Beat: Travel

Tropical Storm Fernand makes landfall on Mexico`s Gulf coast

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USPA News - Tropical Storm Fernand made landfall on Mexico`s Gulf Coast on early Monday morning, causing heavy rainfall over parts of eastern Mexico that could trigger life-threatening flash flooding and mud slides, forecasters said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Forecasters at the U.S. National Hurricane Center (NHC) have been following the weather system since Saturday when it emerged over the Yucatan Peninsula, accompanied by a large area of cloudiness and thunderstorms. It quickly became better organized and was classified as a tropical depression by Sunday afternoon, and strengthened into a tropical storm just hours later. "Observations from the Alvarado, Mexico radar and surface data indicate that the center is inland over the state of Veracruz," Richard Pasch, a senior hurricane specialist at the National Hurricane Center, said on early Monday. "Wind speed observations from La Mancha beach, not far to the east of the center, suggest that some weakening has taken place." As of 4 a.m. CDT (0900 GMT), the center of Fernand was located about 60 miles (100 kilometers) northwest of Veracruz, the port city which carries the same name as the state it is located in. It is moving toward the west-northwest at a speed near 9 miles (15 kilometers) per hour, taking it further inland throughout Monday and early Tuesday afternoon as it weakens. "While it was crossing the coastline, the center turned to the right, and it practically paralleled the coast after moving inland. This motion may have been in response to a weak inverted trough near the Texas coast," Pasch explained. "Since this trough is forecast to move father west later today, the steering flow should be dominated by a large high pressure area to the north of Fernand. This would result in a mainly west-northwestward motion over the next day or so." As it moves further inland over eastern Mexico, Fernand is forecast to produce 4 to 8 inches (10.1 to 20.3 centimeters) of rain over the states of Veracruz, Hidalgo, northern Puebla, southern Tamaulipas, and eastern San Luis Potosi, with isolated maximum amounts near 12 inches (30.4 centimeters) possible. "Continued weakening will occur while the circulation interacts with the land mass of Mexico," Pasch said. "Although Fernand is expected to weaken, very heavy rains should continue over portions of eastern Mexico through tonight. These rains could cause life-threatening flash flooding and mudslides." Forecasters expect Fernand to become a tropical depression by late Monday afternoon local time, and degenerate into a remnant low late Monday or early Tuesday morning. A tropical storm warning remained in effect for the Gulf coast of Mexico from Veracruz northward to Barra de Nautla. Fernand is the sixth tropical cyclone of the 2013 Atlantic hurricane season, which officially began on June 1. According to an updated forecast released earlier this month, NOAA`s Climate Prediction Center is expecting an above-normal hurricane season in the Atlantic this year. The outlook calls for thirteen to nineteen named storms, with six to nine becoming hurricanes and three to five of them expected to become a major hurricane (category 3 or higher). Based on the period from 1981 to 2010, an average Atlantic hurricane season produces twelve named storms, with six becoming hurricanes and three becoming major hurricanes. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30, with peak activity between August and October.

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