope you enjoyed the nice weather over the past few days. The weekend is looking a little cool and damp.

--Chris

Posted by Chris at [5:52](#) [1 comment](#)

Smith [PM](#)

Monday, March 24, 2008

when did spring start???

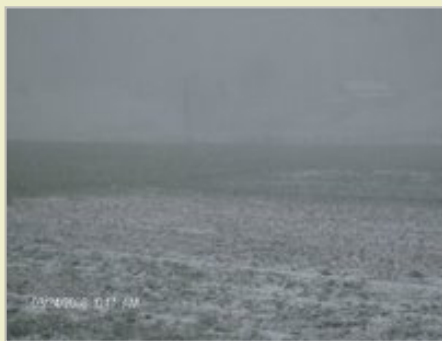


Although spring technically began last Thursday it appears old man winter is not done with us!!

Very cold temperatures filtered into northern Georgia this morning and this afternoon. There was just enough moisture to squeeze out a little bit of snow! While most of us saw some snow flurries there was actually a little dusting well up into the mountains as you can see in the pictures above and below. These pictures were sent in by Tammy Kinman up in Blue Ridge. Thanks Tammy!

The cold weather won't last past Tuesday morning as highs will be in the 60s Tuesday with 70s by Wednesday & Thursday.

--Chris



Posted by Chris at [11:28](#) [0 comments](#)

Smith [PM](#)

Sunday, March 23, 2008

[➔ flower pictures...](#)




Hey guys, just a reminder that we have a section on our website where you can upload your spring flower pictures. I snapped the above picture, with my cell phone, of a Japanese Magnolia just outside the TV station.

You can [upload your picture here](#). Can't wait to see them and we might even show some on the news!

--Chris

Posted by Chris at [4:31](#) [0 comments](#)

Smith [PM](#)

 [hail galore...](#)



Although the tornadoes certainly got the headlines, we received tremendous reports of hail across the metro area last weekend. Check out this video that Ed Hubbard in Gwinnett County uploaded to CBS46.com. Notice how quickly the hail begins to accumulate. The other interesting thing was that we had reports of hail as big as baseballs in a few places. That is nearly unheard of here in the southeastern U.S. and much more common in the in the plains states.

Hail is often confused with [sleet](#) and vice versa. While rain freezes on the way to the ground and becomes sleet. Hail forms by water being carried way up inside of a thunderstorm where it freezes. It then is unable to melt before it hits the ground. One of the best explainers as to how hail forms is on [USAToday.com](#).

Each time a [hail stone](#) is carried up by an updraft inside of a thunderstorm the hailstone collects more water and re-freezes causing it

to get bigger. Technically, you can cut open a hail stone and count the number of rings inside which will tell you how many times the hail has gone up and down inside of the thunderstorm.

Lets hope it is a while before we have any weather like last weekend.

Right now the forecast looks dry for much of the work week ahead.

--Chris

Posted by Chris at [4:06](#) [1 comment](#)

Smith [PM](#)

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