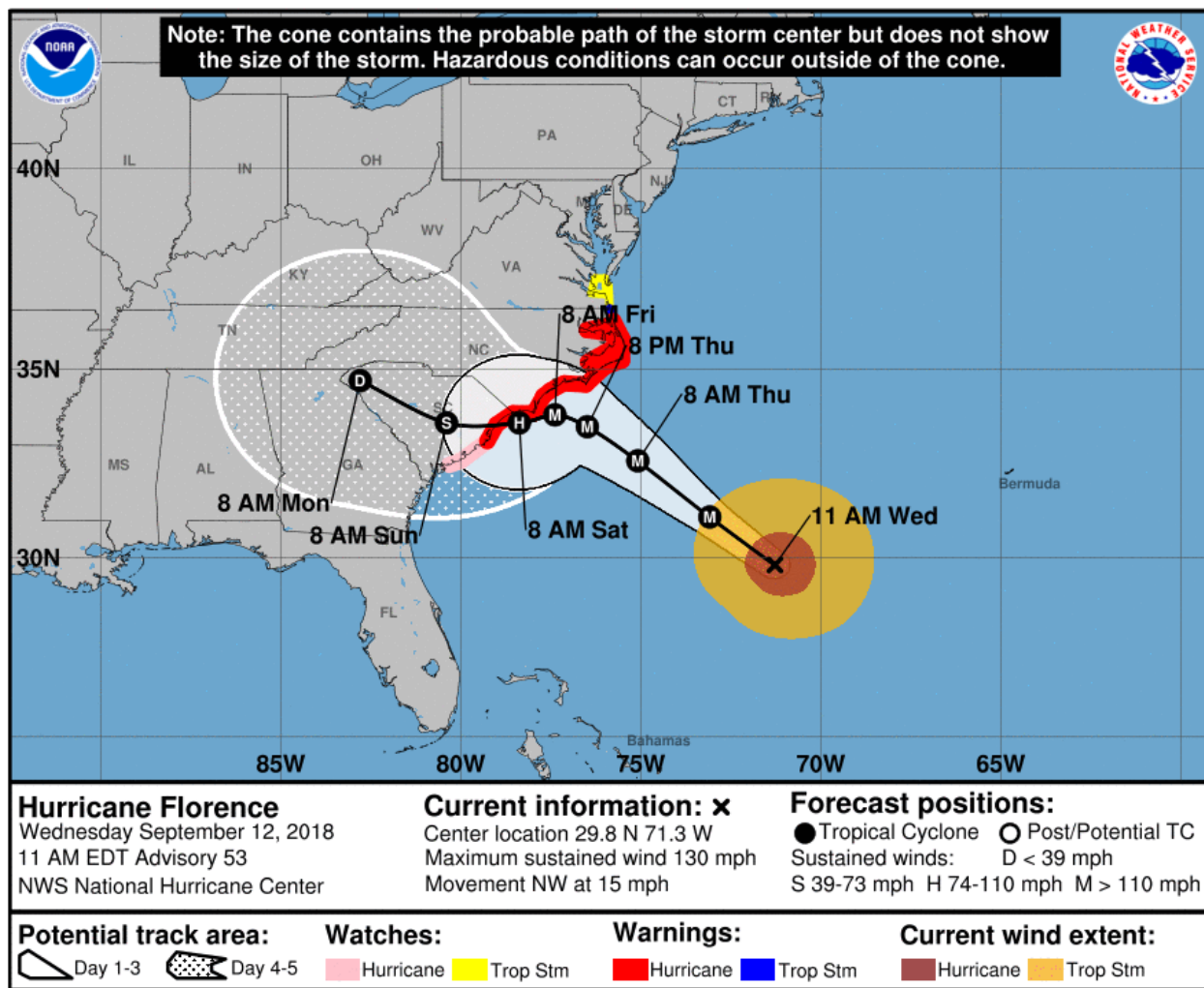


Hurricane Florence forecast worsens for the southern North Carolina coast

The latest projection from the National Hurricane Center greatly increases the potential for significant coastal impacts by Hurricane Florence. The consensus track has the storm slowing down just offshore of Wrightsville Beach, NC and moving very little for a 24-hour period. This could spread Florence’s extremely high storm surge over multiple tidal cycles resulting in significant coastal erosion, substantial loss of sand dunes, barrier island overwash, and major infrastructure damage along the immediate coast and estuarine shorelines. Under this scenario, the greatest impact from Florence would be felt from Bald Head Island north to Emerald Isle. The highest surges are currently expected from Kure Beach to North Topsail Beach. Anyone who has not evacuated these communities should do so immediately.



Above: Hurricane Florence forecast cone from [NOAA National Hurricane Center](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov), as of Wednesday, September 12, 2018, 11 AM.

Interesting Observations

- 1) Wrightsville Beach and Ocean Isle recently completed beach nourishment projects. Florence will test them both.
- 2) The forecast track has changed dramatically over the last 24 hours after remaining fairly consistent for almost three days. It will be interesting to see if it continues to change. The forecast cone has greatly expanded. The timing of the storm's slow down and the predicted turn to the west should be closely monitored.
- 3) The forecast now has the storm coming ashore near Myrtle Beach, SC. Even so, the highest storm surge is likely to remain north of Cape Fear.
- 4) North Topsail Beach, one of America's most vulnerable coastal communities will see its sandbag seawall tested as well. Waves are already coming over the bags today. This section of the town is a part of the [Coastal Barrier Resource System](#) and is not eligible for most types of Federal support.



Above: The north end of North Topsail Beach. Photo by Walker Golder, August 2018.