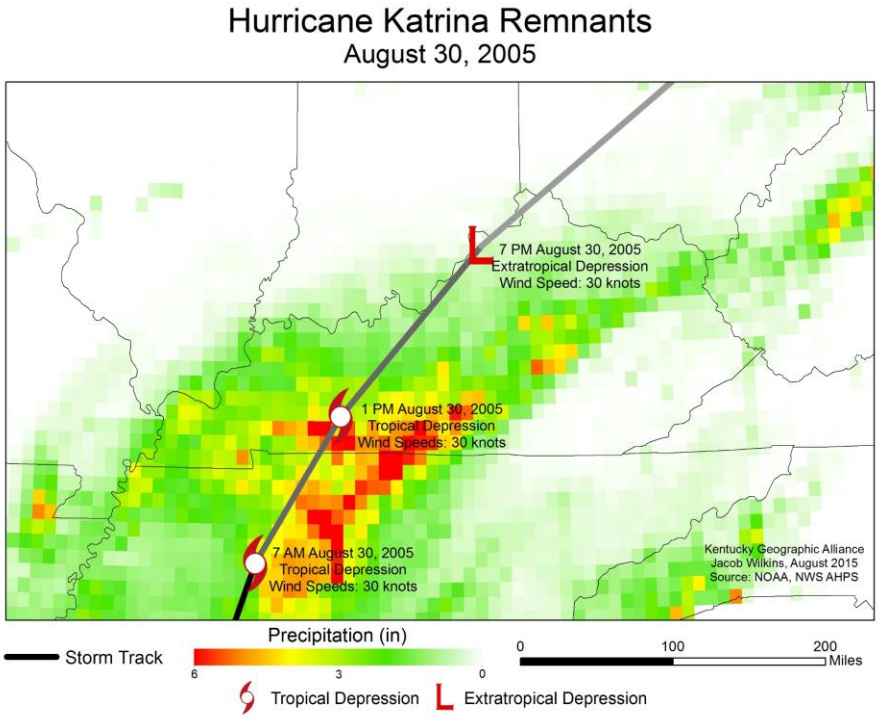
KENTUCKY IN THE NEWS

The Kentucky Geographic Alliance – August 2015



Hurricane Katrina was one of the strongest storms to impact the coast of the United States during the last 100 years according to the National Climatic Data Center. (full report) On August 23rd, 2005, a tropical depression formed close to the Bahamas and used the warm waters of the Gulf Stream and Gulf of Mexico to grow into a category 5 Hurricane (sustained winds over 175 mph) in five days. On day seven, the remnants of Katrina moved through Kentucky (see above) (National Weather Service) as a tropical depression. In northern Kentucky, Katrina began to lose its tropical characteristics, thus it was reclassified as an extratropical depression. The damage and loss of life inflicted by the Hurricane demonstrates how a clear understanding of the geography of natural hazards can affect our social, cultural, economic and political landscapes.

Ten years after the hurricane, Kentuckians can still recall the storm and the flood of evacuees that followed the interstates north seeking shelter from the devastating storm. The Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM) team uses geographic principles to prepare, coordinate and respond to natural and other hazards in or related to Kentucky. One example of geographic data analysis used by the KYEM is produced by the Kentucky Mesonet (real-time weather data).

Although Hurricane Katrina was a devastating natural hazard, the consequences have had an effect in many lives and fields of study. Geographers study events like this to help create better strategies to manage events like this in the future.