



City of Venice Hurricanes Helene and Milton After Action Report (AAR)

Presented April 8, 2025 by

Assistant City Manager James Clinch and
Fire Chief/Emergency Manager Frank Giddens



Purpose of the AAR



- Factual evaluation of the City of Venice's emergency response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024
- Identify successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement
- Provide recommendations for enhanced emergency preparedness and community resilience



Methodology



Three-Phase Process:

- **Phase 1:** Data collection from all departments on pre-, during, and post-storm
- **Phase 2:** Organizing observations and formulating recommendations for future
- **Phase 3:** Compiling findings into the final report.

Department Contributions:

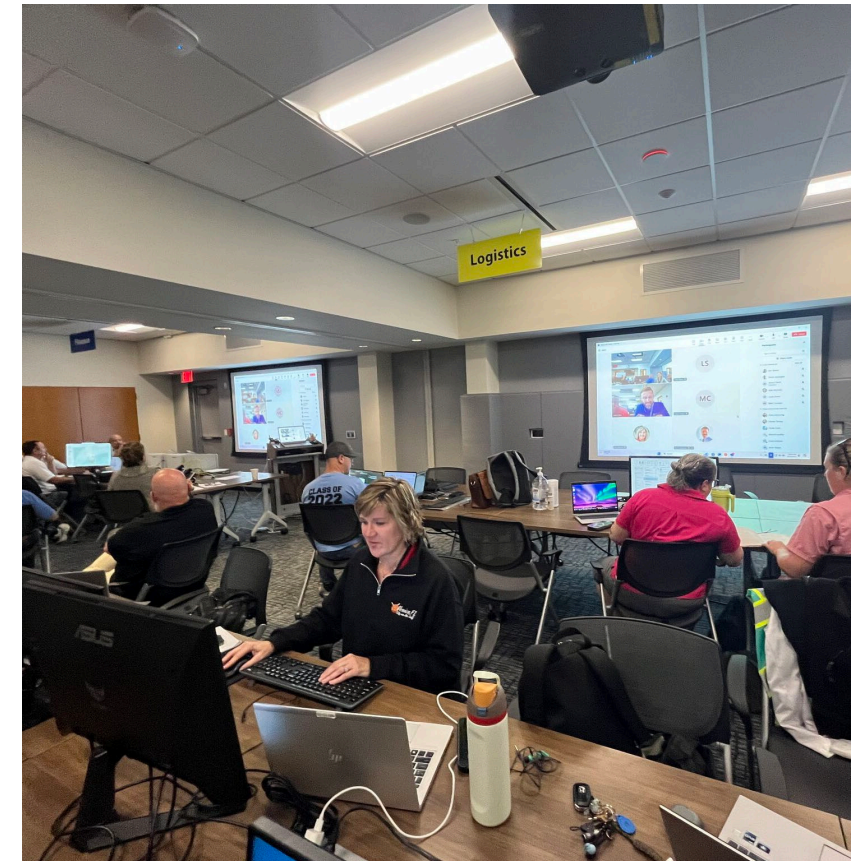
- Each department submitted after-action reports, response summaries, and supporting factual data

After-Action Review Meetings:

- **Nov. 1, 2024 and Jan. 10, 2025** to gather and finalize post-storm data and discuss improvement opportunities and recommendations

Final Report Compilation:

- Led by representatives from the City Manager's Office, Fire Department (Emergency Manager), and Public Information Officer (PIO)

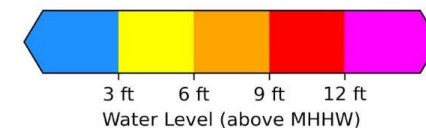
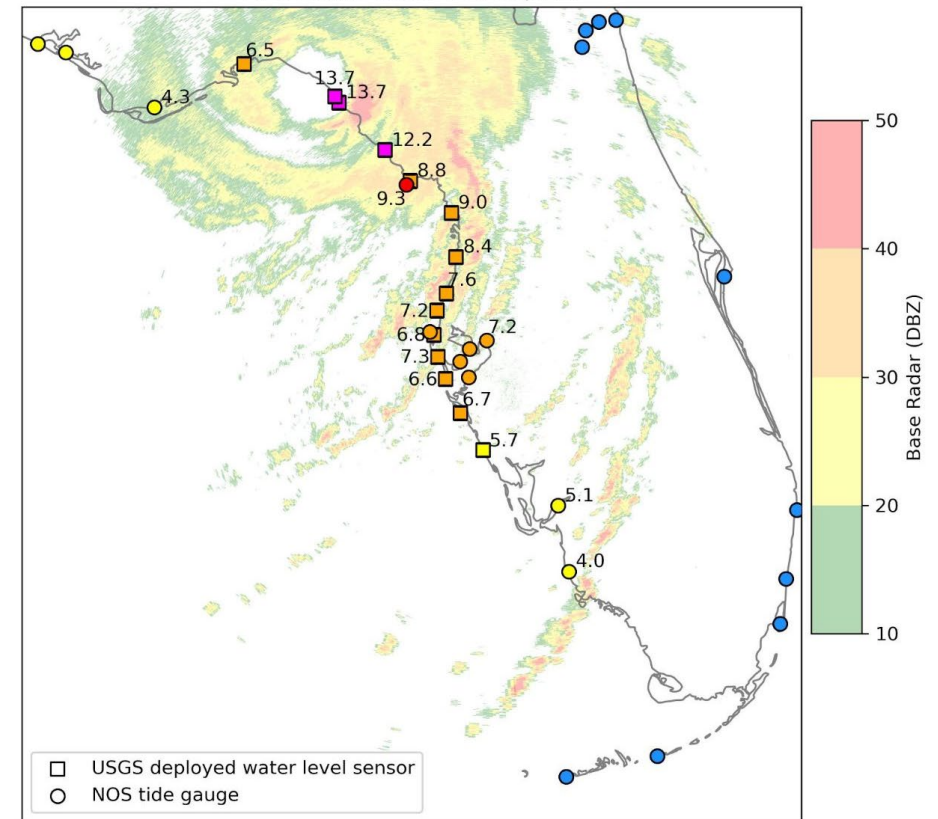


2024 Hurricane Season Overview



- Above-normal activity: 18 named storms, 11 hurricanes, 5 major hurricanes
- Hurricane Helene (Category 4):
 - Landfall: Taylor County, Sept. 26, 2024
 - 6-ft storm surge, 69 mph wind gusts
 - Major coastal flooding due to surge + waves
 - Very low rainfall

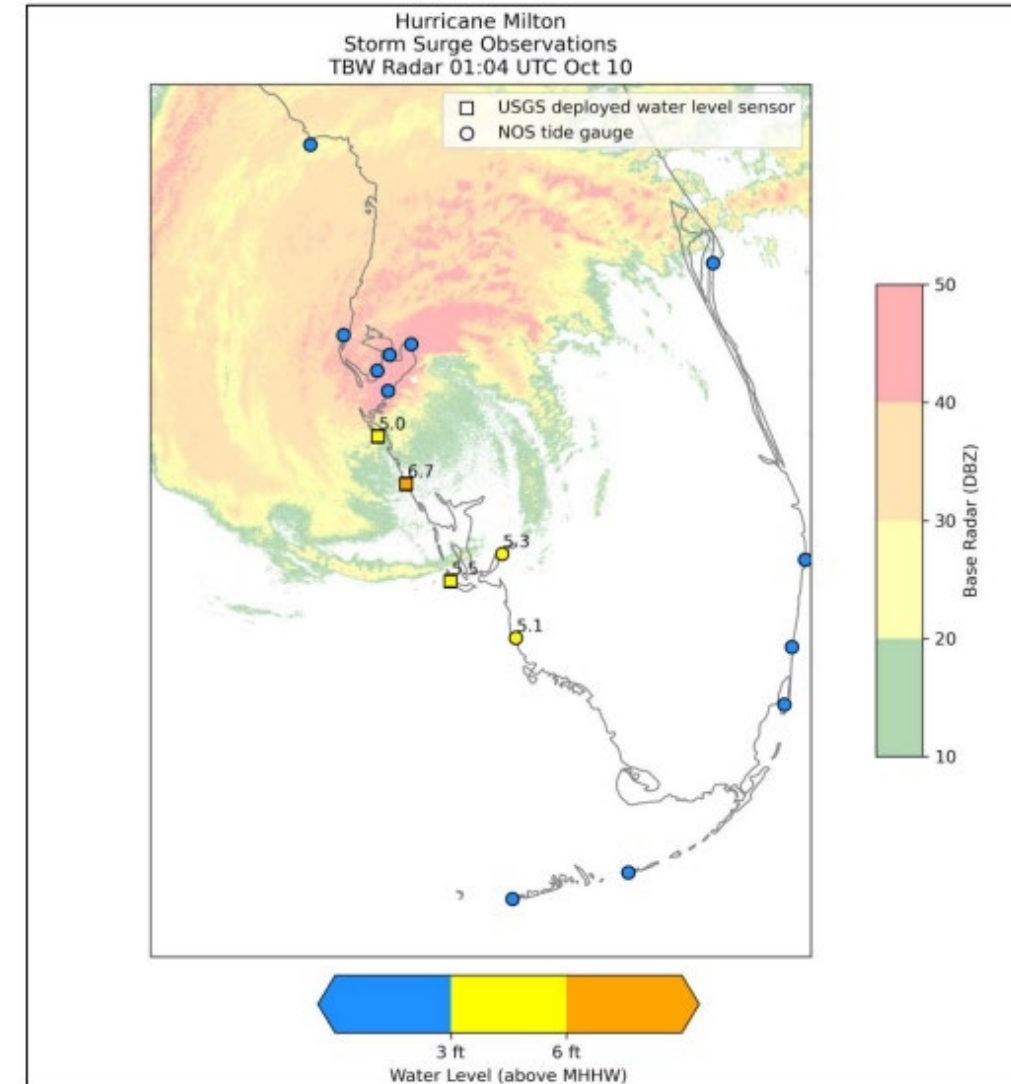
Hurricane Helene
Storm Surge Observations
TBW Radar 02:59 UTC Sept 27



2024 Hurricane Season Overview



- Hurricane Milton (Category 3 at landfall, peaked at Category 5)
 - Landfall: Siesta Key, Oct. 9, 2024
 - 7 ft storm surge, 100+ mph wind gusts
 - 47 tornadoes in FL
 - Very low rainfall
- Milton Landfall just 13 days after Helene
 - Shortest time on record, between major hurricane landfalls in Florida history



Emergency Operations Overview



- City activated Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
- Activation of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) coordinated all efforts
- Sarasota County, State, and FEMA supported response
- Emergency Declaration: All staff, all departments are essential and shift into designated emergency roles



AAR Successes

POLICE

Successes Before the Storm



- Early storm monitoring and emergency declarations
- Pre-storm coordination with Sarasota County, state, and federal partners
- EOC Preparation: Staff, resources, emergency procurement
- City Preparation: facilities, pre-staging equipment, personnel, TFIT teams
- Sandbag stations: 20,000+ sandbags, 600 CY of sand
- Public Notifications: Everbridge alerts, social media, PSAs and door-to-door warnings



Successes During the Storm



- City EOC coordination with City Liaisons at County EOC – Resource Requests
- Public safety response prep: monitoring, GIS incident mapping, resource staging, damage assessment
- Critical facilities including the Water Plant and Fire Station 2 successfully evacuated
- Public Outreach and Communication



Successes After the Storm



- Every Department has a recovery role
- Search and rescue operations
- Rapid roadway clearing: TFIT teams deployed and contractor assistance
- Utility restoration (water & sewer)
- Citywide Damage Assessment
- Debris management activated
- Recovery assistance
- Public information: Continuous updates



Successes - By the Numbers



- 50+ high-water rescues conducted, 2 structure fires
- 39 Resource Requests through County EOC
- 106,930 cubic yards of storm debris removed in 52 days
- 14 emergency calls, 720 Facebook posts with over 3 million views at peak, 200 updates on City website
- 50 TV, print, and radio interviews
- 60 wastewater pump stations restored within hours
- 14,500 properties inspected for damage
- Zero hurricane-related fatalities in the City of Venice, Zero City staff injuries



Key Observations

Part 1



1. Intergovernmental coordination enhanced response and recovery
2. Emergency policies and procedures were well-implemented
3. Public communication effectively informed residents
4. Low evacuation compliance in Helene led to high-risk rescues
5. Damage assessments highlighted vulnerabilities in coastal zones



Key Observations

Part 2



- 6. Permitting and floodplain regulations challenged building staff capacity
- 7. New technology improved emergency response and damage assessment
- 8. City facilities performed well, but Fire Station 2 and Water Plant faced issues
- 9. City staffing levels strained due to back-to-back hurricanes
- 10. Contractors and vendor services were critical to the rapid response



Key Observations

Part 3



- 11. Utility restoration faced delays but was improved over past storms
- 12. Debris management was effective but constrained by resource availability
- 13. Non-profits and volunteers played a key role in relief efforts
- 14. FEMA compliance, tracking, and reporting ensured funding eligibility



Recommendations



- Policies and Procedures: Lessons learned
- Strengthen Intergovernmental & Public Communication
- Infrastructure & Facility Resilience: Water Plant, Fire Station 2, T-Hangers
- Resource & Logistics Management
- Enhanced Recovery: Streamline FEMA compliance, building permitting, debris management
- Staffing & Support: Increased training, staffing support, private contractor support



Financial Impacts



- Estimated Total Cost: \$14M (both storms)
- Major Cost Categories:
 - Debris removal: \$5.3M
 - Park Facilities: \$4.3M
 - Buildings & Equipment: \$2.8M
- Ongoing FEMA reimbursement process, can take 2+ years



AAR Conclusions



- Greatest impacts the City of Venice has received in recorded history
- City outperformed previous storm events on all fronts
- Improvement is the primary goal of this AAR
- Recommendations: assigned to departments for implementation
- Pursue projects and grants for infrastructure improvements and resilience
- Hurricane Expo: May 30th at 9AM, Venice Community Center





THANK YOU & QUESTIONS

Presented April 8, 2025 by
Assistant City Manager James Clinch and
Fire Chief/Emergency Manager Frank Giddens

