



Agenda Item 8: Other bussines

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

This paper informs the GREPECAS Met Project about the pending replacement of text Area Forecasts (FAs) for the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico with the new Graphical Forecasts for Aviation (GFA).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The United States has provided FAs for the waters and islands in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico since at least the late 1980s. While the information used by the forecaster has improved greatly over the years, the format of the forecast has remained unchanged. This old, text based format is not able to communicate the high level of detail that could be made available to the user. The United States created a new web based GFA tool that allows users to view forecast information at a much higher level of detail. This GFA tool has been in use over the Continental United States (CONUS) for about two years, and it will soon be expanded to cover the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. The FA will be retired after the expansion.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The old text FA format can compared with the new format in Appendix A. The text contains a broad overview of expected conditions, but provides very little detail. Thanks to satellite imagery and high resolution modelling, a much higher level of detail can be provided to the users.

2.2 The details that are provided include satellite and METAR observations, SIGMETs and forecast winds at the surface and different flight levels. Forecasts of weather type and location, to include ceiling and visibility, are also provided. All of the above forecasts are made available in one hour increments, in graphical format, via a webpage.

2.3 It is worth noting that, except for SIGMETs, all the information provided for the Caribbean comes from computer models. These models have gotten very good at showing approximate location and movement of weather hazards, but the locations are not always perfect. However, the general location, character and movement of the hazards provide more valuable information than can be provided by the limited text FA.

2.4 The United States plans to supplement the model information by providing Regional Hazardous Weather Advisories for the area. A separate information paper describes a demonstration project for these advisories.

2.5 The webpage is available in trial mode at this time, but it should become part of the operational version for the United States before the end of 2019. The trial mode version can be viewed at



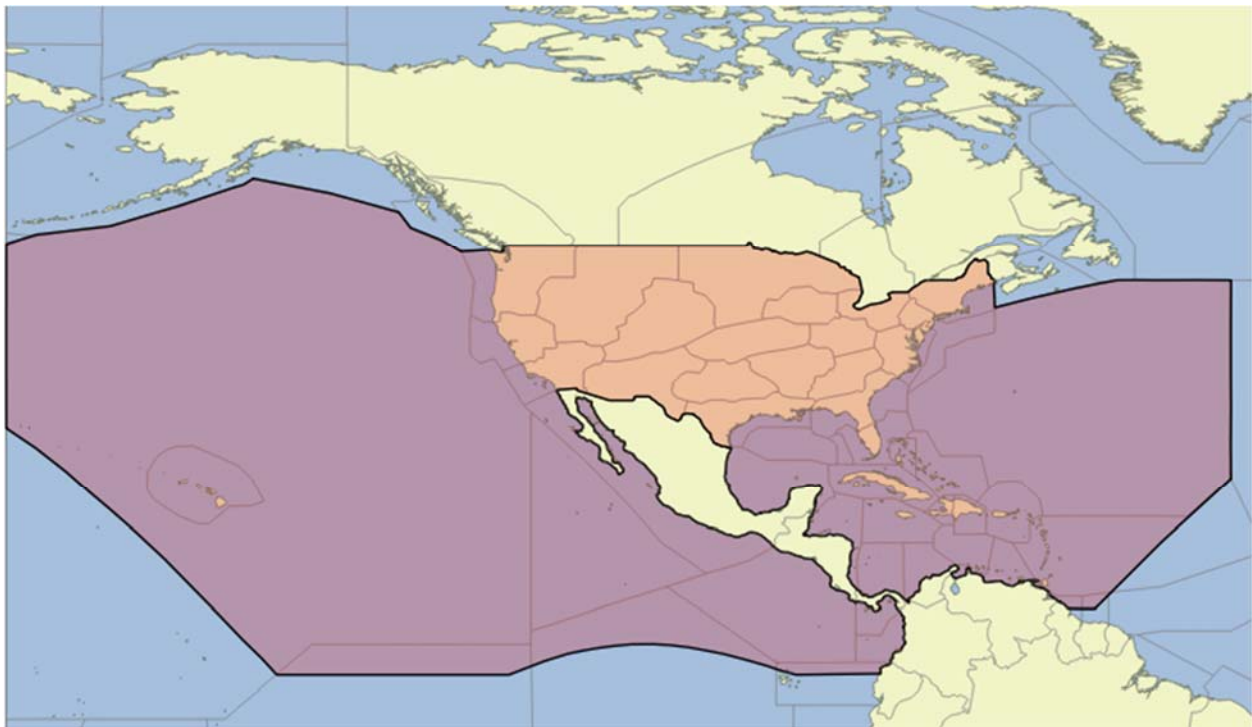
(Lima, Peru, from 17 to 20 June 2019)

<https://testbed.aviationweather.gov/gfa>

and the operational version that currently only covers the Continental United States (CONUS) is at

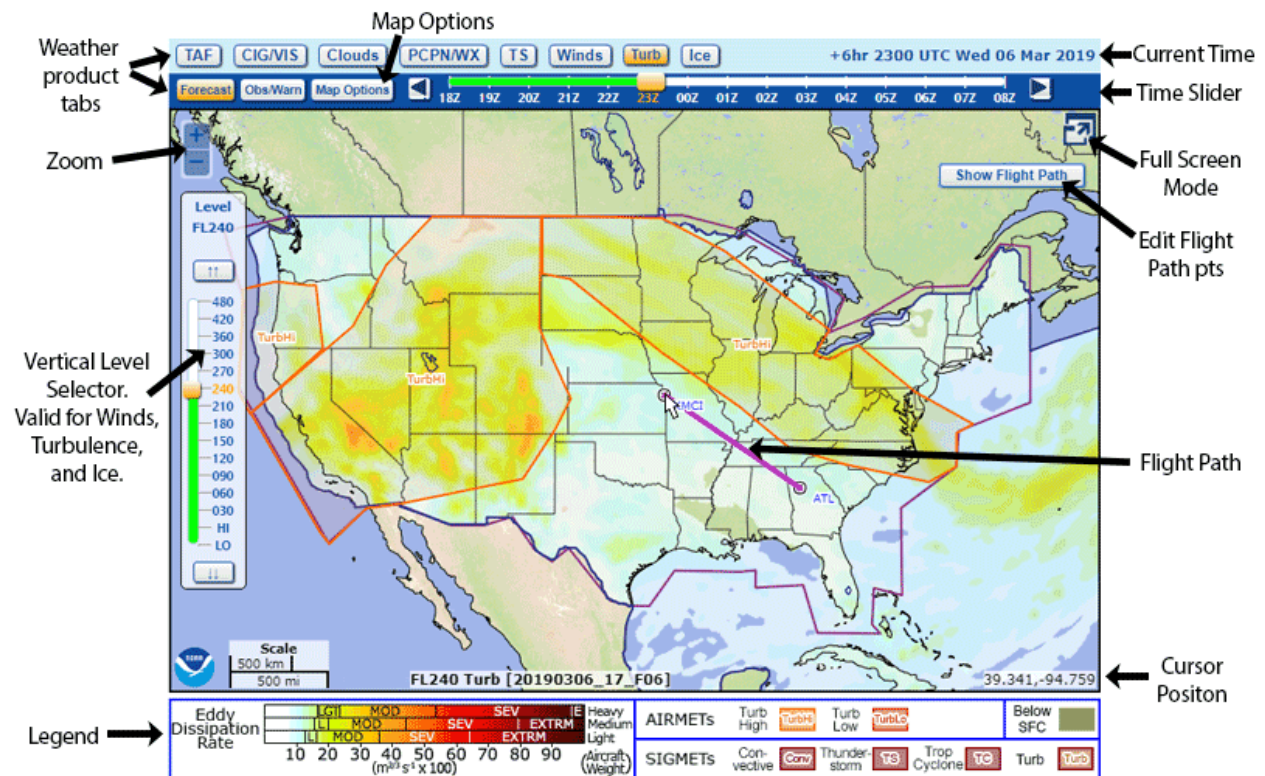
<https://www.aviationweather.gov/gfa>

2.6 The graphic below shows the area that will be covered when the GFA is expanded.



(Lima, Peru, from 17 to 20 June 2019)

2.7 The graphic below serves as a short tutorial on how to use the GFA.



2.8 Further training on GFA use is available via YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbk3O20aBXA&feature=youtu.be>

2.9 **ACTION BY THE GREPECAS**

3.1 The GREPECAS is invited to note the information contained in this paper.

Appendix A

Comparison of old FA with new GFA for 2100 UTC Friday May 17, 2019

Old FA

SANTO DOMINGO FIR...PORT-AU-PRINCE FIR

HISPANIOLA...SCT020 SCT060. OCNL BKN020 BKN060. TOP FL230. ISOL

SHRA. AFT 18Z ISOL TSRA. OTLK...VFR. TIL 06Z...ISOL TSRA/SHRA.

WTRS N OF ISLANDS...BKN020 BKN060. TOP FL230. SCT SHRA. ISOL

TSRA. OTLK...MVFR CIG SHRA TSRA BR.

ELSW...SKC-SCT025. OCNL SCT020 SCT060. ISOL SHRA. OTLK...VFR

SHRA.

New GFA for same forecast

