

FXAK67 PAJK 241459  
AFDAJK

SOUTHEAST ALASKA FORECAST DISCUSSION  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE JUNEAU AK  
559 AM AKST THU DEC 24 2015

.SHORT TERM...SERN AK WILL RESIDE BETWEEN AN INTENSIFYING STORM SYSTEM OVER THE ALEUTIANS AND A BROADER AREA OF TROUGHING OVER THE WRN CONUS/CANADA THU MORNING/AFTERNOON. AMPLIFYING UPPER RIDGE WILL THEN SHIFT E AHEAD OF THE ALEUTIANS TROUGH TONIGHT...BECOMING POSITIONED OVER THE PANHANDLE BY 12Z FRI.

A NW-SE ORIENTED BAND OF LOW/MID CLOUDS WAS POSITIONED FROM ROUGHLY SITKA TO Klawock AT 12Z/THU. HOWEVER...LARGE-SCALE SUBSIDENCE OCCURRING WITH THE APPROACHING RIDGE...COMBINED WITH DRY BOUNDARY LAYER AIR SPREADING S ACROSS THE PANHANDLE...IS EXPECTED TO DISSIPATE SHOWER POTENTIAL WITH THE COASTAL CLOUD BAND. IN FACT...THE ENVIRONMENT WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY HOSTILE TO CLOUDS BY TONIGHT OVER THE CNTRL/SRN PANHANDLE...THOUGH HIGH-LEVEL CIRRUS WILL INCREASE OVER AKZ017 AS THE UPPER RIDGE AXIS SHIFTS E.

OTHERWISE...MODEST TEMPERATURE MODERATION THROUGH AFTERNOON WILL GIVE WAY TO STRONG RADIATIONAL COOLING TONIGHT...RESULTING IN LOWS IN THE TEENS OVER THE NRN PANHANDLE /AND HYDER/ TO THE 20S/LOW 30S OVER SRN AREAS /WARMEST NEAR THE GULF COAST/.

TIGHT SURFACE PRESSURE GRADIENT IS FORECAST TO PERSIST OVER THE SKAGWAY/LYNN CANAL REGION THROUGH MOST OF THE SHORT TERM PERIOD. THIS WILL AID IN SMALL CRAFT TO GALE STRENGTH NLY WINDS OVER THE CANAL...AND GUSTY WINDS AT SKAGWAY. MAGNITUDE OF THE GRADIENT COMBINED WITH AN ARCTIC AIRMASS OVER THE YUKON WOULD SEEMINGLY FAVOR STRONG WIND POTENTIAL AT SKAGWAY. HOWEVER...GUSTS HAVE RESIDED WELL BELOW 40 MPH. THUS CURRENT FORECAST HAS BEEN WEIGHTED TOWARD THE LOWER END GUSTS OBSERVED DURING THE PAST 24 HRS.

.LONG TERM...JUST AS AN ARCTIC AIR MASS IMPLANTS ITSELF OVER THE PANHANDLE...ENOUGH RIDGING ATOP OUR REGION WILL HELP STRENGTHEN THE COLD AIR DOME ATOP WITH MAXIMUM RADIATIONAL COOLING FROM MAINLY CLEAR SKIES THURSDAY NIGHT INTO FRIDAY. THIS WILL BE KEY IN THE EVENTS TO FOLLOW AS A GALE FORCE FRONT STEMMING FROM A VIGOROUS SYSTEM WELL SOUTH OF THE ALEUTIANS IN THE NORTH PACIFIC WILL SEND MOISTURE NORTHEASTWARD.

PRECIPITATION WILL BEGIN IN THE FORM OF SNOW FOR MOST ALL OF THE PANHANDLE FRIDAY NIGHT. WINTER STORM WATCHES WERE CONSIDERED FOR MUCH OF THE PANHANDLE AND WEIGHED AGAINST INHIBITING FACTORS. AT THIS TIME...CONFIDENCE WAS JUDGED HIGHER FOR YAKUTAT, HAINES, JUNEAU, PETERSBURG, KETCHIKAN, AND ESPECIALLY HYDER AND THEREFORE WATCHES WERE ISSUED. WHILE OTHER AREAS WILL RECEIVE SNOW, THE SPEED OF THE SYSTEM AND IN SOME CASES ALONG THE COAST BOTH TEMPERATURE AND THE CHANGE OVER TO RAIN MAY CHECK SNOW AMOUNTS SUFFICIENTLY TO QUESTION THE NEED FOR ANY WATCH AT THIS TIME. THUS A SPECIAL WEATHER STATEMENT CONTINUES FOR THESE AREAS TO CONTINUE ADVERTISING ACCUMULATIONS DURING THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND. MODEL TRENDS WILL CONTINUE TO BE STUDIED SHOULD THIS CHANGE, AND MORE WATCHES MAY NEED TO BE ISSUED TO COVER PORTIONS OF THESE AREAS. EXPECT POSSIBLE SNOW ACCUMULATIONS OF 2 TO 6 INCHES OVER AREAS OUTSIDE THE WATCH WITH 4 TO 10 INCHES FOR THE ZONES UNDER A WATCH. ONE EXCEPTION IS HYDER WITH 1 TO 2 FEET POSSIBLE.

IN REALITY, THIS NOW LOOKS TO BE A BORDERLINE WARNING CASE OVER MUCH OF THE NORTH. ONE REASON IS THAT BOTH NAM AND ECMWF ARE SUGGESTING SOME SORT OF WAVE DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE FRONT AS IT APPROACHES THE COAST. IF A WAVE FORMS FARTHER NORTH...THE NORTHERN PANHANDLE MAY RECEIVE GREATER SNOW AMOUNTS. SHOULD THE WAVE FORM SOUTH...SNOW TOTALS WILL FALL SHORT OF CURRENTLY FORECASTED. THE SPOT WITH THE MOST CONFIDENCE CONTINUES TO BE HYDER WHERE SNOW WILL LIKELY BE MEASURED IN FEET RATHER THAN INCHES. THE SOUTHERN INNER CHANNELS WILL PROVIDE AN INTERESTING TEST CASE. SHOULD WINDS BE MORE EASTERLY THAN SOUTHERLY...WARNING CRITERIA IS POSSIBLE LATE FRIDAY NIGHT INTO SATURDAY MORNING. GUIDANCE IS FUZZY ON TEMPERATURES WITH SOME DISAGREEMENT. BUT GIVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPRESSIVE SNOWFALL TOTALS, THAT ADVISORY CRITERIA IS JUDGED BY A LOWER THRESHOLD, AND THAT THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND CARRIES CHALLENGES FOR PLANNING, WE DECIDED TO PLACE THIS AREA UNDER A WATCH AS WELL. SNOW WILL BEGIN TO CHANGE OVER TO OR MIX WITH RAIN ACROSS THE COAST AND CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN ZONES SATURDAY AFTERNOON. THIS WILL SIGNAL AN END TO HEAVIER SNOW ACCUMULATIONS.

GALE FORCE WINDS WILL APPROACH THE COAST FRIDAY AND WINDS RISE ACROSS THE PANHANDLE FRIDAY NIGHT. WINDS WILL LIKELY BE STRONG ALONG THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHEAST GULF COAST. WINDS WERE GENERALLY LIGHTENED ACROSS THE INTERIOR PANHANDLE IN THE MID-RANGE.

CHANGES TO THE EXTENDED FORECAST WERE RESERVED FOR THE SIGNIFICANT SNOW EVENT FRIDAY NIGHT/SATURDAY...THUS VERY LITTLE WORK WAS COMMITTED TO THE EXTENDED FORECAST. SNOW AND SNOW/RAIN SHOWERS WILL SLOWLY DISSIPATE SATURDAY NIGHT INTO MONDAY NIGHT FOR THE PANHANDLE AS THE NEXT FRONT ENTERS THE GULF FROM THE SOUTHWEST. THIS SYSTEM LOOKS INCREASINGLY WET AND A LITTLE WARMER.

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TRENDS SEEM TO BE SIGNALING A WARMER PATTERN INTO NEXT WEEK WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR RISING SNOW LEVELS AND MORE RAIN MENTIONED AT SEA LEVEL THAN CURRENT PACKAGE. SNOW LOVERS, THIS WEEKEND IS FOR YOU TO ENJOY. DO NOT COUNT ON NEXT WEEK TO BE AS NICE. RAIN LOVERS, YOUR TIME IS ON ITS WAY.

FORECAST CONFIDENCE NOT WHERE WE WOULD LIKE. BUT WE MUST HEDGE WITH A POTENTIALLY IMPACTFUL FORECAST ON A HOLIDAY WEEKEND. USED NAM AND ECMWF FOR UPDATES TO THE MID-RANGE. NUDGED WINDS TOWARD WPC IN THE LONG-TERM.

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.AJK WATCHES/WARNINGS/ADVISORIES...  
PUBLIC...WINTER STORM WATCH FROM LATE FRIDAY NIGHT THROUGH SATURDAY MORNING FOR AKZ026-028.  
WINTER STORM WATCH FROM FRIDAY EVENING THROUGH SATURDAY MORNING FOR AKZ019-025.  
WINTER STORM WATCH FROM FRIDAY EVENING THROUGH SATURDAY MORNING FOR AKZ017.  
WINTER STORM WATCH FROM LATE FRIDAY NIGHT THROUGH SATURDAY AFTERNOON FOR AKZ029.  
MARINE...GALE WARNING FOR PKZ012.  
SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY FOR PKZ013-031-041-042.  
SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY DUE TO SEAS FOR PKZ043-051-052.

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GARNER/ADKINS

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