



Can we decide weather to be hopeful?

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on May 24, 2006 - 12:08am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

Tags: [gulf of mexico](#), [hurricanes](#), [technology](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Having just dropped back home to change suitcase contents again, after, this time, watching joints being made and unmade (of the tubular variety) for a couple of days, I have been relying on hotel newspapers for news (some hotel internets don't work) and so was reminded that this is [National Hurricane Preparedness Week](#) and that the forecast is for up to 16 named storms and 10 hurricanes, down from the 28 named storms and 15 hurricanes last year. However we can still expect some 6 major hurricanes, down from 7 last year, which is a critical number and really not that much different from last year. The major question of where will, unfortunately, not be known for a while, and remember that hurricanes in the Southern GOMEX also can cause severe casualties, and can, less directly, but nevertheless significantly, impact our oil availability.

The actual forecast is somewhat more general

"For the 2006 north Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA is predicting 13 to 16 named storms, with eight to 10 becoming hurricanes, of which four to six could become 'major' hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher," added retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

On average, the north Atlantic hurricane season produces 11 named storms, with six becoming hurricanes, including two major hurricanes. In 2005, the Atlantic hurricane season contained a record 28 storms, including 15 hurricanes. Seven of these hurricanes were considered "major," of which a record four hit the United States. "Although NOAA is not forecasting a repeat of last year's season, the potential for hurricanes striking the U.S. is high," added Lautenbacher.

And in that same mood, I see that Texas is thinking of [an 80 mph speed limit](#).

To conclude let me just comment on a few points that were brought up in recent comments.

First, thanks to [Todd](#) I see that [MIT](#) are pointing out their connections to the world. The technology is not likely to have much significant impact, for a variety of reasons, but it does illustrate how the well-connected Universities can get funding more easily than more humble mortals. And if you think that disparity is bad now, wait until the crisis starts to bite and more serious money appears on the table. It will, as last time, first go to the National Labs and the MIT's of the world, and only later will someone realize that perhaps - since these folks are not in general at all clued up on what happens at the end of an oil bit in contact with rock, or a shearer pick in contact with coal, - will the residual crumbs be sent to those schools who actually know something about that. (Gasp, this can't be bitter experience talking, can it ?)

And in answer to [PhilRelig](#) who asks why we can't get more oil out of the ground. The answer is that, under the right circumstances we can. But the cost (to give but one way) of sinking mines down to the sand to mine out the sand, strip it of oil, and then put it back, are, in general way too high. There have been some attempts at this, and one weekend I will describe one or two of them to you.

And as for the question by [cwilbur2000](#) on [Oil tech](#) there are significant problems that are glossed over. Pulverizing rock, as a general rule (there are technologies and rocks that get around this but these are neither) is very energy intensive, and the oil shale rock expands during this process, so that disposal is a very serious question and has been part of the discussion for the past 30 years. There are mining related issues that are glossed over, and the variability in the shale oil over a face is also not discussed. One of these weekends soon, (see I'm starting a list) I'll try explaining some of these.



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