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Georgia Southern University Researchers Receive Grant to Investigate Historical Tropical Cyclone Activity along Georgia Coast

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GEORGIA SOUTHERN

Georgia Southern University researchers have been awarded a grant to investigate historical tropical cyclone activity along the coast of Georgia, in an effort to determine how susceptible the state is to hurricanes. Preliminary data suggests the Georgia coast has historically experienced cycles of very high hurricane landfall activity, despite no major hurricanes hitting the state in recent decades.

“Many people believe that because no major hurricanes have hit the Georgia coastline in recent decades that we are somehow immune,” said Georgia Southern University researcher Brian Bossak, Ph.D. of the University’s Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health. “But we believe we can trace cycles of very high hurricane landfall activity along the Georgia coast, and that should serve as a warning that residents and local governments should take planning for a major hurricane very seriously.”

The nearly \$130,000 grant from the Georgia Sea Grant program will fund two years of research by Bossak and Georgia Southern professor Mark Welford, Ph.D. of the University’s College of Science and Mathematics. The researchers are working to determine if some parts of the Georgia coast may be more susceptible to hurricane landfall than others.

“We have evidence that tropical cyclones, including hurricanes, did significant damage to Georgia’s coastline and settlements,” said Welford. “We plan to generate the most complete digital database of Georgia’s tropical cyclones to date, and use the data to analyze and determine areas with the highest risk of landfall frequency and storm intensity.”

The ultimate objective of the research is to generate hurricane risk information that can be used by government officials and coastal managers when planning evacuations and other public health and safety measures.

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