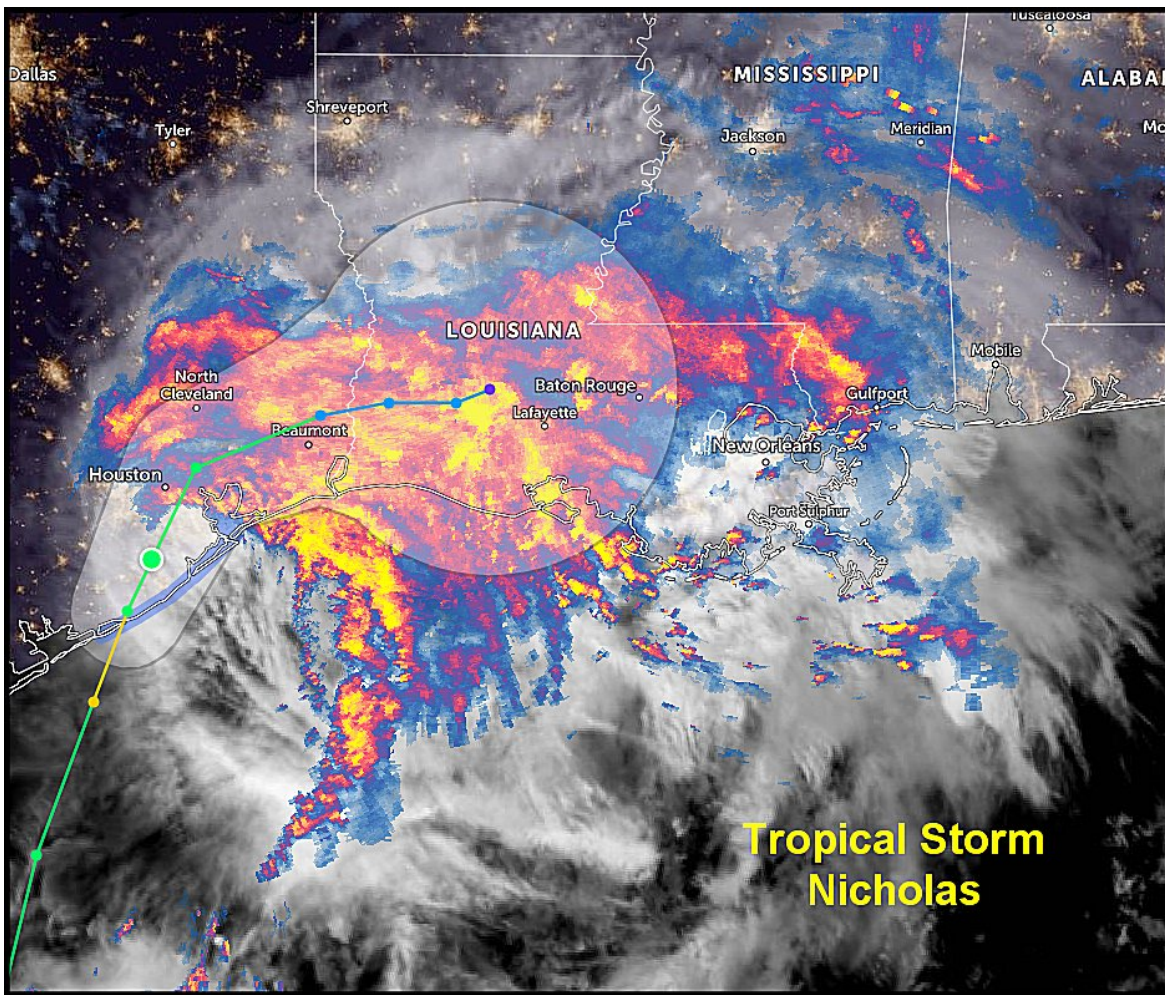


Nicholas Brings Heavy Rain To Texas, Louisiana Gulf Coast

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, September 14 (World Weather Inc.) – Tropical Storm Nicholas moved over the central Texas coast overnight while producing heavy rain along the Texas and Louisiana coastal areas. Additional rain will fall today raising the potential for flooding, but most of the significant rain will stay relatively close to the coast. *Sugarcane in Louisiana may be most impacted because of flooding rainfall over the next few days and then frequent follow up showers and thunderstorms for at least a week following the storm. That will result in lower sucrose levels and a decline in yield.*



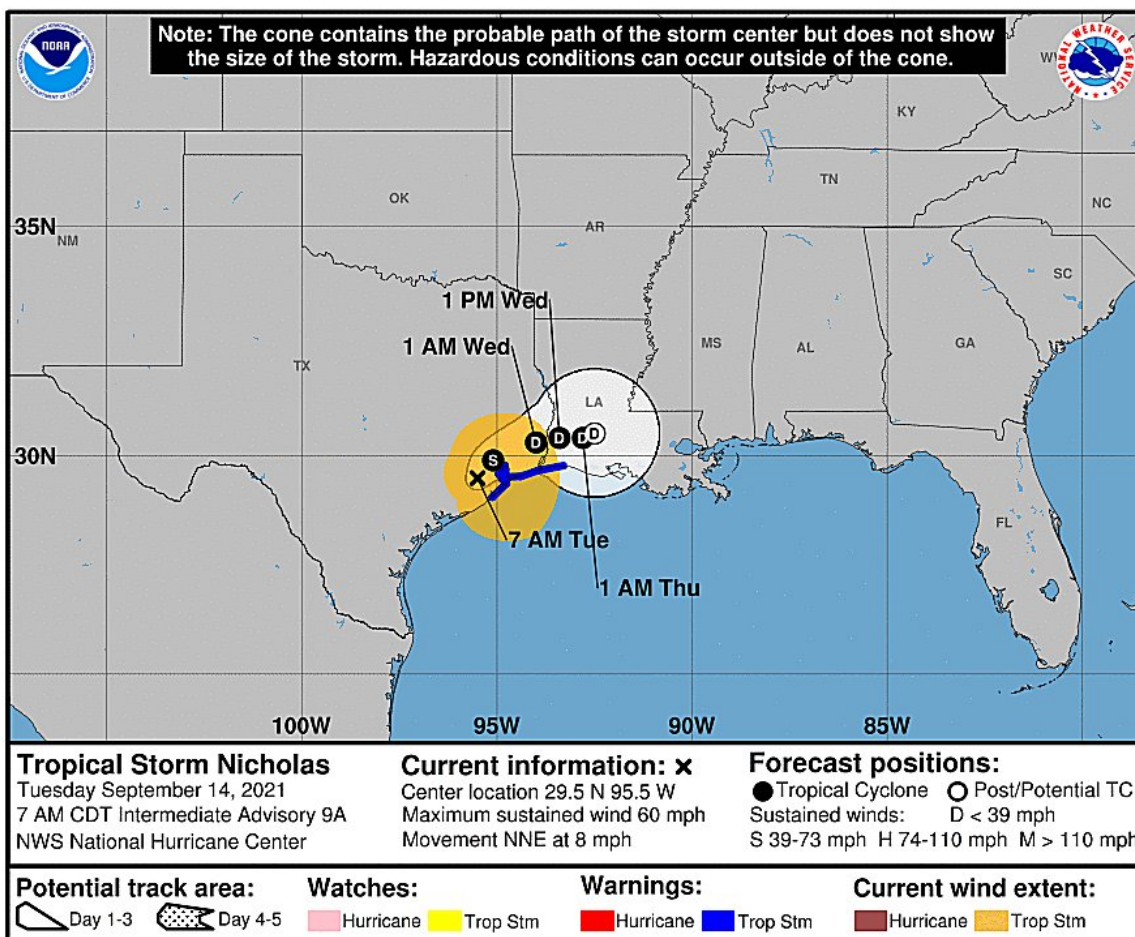
At 0700 CDT, the center of Tropical Storm Nicholas was located 15 miles south southwest of Houston, Texas near 29.5 north, 95.5 west moving north northeasterly at 8 mph and producing maximum sustained wind speeds of 60 mph near its center. Tropical storm force wind was occurring out 125 miles from the center of the storm.

Nicholas has already produced up to 7.00 inches of rain along the middle and upper Texas coast during the past 24 hours while parts of southwestern Louisiana have reported up to 3.00 inches. The precipitation from the storm has not reached very far into crop areas thus far, but greater rain will occur today in Louisiana impacting sugarcane and some rice

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production areas. Most of the impact from this storm is not going to be very great on agriculture. The exception will be in sugarcane areas of Louisiana where there will be some decrease in sugarcane sucrose levels, but no damaging wind. Total rainfall in southern Louisiana will range from 5.00 to 10.00 inches and totals in the Texas coastal region will vary from 4.00 to 10.00 inches. Flooding is expected, but the impact may be greater on urban areas than in the rural regions.

Peak wind speeds reported overnight reached 66 mph near Galveston and southwest toward the Port O'Connor area of Texas. Wind speeds to 52 mph occurred at the Houston Executive Airport. Most of the wind from the Lake Charles area of Louisiana through the Houston area to near Port O'Connor ranged from 30 to 60 mph. Some wind damage is suspected, but the biggest threat may be from flooding due to the storm's expected slow movement.



Nicholas will be downgraded to tropical depression status later today and tonight while moving east northeasterly. The system will stay mostly in southern Louisiana and the closeness to the ocean will help to enhance some of the rainfall and it would not be surprising to see some amounts in southern Louisiana sugarcane areas to get close to 15.00 inches.

Sugarcane harvesting usually begins in late September, but this year's harvest will now be delayed into October as farmers wait for the fields to dry out and for sucrose levels

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to possibly recover. ***The weather will need to be dry and very warm for the sucrose levels to return to pre-Tropical Storm Nicolas levels and that may not be fully possible.*** The majority of the sugarcane will not be seriously harmed by the storm. In the meantime, most of the rice produced in Louisiana has already been harvested and the impact of additional rain should be relatively low. But, with that said, there is some late season crop that could still suffer from the excessive moisture.

Today's change in the forecast path of Tropical Storm Nicholas has removed nearly all concern over cotton and other crops being impacted in Mississippi and northeastern Louisiana has ended.

The biggest concern for Louisiana is that after the tropical storm dies out there will be additional rain in the state's agricultural areas for at least a full week following the event preventing the region from drying out as required to improve sugarcane conditions. The additional rain may not be heavy, but it will leave production areas too wet hurting the bottom line for production.

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